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The Spread of Islamic Culture to the East Asia Before The Era of Modern European Hegemony

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The pre-Islamic trade relations between China and Arabia, established with the spread of Islam through the Eastern Asian regions, continued without interruption from the middle of the 7th century (1st century H.) until today, with only a short break. In the 8th and 9th centuries the Muslims in China numbered over 100,000. The Muslims, known as "Fan Feng", established colonies in various trade ports, where judges and sheikhs could be found to solve their problems according to Islamic law and traditions. Moreover, large mosques were established in the Chinese cities of Canton, Zaitun and Hang-chou. According to many Islamic sources, from the middle of the 9th century on, Muslims established relations directly with the Korean peninsula. From the 13th century on, thanks to the Muslim merchants, scholars and scientists who played a major part in the Mongol Empire, Islamic science and art had a great influence on Eastern Asia. The Korean Dynasty, employing Islamic principles, reached the highest cultural level in the Middle Ages. After a long stagnant period, the final years of the 19th century, within the framework of the East Asian Pan Islamic activities applied by Sultan Abdulhamid 2nd, these areas began to enjoy the revival of Islamic components. The Ottoman-Japanese relationship improved. In addition, with the tremendous efforts of Abdurresid Ibrahim Efendi Islam started once again to spread in Japan and Korea. The fact that in the 1920s approximately 600 Russian Turks came and setled in Manchuria, Korea and Japan is one of the reasons for Islam being well-established in the region until the present day. The current Islamic society is a result not only of the Turks heroically joining in the Korean War (1950-1953) but also of their exemplary ways of living under difficult conditions, which had a great impact on the Korean people at the time.

1. Ancient Relations between the Muslim World and East Asia

The cultural contacts between the Islamic world and the East Asian countries (China proper, Korea and Japan) are believed to have been

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do not. As a general rule, in cultural contacts, material objects are taken over by the guest culture earlier than non-material characteristics. Tools, architecture and clothing, for example, are adopted by the recipient culture before religious ideas and social organizations. Under the stress of the assimilatory factors, Muslims in East Asia were responsive to the host culture, but were insistent on preserving their essential Islamic value system.

The cultural contacts between the Islamic world and the East Asian countries(China proper-Korea-Japan) are believed to be initiated as early as the first Hejira century, the middle of the 7th century AD., and continued untill recently without showing any conflict or antagonism. Not surprisingly, Islam in East Asia has been characterized all through the ages by an attempt to retain its identity as a religious minority while adopting many of the outward forms of the surrounding local culture and ways of life. Only when the tension between two divergent cultural traditions has become too great, Muslim community has broken out into rebellion, particularly against Chinese regime of Ch'ing dynasty(1644-1912).

1.1. Sino-Muslim Relations

The first Islamic spread to East Asia is regarded as an outcome of the ancient China-Arabia commercial relations through sea-routes from the 7th century. Commercial trade between East Asia and Arabia probably precedes the period when records were first kept. Long before the advent of Islam, China and Arabia were trading by sea, following established sea routes and by such overland routes as the Silk Road. According to such Arabic sources as"Kitab al-tanbih wa'l-ishraf" by the Arab historian Ma'sudi, Chinese ships sailed often in the fifth and the sixth centuries to the port of Siraf on the river Euphrates and other ports in the Arabian Gulf. According to one of old Islamic records, Arab-Chinese commercial relations date back to the year 636(14 AH). When the Muslim General 'Utba b. Gazwan conquered Basra, he sent the following report to Caliph 'Umar in the month of Ramadhan or Shaban in 636.

> *"Thanks to Allah, we conquered Basra whence so many junks were coming from Oman, Bahrain, Morocco, India and China. Know and thank Allah. He gave us their gold, silver, women and children. Inshallah, I will write to you with more details later"* (Dinawari, *Kitab al-akhbar al-tiwal,* 1888: 123)

Another important Arabic source in these times is that of "Muruj al-dhahab"of Ma'sudi, in which he describes how the Chinese traders sailed

Another important Arabic source of these times is that of "*Muruj al-dhahab*" of Ma'sudi, in which he describes how the Chinese traders sailed to Eastern Arabia, Basra and several ports of Oman in their ships loaded with commercial goods.[2] An earlier Arab author, Ibn al-Kalbi, also mentioned the commercial activities of the Chinese markets of Oman.

> *"In Daba, one of the two great ports of Arabia, there is a crowded trade market. Merchants from Sind, India and China, and Eastern and Western peoples constantly gathered there".*[3]

Ships from these areas also sailed directly to China. We are told by Chinese sources, however, that up to the fifth century, a few Chinese from Cambodia, Annam or Tongking had reached Arabia, while merchants from those parts came frequently to Indo-China.[4]

It seems evident that during ancient and medieval times, the sea-trade between Egypt and the Arabs on the one side, and India and East Asia on the other, remained almost exclusively in the hands of the enterprising Arabs and Persians of the Southern Arabian coast, who very early on established stations at all the principal ports along the coast to the south of the Indus, and thence ultimately to Canton, the most important Southern Chinese port. In fact, the origins of the export and import trade of China with foreign countries can be attributed to the efforts of the Muslims. Merchants, missionaries and travellers from various countries came pouring into the Chinese ports by sea and by land. Of the foreign countries possessing precious goods, none could surpass the Muslim lands.

