

Buyantaw R. Zogin

THIS BOOKLET IS WRITTEN IN MEMORY OF THOSE BROTHERS WHO SPREAD ISLAM IN CHINA (SOME OF WHOM WERE LATER KILLED FOR THEIR FAITH) AND FOR THOSE WHO KEEP THE RIGHT RELIGION OF ISLAM ALIVE IN CHINA AND ABROAD.

I THANK MY SONS MUSTAPHA C. MA AND NASR L. MA AND HIS WIFE ROSEY JALAL. WANG WHO HELPED ME TO FINISH THIS WORK.

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MUSLIMS IN CHINA

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PREFACE

READING the manuscript of "The Muslims In China" by Tuan Haji Ibrahim T.Y. Ma, J.S.M., a well known Chinese Muslim leader in the Far East, I came across many astounding facts hitherto unknown to many students of Islamic history.

The history of Muslims in China is fascinating to learn. Islam spread in China at least five hundred years before the advent of Islam in India and the South Seas.

In the words of Prof. Koo Chi Kang.... "the faith of the Muslims is so strong that it leads others to think that the Muslims themselves are Islam itself". The impression, though said in jest, seems to be the exact definition of the character of the Muslims in China.

If Islam can enjoy such a long history in China, it is due to the high standard of toleration of the Chinese civilisation and it is also due to the firmness of faith of the Muslims.

It is very interesting to read the history of Admiral Muhammad Cheng Ho who visited Malacca during the time of King Parameswara and his friendly gesture to the King; King Parameswara's visit to China and after his return embracing Islam and taking the name of Iskandar Shah. All these go to show how Islam spread in China, Malaya and South East Asia.

The Chinese Muslims preferred death to giving up their faith or losing dignity. One example is the wife of a Muslim called Younger Khoja. She was extremely beautiful and was offered to become a mistress of an Emperor. Her name was Epar, nicknamed Hsiang Fei. She defied until the end, preferred to die rather than submit and face humiliation. The effect and her moral on death were tremendous.

The Chinese and the Arabs were so friendly that the Chinese even called the Arabs to help them to quell a rebellion. In this process, most of the Arabs who came to help the Chinese in China settled there permanently. This was another reason to account for the Muslim population in China.

The Chinese Muslims were proficient in technical fields, e.g. they made cannons. Two of the best cannon makers were Allahuddin of Mufari and Ismail of Syria. They were probably the earliest to use gun powder to fire stone cannon balls.

The Muslims were known as Da'shwa or Da'shman (which means the learned men). Islam was known as "Hui Hui" religion derived from the word 'Uighurs' — which was mispronounced as 'Hut Heh' and then became "Hui Hui".

The Chinese Muslims excelled in judiciary, administration, astronomy, medicine and other fields of scientific research and held very high offices.

The author Tuan Haji Ibrahim T.Y. Ma, J.S.M., deserves praise for his research into Chinese history in relation to Islam in the country, e.g. :—

- (a) Muslim names like Ma (Mahmud etc), Kha (Khalid or Hassan), Lah (Abdullah), Dan (Dawood), Saa

(Saad), Aih (Isa), Man (Mansoor), Nah (Naseruddin), Hu (Hussain), Hai (Haider) etc.

- (b) Establishing whether Chu Yuas Chang was a Muslim by studying his life history and that of his family.

This book, I am confident, would be a very useful addition to the history of Islam and an exemplary of the spread of Islam in a peaceful manner without the clash of cold steel as alleged by some other religionists. Islam spread in China through Arab and Turk traders who carried their missionary work through honesty, sincerity, kindness and freely mixing with people sharing their joy and sorrow.

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