There are many contradictory opinions based on official historical records or traditional legends concerning the period when Islam was first introduced into China. Even though such well known Chinese historians as Liu Chih, Chin Chi-t'ung gives the year 628 as the date of the first entry of Muslims into China, thus confirming the legends that persist to this very day, most historians point to the year 651 as marking the advent of Islam in China. This date is based on Chinese records. The official text reads;

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2 Mas'udi, *Muruj al-dhahad wa ma'adin al-jawahir* (French trans. and comp. C. Barbier de Maynard et Pavet de Courtille), Paris, p. 308.

3 Ya'qubi, *Tarikh* (comp. M. Th. Houstma), Leiden 1883, p. 313-315.

4 F. Hirth and W. W. Rokhill (trans.), *Chau Ju-Kua: His Work on the Chinese and Arab Trade in the 12th and 13th Centuries*, entitled Chu-fan-chi, Imperial Academy of Sciences, St.Petersburg 1911, p. 6.

> *"In the second year of Yung Hui (651 AD), the king of Tashi (Arabia) Amir al-Mumin sent an envoy for the first time to the Chinese court bearing tribute. He announced that the House of Tashi had already reigned for thirty four years and had had three kings".*[5]

While this was the first formal contact between the two empires, some legends of Chinese Muslims have it that Muslims came to China before 651. Among many of the traditional narratives, the best known legend, and that which has the most currency so far as Chinese Muslims are concerned, is the coming to China of S'ad b. Abi Waqqas, the maternal uncle of Prophet Muhammad. According to his legend, S'ad b. Abi Waqqas came to China along with three companions, accompanied by the Chinese ambassador who had been dispatched to Arabia, around the year 632.[6] Thus, Chinese Muslims consider Sa'd b. Abi Vaqqas as the first apostle of Islam to China and they believe that he was buried in Canton. We cannot find any reliable evidence that lends credence to the above legend. Absence of such should not, however, be considered absolute proof. It is of course possible that there was intercourse between the two countries during Muhammad's life time. A famous adage of that time attributed to Muhammad was, *"Seek for knowledge, even unto China"*. This famous adage shows that, due to commercial relations between Arabia and China, the name and civilization of this country was known to the Prophet.[7]

In the process of the spread of Islam to East Asia, two routes were extremely important. One established commercial relations through maritime routes and the other political and diplomatic relations through the Silk Road. Loading their ships at Sierra in the Arabian Gulf, the Muslim merchants set sail for China following the monsoon via Muscat of Oman. Crossing the open sea of the Indian Ocean, they reached South India. Starting again and striking along the south coast of Ceylon, the vessel proceeded to the Gulf of Diam through the Malaria strait. After a long journey of 3 months, the hardy Muslim navigators would arrive at famous Canton in southern China. From the Muslim manuals of navigation that have come down to us, it is clear that Muslim navigators were quite at home in the eastern China seas.[8]

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5 *Chiu T'ang Shu (CTS: Old T'ang Annal)*, Tashi Chuan (Arabia Chapter), 651 year.

6 S'ad b. Abi Waqqas was the seventh person who embraced Islam and accompanied Muhammad in all his battles. He died at Akiq, which is ten miles distant from Medina, around 678, and was buried at the Prophet Mosque in Medina. He never visited China so was not the apostle of the legends (K.V. Zetterstéen, "S'ad b. Abi Waqqas", *İA*, X, 18-20).

7 T.T. Arnold, *The Preaching of Islam*, Lahore 1961, p. 297).

8 Marshall Broomhall, *Islam in China: A Neglected Problems*, Morgan & Scott Ltd., London 1910, p. 7-8.

From the T'ang (618-907) to the Sung period (960-1127), the Arabs and Persian merchants came to China in increasing numbers. Bazaars specializing in the sale of such Chinese products as silk fabric, porcelain ware, tea, and natural silk were established in the Abbasid capital Baghdad. Similarly, in the western and eastern markets of the Chinese capital Ch'ang-an, foreign people, mostly from the Muslim world filled the street. There were foreign shops where they dealt with precious stones, ivory, rhinoceros horns, spices, glass, pearls and other products from Arabia and Persia[9] Meanwhile the Silk Routes were the main channel for political and diplomatic relations between China and the Muslim world. According to Chinese historical sources, during 147 years, between 651-798, the Arab states known as 'Tashi' sent emissaries over 37 times (CTS). In the early political relations between the two worlds, two important events contributed greatly to their political and cultural relations. One was the "Talas War" (751) and the other the "An Lu-shan Rebellion" (755-759).

In 751, one hundred years after the official introduction of Islam to China, the two armies of China and Abbasid met on the banks of the Talas River near Samarkand. The Arabs fought for five full days against the Chinese. The Chinese general of Korean origin, Kao Hsien-chi, was heavily defeated in the momentous battle in which only a few thousand soldiers survive. This war, the only unfortunate incident between China and Arabia in their joint histories, has a significant place in world history. Through the victory of the Muslim Arabs in the war, most of the Central Asian territory, which had been a stronghold of Buddhism from its earliest times, became quickly Islamized. Chinese power was not to reappear in the area for the next six centuries. Meanwhile, with the Muslims' victory in the Talas War, the advance of Islam was accelerated among Central Asian Turks, which also enabled Turks to upgrade their political influence in the Abbasid domains. Furthermore, the Arab soldiers involved in the war joined their countrymen who had been doing business in the capital of China. There were more than 4,000 Arab families in Ch'ang-an, according to the census of 760.[10]

Even though the Talas War of 751 exerted a certain negative effect on the promotion of political relations between China and Arabia, it must

9 *CTS.*, Vol.198, Hsi-yu chapter; Ma Qi-ching, "A Brief Account of the Early Spread of Islam in China", *JCASS*, vol. 4/1983, Peking, p. 99.

10 Ma Ibrahim, *Muslims in China*, Kuala Lumpur nd., p. 21.

be noted that friendly relations between the two countries continued to exist with the arrival of the official Arab envoy to the Chinese court in the year 752. For about five years from 752 to 756, we understand that Arab envoys came to the Chinese court at least 8 times. With this normalization of political relations with the Arabs, the Chinese greatly benefited when the Chinese regime faced a serious challenge in the shape of the critical rebellion by An Lu-shan, a Chinese general.

Unhappy with the Chinese emperor, An Lu-shan rose in rebellion in 756. When he succeeded in over-powering the Chinese capitals of Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang, he promptly proclaimed himself Emperor of a new dynasty, called Yen. In a critical situation of chaos and unrest, the T'ang emperor appealed to the Arabs for help. The Abbasid Caliphate immediately responded to the appeal and sent a contingent consisting probably of some 4,000 Persians and Iraqis, with whose assistance the Chinese emperor was able to recover his country and restore order. Chinese history clearly indicates that Arab troops, with the co-operation of the Uighur armies, assisted the Chinese armies in recapturing the two capitals from the rebels in 757.[11]

It is of interest to note that only five years after the Arabs had fought the Chinese in 751, they now rallied to help the Chinese Emperor to quell a rebellion. After the rebellion was quelled, many Arab soldiers were allowed to settle in Ch'ang-an and Lo-yang as a reward for their services and bravery. In fact, only a small number returned home in the west. Those who stayed married Chinese women, thus becoming the real nucleus of the naturalized Chinese Muslims of today. The settlement of this large body of Arabs in China may be accepted as probably the largest and most definitive event recorded concerning the advent of Islam in China. Through the efforts of those that stayed in China, Islam spread further to the western part of China. This event can be considered as the second big influx of Muslims to China through the Silk-Road.

The politico-economic relations between China and the Muslim world accelerated during the Sung Dynasty (960-1127), during which the Arab tribute envoys came to China 49 times. In 966, the first Sung emperor, T'ai-tsu (r.960-976), dispatched a goodwill mission to contact various Muslim countries. This mission, consisting of more than one hundred officials, was entrusted with numerous imperial messages. The most important message was the one delivered to the Abbasid Caliph, al-Muti

11 Charles Hucker, *The Chinese Imperial Past*, California 1975, p. 144.

(r.946-974), concerning the re-opening of Sino-Arab sea trade. In response, an Abbasid tributary delegation arrived in the Chinese court in 968 and delivered valuable gifts and Arabian products. Between the years of 971-976, four more Abbasid embassies visited the Chinese emperor. As a result, the formerly discontinued Sino-Arab relations were more actively resumed.[12]

The Sung government turned international trade into a monopoly. But in fact, the import, export and shipping enterprises were owned and operated by Chinese and Muslim merchants. When the Sung dynasty took measures to protect foreign traders and established a definite system of trading policy, the influx of foreign traders to China increased. More came in the Sung period than had during the T'ang period, and these were concentrated mainly in the ports of Canton and Zaitun (Ch'un-chou). Most of the traders were Muslims.

Although overland trade with East Asia was predominantly in the hands of the Persians and Central Asian Turks during this period, the Arabs played a leading part in maritime commerce. If we examine the commercial and maritime standing of the Arabs in the Arabian Gulf, we find that the Arabs, from very early times, held an important position both in trade and in navigation. With their superb navigational skills, they sailed, mainly from their native countries, to Africa, India, Burma, Champa and places in south-east Asia, where they collected commodities much sought after by the Chinese. Although some of these traders did sometimes sail to Korea and Japan, their final destination was always China, especially the two south-eastern international ports; Canton and Zaitun, the busiest trade centres of the world.

During the Sung period, Zaitun's position became more important. Foreign merchants and goods *"congregated here like swarming bees"*, and all who left and came to China used Zaitun for embarking and landing. A Chinese scholar, Chao Ju-kua's "*Chu-Fan-Chi*" records that the ships from Arabia could carry several thousand people, and the ships were provided with wine and restaurants/ canteens (eating shops)[13] The great 14th century Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta, upon visiting Zaitun, described it as;

> *"the world's greatest port, with over a hundred big ships in its harbor, smaller crafts being simply countless. Chinese porcelain is produced*

12 Yusuf Chang, "Chinese Muslim Mobility in Sung-Ciao-Chin Period", *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs- JIMMA*, Jeddah, vol. 6, 1964, p. 155.

13 Ma Qi-ching, p. 99; F.Hirth, p. 17-18.

only in Zaitun and Canton and is sold in India and other places, even as far as our country Morocco".[14]

The prosperous economic exchanges between China and Arabia at that time and the common bond of trade between the two countries caused large numbers of Arabs and Persian Muslim traders to emigrate to China. The Sung dynasty was anxious to promote import and export trade with the Muslims. It even installed 'The Office of Superintendency of Merchant Shipping' at various sea ports to look after this promising import and export trade. In 999, 'Inspectorates for Maritime Trade' were established at the Hang-chou and Ming-chou ports. The superintendents of merchant shipping were specially appointed to manage such shipping affairs as collecting custom duties on foreign and domestic goods, offering warehouses for storage and purchasing profitable foreign goods for resale.[15]

At this time, many rich Arab merchants appeared in China. At the end of the 10th century, an Arab sea captain, P'u Hsi-mi arrived in Canton and presented many gifts to the Sung court, among which were fifty tusks of ivory and 1800 bottles of frankincense. In the latter half of the 11th century, Sin Abdullah, an Arab merchant who had lived in Canton for several decades, accumulated a huge fortune, and offered his own money to assist in the rebuilding of Canton city.

Toward the end of the Sung period, a well-known Arab descendant by the name of P'u Shou-keng looked after the affairs of the Arab merchants in China as the superintendent of the maritime trade. At the beginning of the 13th century, when the city of Zaitun expanded, the use of granite became common place. It was with the economic power of such Arab traders that new projects were completed.[16]

1.2. Muslim Relations with Japan and Korea

It has yet to be determined when Muslims had their first direct contact with the Korean peninsula and Japan. It is believed that Islamic and Turkish culture has had a significant influence on East Asian culture since ancient times. Documented references are few and far between, but sufficient remain to give proof of substantial commerce between Korea and the Arab world. Though sources from medieval times record Arab Muslims

14 Ibn Battuta, 1983, p. 464.
15 F. Hirth 1911, p. 20.
16 Yusuf Chang, p. 162; Ma Qi-ching, p. 100.

as travelling to and from the Korean peninsula in the early part of the eleventh century, Muslims apparently first attempted to make contact with the Korean peninsula during the latter part of the Shilla period (57 BC-935 AD). Glass cups excavated from ancient tombs of the Korean kingdom of Shilla demonstrate that contact had been established with the Arab world much earlier. Most of the glass cups unearthed from the tombs were either from Arabia or Persia. Assuming that the tombs were constructed toward the close of the 5th century or at the beginning of the 6th century, it can be safely said that at about that time Arabian or Persian merchandise had already found its way into Korea and Japan.

The chronicles of Korea and Japan have a detailed account on items of musical instruments and trading products that are peculiar to Muslim culture. The introduction of the Arabic and Persian cultures and their products into Korea and Japan before Islam was largely a result of indirect contact between East Asians and those countries through China. But the direct contact of Arabs and Central Asians with the Korean peninsula and Japan was also achieved from time to time. Moreover, several clay busts found in recent archaeological digs carried out in Korea have revealed human figures that resemble Central Asian Muslims with beards and moustaches. Similar items were found in the old royal tombs of Korea in the middle of the 7th century. But evidence of direct Muslim advance and contact with the Korean peninsula before the 11th century has not been found.[17]

Studying the indirect contact between Muslims and Koreans or Muslims and Japanese in China is very important in understanding Islamic development in East Asia. Japan and Korea had very close relations with T'ang China at that time. A wide range of political, economic and cultural relations were at the height of prosperity. Moreover, it was only a few days' voyage away from the western part of Korea and Japan to the southern and eastern parts of China, where large Muslim communities were to be found. It is thus very likely that Japanese and Korean people came into contacts with Muslims through several channels:

First, "business contacts in Chinese ports between Muslim merchants who dominated the South Sea trade (Arabia-India-Malay-China) and their Korean counterparts who controlled the Eastern regional trade (China-Korea-Japan). Second, "political contacts in Ch'ang-an, the capital of T'ang

17 Hee-Soo Lee, *The Advent of Islam in Korea - A Historical Survey*, Ircica, Istanbul 1997, p. 54-56.

China, between Muslim residents and Japanese-Korean diplomats or trade missions who regularly visited the Chinese court as a part of tribute diplomacy or official trade. Third, "cultural contacts in China between Muslims and Japanese-Korean students who were dispatched to study Chinese culture on government scholarships. Fourth, "religious contacts with Muslims by Japanese-Korean Buddhist monks who frequently went to China and the West Region (modern Turkistan). Some of their travel descriptions tell us of contact with Muslims and their religion.

Muslim merchants may have extended their own trade routes to the Korean peninsula or Japan. While trade was the primary reason for contact, it seems that many elements of Islamic culture were introduced to Japan and the Korean peninsula as well. This development is well supported by accounts of Korea, called *'Shilla'* by Arab geographers, that can be found in twenty different Islamic books of geography, history and travel written by seventeen Muslim scholars, ranging from Ibn Khurdadbih of the mid 9th century to A'bul Fazl of the early 16th century. We do not see such reliable historical sources on Japan in medieval Arabic sources.

The oldest extant record, being not only the first to contain remarks concerning Korea, but also a mention of the settlement of Muslims on the Korean peninsula, is Ibn Khurdadbih's "*Kitab al-masalik wa'l-mamalik*" of 846. The book contains two passages concerning the Muslims' advance to Korea and their settlement there as follows:

> *"Beyond China, across Qansu, there is a country with many mountains and abounding in gold, called Shilla. Muslims who happened to go there are fascinated by the good environment and tend to settle there for good and do not think of leaving the place. There is no way of knowing what lies beyond there".*[18]

In addition, there are more detailed and interesting accounts of Muslims living in Shilla in several writings of such scholars as Ibn Rustah, Mas'udi, Al-Idrisi[19] and others. The early accounts tell us that Muslims began to venture to and settle down on the Korean peninsula from the ninth century or earlier.

In the works written by early Muslims concerning the Korean peninsula and Japan, there are many passages whose credibility and authenticity are doubtful because of fragmentary and indiscriminate

18 Ibn Khurdadbih, *Kitab al-masalik wa'l mamalik* (ed. M. J. de Goeje), Leiden 1889, 70, p. 180.

19 Al-Idrisi, *Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq*, E.J. Brill, Napoli 1970.

quotations of earlier works. Nevertheless, some features of the geographic location and living conditions of the Korean peninsula are depicted. There are definite accounts of the advent of Muslims on the Korean peninsula 150 years prior to Sino-Korean historical records. This promotes a new insight and perspective on this period.[20]

Korean sources also show very clear indication of Muslim contact with the Korean court. The "*Koryosa* (Official Chronicles of the Koryo Dynasty)" refers several times to Muslim advances into Korea and to their commercial activities.

> *"In September of 1024, the 15th year of King Hyun-jong's reign, Al-Razi and a hundred people from the Tashi country (Arabia) came and presented their native products to King".*[21]

In the next year, another group of Muslims, headed by Hasan and Raza visited Korea from Arab countries for the purpose of trade with Korea. But there was no clear evidence that they resided permanently in Korea or initiated the dissemination of Islam. Of course, they may have followed their own religious rites, such as praying, fasting and have pursued their own customary tradition during their stay in Korea. The king ordered that all possible facilities be provided to make them comfortable in selected guest houses.

2. Cultural Influence of the Early Spread of Islam

The birth of Chinese Islam was a product of Sino-Arabian friendship. As the political and economic relations increased between Arab and China, large numbers of Arab and Persian Muslim traders emigrated to China. In particular, the Talas War became the historic momentum for the rapid influx of Islamic culture to China, while it also produced favourable outcomes for the Arabs by introducing them to the paper-making techniques through the medium of Chinese war prisoners. Tu Huan, a certain clerical officer who accompanied the ill-fated Chinese forces, wrote a travel account entitled "*Ching Hsing Chi*" in which he very accurately recorded the principles and teachings of Islam. He also pointed out clearly the fundamental belief in Islam. In fact, his book can be claimed as the earliest work on Islam in China.[22]

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20 Hee-Soo Lee, p. 40-53.

21 *Koryo-Sa (KS: Koryo History)*, Se-Ga, the 9th year of King Hyun-jong (1024).

22 Yung-ch'ang Yang, "Detailed Research on the early Islamic Spread in China", *ITC*, p. 127-128.

The Muslims residing in China spread their religion through marriage and by instancing the beauty of Islam, whose basic teachings did not differ much from Chinese customs. Islam was accepted readily without war or bloodshed. This resulted in Islam being introduced to China earlier than in many other countries, with the exception of Arabia. This was the basic reason for the early entry of Islam into China.

Muslims built beautiful mosques with Chinese styled architecture. *Kwang-Tai-Se* of Canton and *Chi-Lin-Se* of Zaitun are two of the earliest mosques to be built in China in the first half of the 9th century. The minaret of the *Kwang-Tai-Se* mosque, besides serving as a place from which the faithful were called to prayer, also had a weather vane on its roof which indicated the direction of the wind. The *Kwang-Tai-Se* mosque, whose original name was *Hui-Sheng-Se*, is reputed to be one of the first mosques to be built outside Medina. These old relics, without doubt, are of the early entry of Islam into China.[23]

Some Arabs chose to live among the Chinese, but most of the Muslims were confined to the *Fan-Fang* (specific foreigners' resident: Ummah) which was instituted to cater for the increasing number of Muslims. In Fan-Fang, men of virtue called *Qadi* and *Sheikh* were chosen and appointed by the Chinese government to administer the colonies in accordance with Islamic law and customs. Through marriage with Chinese girls, they gradually settled down. According to an Arab writer, Abu Zaid, there were more than 150,000 Muslims along the south-eastern coast of China in the middle of the 9th century. The information, coming from Chinese records, shows that foreign sojourners enjoyed freedom in their commercial and religious life and also something that resembled their own integral state within another country. The Fan-Fang and the laws governing its affairs later embodied the claim known as the 'Right of Extra-Territoriality' of foreigners in modern China.[24] Most of the Arab Muslims in China returned home during the winter season. But not a few Arabs and Persians became assimilated, becoming the earliest group of Chinese Muslims. A combination of fine Chinese culture, excellent life conditions, such as seasonable weather, fertile agriculture, the tolerant nature of the Chinese and profitable trade, attracted Arab Muslims to settle permanently in China. Some became high ranking officials.

23 The Chinese Islamic Association, *Moslems in China*, Peking 1953, np.
24 F. Hirth, p. 14; Ma Qi-ching, p. 100.

It can be safely said that the amalgamation of Chinese and Islamic culture had enabled the Chinese Muslims to emerge as a distinct community, one that was intensively aware of the divine laws and human sentiments of life. China produced a very great number of prominent Muslim personalities who observed Chinese custom and whose loyalty toward China was no less profound than that of other Chinese.

However, Muslims were faced with severe hardships from time to time. The most important event was the "Huang Ch'ao Rebellion" in 879, in which thousands of Muslims were massacred. During this period, many Arab and Persian Muslims moved to the Indo-China peninsula or the Malay ports to escape the massacre. Other Muslims might well have proceeded to the Korean peninsula and Japan, with its well known sea-routes that were conveniently only a few days travel from other ports. After those two major massacres, the Muslims were to experience no similar ill-fortune until the dawn of the Ch'ing dynasty. But in this period, the assimilation of Muslims was accelerated to protect them from disasters. Islam was again revitalized in East Asia with the advent of the Mongol Empire, which had reopened the cultural routes of the Silk Road.

3. East Asian Islam during the Medieval Ages

The emergence of the Mongol Empire in the early 13th century could be regarded as one of the most remarkable events in the history of Islam's spread to East Asia. The Mongol conquests of the whole of Asia resulted in a vast immigration of Muslims, particularly Turks, into China and other East Asian countries. Muslims were suddenly appointed to high ranking positions in the central government of the Mongol Empire and played an influential role in the national economy. For nomadic Mongols, the organization of the civil administration was a matter of great difficulty. In their efforts to acquire assistance to ensure their absolute rule, the Mongol leaders obtained the service of the Muslims. When the Mongols established the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) in Chinese territory, a large number of Muslims were invited to make a contribution in every field of Yuan society.

Abdul Rahman was appointed as head of the Imperial Finance and allowed to farm the taxes imposed upon China in 1224. Mongke Khan appointed the venerable Mahmud Yalavach as the governor of Northwestern China and adjacent territories in Central Asia. Mahmud's son, Mas'ud Bey, was given jurisdiction over Khorezmshah and much of western Central Asia. The excellent economic activities of such well known

Muslim officials as Ahmad, an Uighur Sang-ga, Abubakr P'u Shou-keng were described in detail in the Chinese chronicles. Umar Shams al-Din, commonly known as Sayyid Ajail, a native of Bukhara, was entrusted with the management of the Imperial Finance by Kubilai Khan in 1259. Afterward, he became the governor of Yunnan province, where he built mosques. The Yuan used the Central Asian Muslims as convenient buffers between the Mongol ruling elite and the Chinese subjects.[25] Like the Muslims in China during the T'ang-Sung period, the Muslims in the Mongol Empire often lived in self-contained, virtually self-governing, communities separated from the Chinese sections of towns and cities. They enjoyed privileges as a second group of *Se-mu-jen*, a status that isolated them from the Chinese and other ethnic groups.

The Muslims of the Yuan period extended their activities as far as Korea, which had been under the control of the Yuan since 1270. In those days, many Muslims from Central Asia settled down permanently in Korea, thanks to the fact that the Muslims were treated well and there were profitable economic advantages. The Muslims took up positions, not only as officials of the Korean court, but also as private traders or immigrants in almost every corner of the country. They mainly preferred to conduct commercial business, in which they had generations of experience.

Muslims in Korea formed their own communities, where they celebrated their own festivals, wore their national dress and headgear, and maintained their Islamic way of life. Furthermore, they built mosques called '*Ye-Kung*' (ceremonial hall).[26] The religious leaders, called '*Doro*', were chosen in the Muslim communities to perform acts of worship in accordance with Islamic law and customs. From time to time, the Muslim leaders were given the exceptional honor of being invited to attend official court ceremonies where they could practice their own religious rituals, such as recitations of the Qu'ran and Arabic *'Dua'* to pray for the king's long life and prosperity of the country. The commercial activities of the Muslims and their political upgrading continued until the early 15th century without any sudden decline.[27]

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25 Willian E. Henthorn, *Korea:The Mongol Invasions*, E.J.Brill, Leiden, 1963, p. 25; Morris Rossabi, *Khubilai Khan: His Life and Times*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1988, p. 277-278.

26 Yi Neung-hua, *History of the Chosun Buddhism*, vol. II, 605.

27 *Chosun Wangjo Silrok (CWS:Chosun Dynasty Chronicle)*, King Sejong Document, p. 36.

However, the continuation of Islamic religious activities faced a serious threat, posed by the newly established Chosun Dynasty in Korea in the early 15th century. Thereafter, Muslim settlers in Korea who had secured quite high social and economic position, gradually shed their native attire, custom and rituals, to which they had adhered for about 150 years.

In China, however, scattered Muslim communities were strengthened more and more during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). Owing to the isolation policy of the Chinese government, Muslims in China became cut off from communication with Muslims abroad. In these circumstances, the Muslims tended gradually to become merged into the mass of the native population, through marriage with Chinese women and adoption of Chinese manners. Many mosques were built in the pagoda shape of Chinese temples, eliminating the minarets. The Muslims became outwardly indistinguishable from the Chinese. This trend continued until the Ch'ing dynasty. Admiral Cheng Ho was the most remarkable Muslim in the Ming period, a man who made eight great voyages to the Indian Ocean and East Africa between 1405-1431. During this dynasty, friendly relations with Muslim states in Central Asia were also cultivated.

3.1. Influence of Islamic Culture

Under the banner of Pax-Mongolica, a strong cultural exchange between East and West Asia was accelerated. Without exception, the East Asian countries of the Middle Ages benefitted from some aspects of Islamic culture. In spite of the intense assimilation policy of the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1644), high cultural and scientific achievements by Muslims in astronomy, calendar science, medicine, musical and scientific instruments were introduced and utilized over a wide range in East Asian societies.

According to the official chronicles of China and Korea, the lunar calendar system, which was widely used throughout East Asia, was completed based on the theory of Islamic astronomy and calendar method. The Chinese and Korean lunar calendar employed genuine lunar years, like that of the Islamic calendar. Also a system of calculation that can be adjusted to the sun travelling through the 12 zodiacal constellations was developed, again based on Islamic astronomical sciences.[28]

28 K. Tazaka, "An Aspect of Islamic Culture Introduced into China", *MTB*, 16, Tokyo 1957, pp. 77-149.

Besides the development of calendar science, the East Asian society of the middle ages was characterized by important advances in science and technology in the fields of astronomy and meteorology. Many astronomical and meteorological instruments were devised. The advanced Islamic science might have contributed to new invention of various scientific instruments in China and Korea, such as the celestial globe, the water clock, the sundial, the astronomic clock and the rainfall gauge. In addition, some aspects of Muslim art, medicine and literature were introduced into East Asia too. Muslim medical influences contributed to the development of Chinese and Korean medicine in this period. Some of the medical herbs of the Islamic world were imported into East Asia and some medicinal formulae developed by Muslims were introduced. At the same time, metal movable type printing was probably introduced into the Islamic world through Muslims in Korea or China.[29]

4. The Situation of Islam in East Asia before the European Hegemony of the late 19th Century

We have very few records regarding the activities of Muslims in Japan and Korea from the 16th century to the late 19th century. In China, however, the Muslim population steadily increased under positive circumstances. Up to the establishment of the Ch'ing Dynasty by the Manchus in 1644, there is no record of any Muslim uprising. The followers of Islam appear to have been entirely content with the religious liberty they enjoyed. But difficulties arose soon after the advent of the new ruling power. Insurrection in the province of Kansu in 1648 was the first occasion on which any Muslim rose in arms against government. Nevertheless, it was not until the 19th century that any such revolt entailed disastrous consequences or seriously interrupted the amicable relations between Muslims and the Chinese-Manchu governments. With the decline of the Manchu regime, Muslim revolts occurred in almost every Muslim area. The Muslim revolts were mainly initiated in provinces where the Muslims constituted a large segment of the population. The prime reason was that Muslims were loyal to the Ming dynasty and they refused to be ruled by the Manchus. The Muslim's motto was "Crush the Manchus and restore the Ming". The second reason was an aspiration for independence and the creation of a Muslim state in Turkistan, where the absolute majority of the inhabitants were Muslims. These rebellions were cruelly quelled. Over a period of 200 years of the Ch'ing regime, about 12 million Muslims

29 Hee-Soo Lee, p. 125-128.

were massacred. But, the Muslims never gave up either their separate identity as Muslims or the desire for their own state.

The situation of Muslims in China changed drastically during the second half of the 19th century. With the advent of European informal and formal colonialism, both in China and throughout the entire Muslim world, there emerged an emotional, intellectual and political link between Chinese Muslims and Muslims in the Ottoman lands.

Under these circumstances, to prevail over the growing threat of the European 'super bloc', the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II adopted an important policy to mobilize the Islamic potentiality of his empire. In the framework of this policy, the Sultan was supported by the philosophy of Pan-Islamism. Pan-Islamism was a movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries which attempted to revive the unifying strength of Islam to resist western encroachments. Under the Pan-Islamic policy, the sultan personally selected *Qadis*, teachers and other members of the *Ulema*, and sent them as agents to North Africa, the Balkans, India, Turkistan, Java, China and to Japan and Korea. Islamic activities in the East Asian region, therefore, became vigorous with the coming of these religious missions. In this era of rising Chinese nationalism and the development of an Pan-Islamic network, the Chinese Muslims developed ties with both movements. Yet, these modern developments should be a topic of a separate study, as they involve a new set of political and cultural conditions, under which even the spread of Islam to East Asia was shaped by relations with Western powers and Western civilization.

Conclusion and Future Prospects

Over 1400 years of Islamic history, the culture of tolerance is the hallmark of Islam, particularly in East Asia. This peaceful and gradual Islamization gave valuable opportunity to the East Asians who were cosmopolitan, open-minded, tolerant and amenable to cultural diversity. Many aspects of the East Asian Confucian tradition value system were seen by East Asian Muslims as being in agreement with Islamic principles. Historically, there has been friendly relations between East Asia and the Islamic world from the first Hejira century. Moreover, Islam played a central mediating role by introducing East Asians to the highest scientific and academic Muslim achievements. At the same time, East Asian technology and philosophy penetrated into the Muslim world through the Silk Roads. Thus, Islamic-East Asian interactions were mostly peaceful. For centuries, both worlds interacted with each other in a positive framework.

Özet

Doğu Asya'ya İslamiyet'in yayılması, İslam'dan önceki Çin-Arabistan ticaret münasebetlerinin bir devamı olarak VII. asrın (Hicri I.) ortalarından günümüze kadar -kısa bir devir hariç- durmaksızın devam etmiştir. VIII-IX. asırlarda Çin'de bulunan Müslümanların sayısı 100 bin'i geçmiştir. Çeşitli ticaret limanlarında kurulan 'Fan Fang' denilen Müslüman kolonilerinde kadılar ve şeyhler bulunup meselelerini İslam hukuku ve geleneklerine göre hallederlerdi. Ayrıca Çin'in Canton, Zeytun ve Han-chou şehirlerinde büyük camiler kurulmuştur. İslam kaynaklarına göre IX. asrın ortalarından itibaren Müslümanlar Kore yarımadası ile doğrudan temaslarda bulunmuşlardı. XIII. asırdan itibaren Moğol İmparatorluğu'na büyük katkıda bulunan Müslüman tüccarlar, alimler ve bilim adamları sayesinde İslam bilim ve sanatı Doğu Asya'da büyük bir tesir bırakmıştır. İslam esaslarından faydalanan Kore Hanedanı da Ortaçağ'ın en yüksek kültürel seviyesine ulaşmıştı. Uzun bir duraklama devrinden sonra XIX. asrın sonlarına doğru Sultan II. Abdülhamid'in Doğu Asya'da uygulandığı Pan-İslamik faaliyetler çerçevesinde bu bölgede İslam unsurları yeniden canlandırılmaya başlanmıştı. Osmanlı-Japon münasebetlerinde olumlu gelişmelerin yanısıra Kazan'lı alim Abdürreşid İbrahim Efendi'nin olağanüstü faaliyetleri neticesinde Japonya ve Kore'de İslamiyet yeniden tanınmıştı. 1920'li yıllarda ise sayıları 600 civarında olan Rusya Türkünün Mançurya, Kore ve Japonya'ya gelip yerleşmeleriyle bugüne kadar İslamiyet'in bu bölgede sağlam bir yer tutmasına sebep olmuştur. Kore'deki İslam topluluğu ise Kore Harbine (1950-1953) katılıp kahramanca savaşmanın yanısıra zor şartlar altında dahi Kore halkına insanca ve sevgi dolu örnek davranışları ve iman dolu yaşayışlarını göstermiş olan Türk askerleri sayesinde ortaya çıkmıştır.