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**Beyond Translation:  
Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon"  
and Islamic Literature in Early Qing China**

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*Lee Cheuk Yin*

**Abstract**

In the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, a group of Islamic scholars who were proficient in Chinese and had a deep understanding of Confucianism appeared, who wrote in Chinese, translated or extended the original text of the Qur'an in Chinese, and promoted Islamic teachings. Their writings had a profound impact on the spread of Islamic teachings and the convergence of Confucianism. Japanese scholar Rokuro Kuwata called these authors "Muslim Confucians", and the late Ming Dynasty was "the Renaissance period in the history of Chinese Islam". At the same time, the translation of Islamic scriptures into Chinese in Nanjing in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties marked a new stage in the history of Islamic development in China. At the same time, the development of Islamic religious literature was also promoted. This article expounds on Islamic literary works and takes Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon" as an example to help understand the characteristics of Islamic religious literature in early Qing dynasty.

**Keywords:** Late Ming and early Qing dynasties; Islam; Liu Zhi; religious literature; Five Watches of the Moon.

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## **Introduction**

### *Chinese translation and writing of Islam at the end of the Ming Dynasty*

The Muslim people of the Ming and Qing dynasties played a greater role and influence in society and culture, and integrated into the Han society, which was closely related to the ethnic policy of the early Ming government. While expelling foreign regimes and rebuilding Chinese traditions, the first emperor Zhu Yuanzhang also faced the problem of how to prevent the resurgence of the Mongols and Semu 色目 people and the appeasement of minority ethnic groups. From the perspective of political interests, Emperor Taizu often emphasized that non-Han people would be treated equally. Emperor Taizu also adopted a strict policy of racial assimilation and carried out etiquette reforms, from clothing and clothing, communication etiquette to wedding and funeral customs, all of which were cleaned up, striving to "transform the new world" to "correct the unification of the world"<sup>1</sup>, hoping to dilute the influence of foreign traditions in China over time.

Because the assimilation policy adopted politically to complete the unified regime directly led to the integration of ethnic groups. The second or third generation of Muslim people who settled in China, or the next generation born after intermarriage with Han Chinese, also played an important role in the integration of traditional Chinese culture and Muslim culture. Because of the reform of etiquette and customs in the early Ming Dynasty, many Muslim people

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<sup>1</sup> For Emperor Taizu's reform of rituals and customs, please refer to Zhang Jia 张佳, 《新天下之化: 明代礼俗改革研究》 (The Transformation of the New World: A Study on the Reform of Rituals and Customs in the Early Ming Dynasty) , (Shanghai: Fudan University Press, 2014).

have adopted Han names and speak fluent Chinese, which is no different from the Han people in appearance.

Donald Leslie pointed out that some Muslim people at that time were able to write beautiful poems and embody the style of scholars. He said:

Their works are special and can be mixed with the vast Chinese literature. They cannot be Muslim, and I have almost or no chance of finding traces of Muslim origin in these writers and works. However, these works clearly show the sinicization and assimilation of Muslims in Confucian China.<sup>2</sup>

The Muslim people of the Ming Dynasty were not much different from the Han people in terms of words and deeds, and their own Chinese cultivation made them the most ideal candidates for the integration of Confucianism and Islamic thought. In the history of Islam in China, "native-born" Muslims began to appear in the Ming Dynasty.

The background that promoted the emergence of Islamic Chinese writings during the Ming and Qing dynasties was the scripture education that appeared in the late Ming Dynasty. After the implementation of the maritime prohibition in the middle of the Ming Dynasty, fewer Muslims came to China, and mosques in various places generally lacked successors to Imams with religious knowledge. Secondly, because in the past, the spread of Islam relied only on "oral teaching", did not study the scriptures, and did not carry out foreign missions, which often led to the dilemma of knowing the language but not teachings.

Because Chinese had become the common language of the Muslim people at that time, and the Islamic classics were still in Arabic and Persian, the Muslim could not understand the scriptures, resulting in "the teachings being obscured for a long time and the people's hearts being abandoned", causing a crisis of the faith.<sup>3</sup> In such a social context, the establishment of formal religious education and the cultivation of religious talents suitable for the needs of national society became an urgent need for the development of Islam at that time, and scripture education came into being at the end of the Ming Dynasty.

From preaching in Chinese to creating and translating Islamic scriptures in Chinese, it can be said to be a logical process. At the end of the Ming Dynasty, a group of Muslim scholars appeared in Nanjing and began to try to translate Islamic classics into Chinese, which later generations called the "Jinling School" 金陵学派. The Jinling School is a regional academic

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<sup>2</sup> Donald Leslie, *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800*, Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1986, p. 115.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to Yu Zhengui 余振贵, 《中国历代政权与伊斯兰教》 (Chinese Regimes and Islam) , (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1996), p. 139.

faction centered on Nanjing, but we can also say that the Jinling School is different from other schools in that it translates Islamic classics into Chinese. Therefore, some scholars call it the "Sinology School" 汉学派<sup>4</sup>.

The publication of Chinese writings describing Islamic doctrine and Islamic classics began in the late Ming Dynasty and reached its peak in the Qing Dynasty. Some scholars call this period the Renaissance era in the history of Islam in China.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, descriptions of Islam began to appear in the writings of intellectuals and Confucian scholars of the time. Although these records are superficial, they are enough to show that the religion has received the attention of Chinese intellectuals.

At the end of the Ming Dynasty, Nanjing Muslim scholars interpreted the classics in Chinese, which had the needs of their times and environment. Islam represents foreign beliefs and cultures, and with its spread and development in China, it is inevitable to encounter the problem of how to coexist with traditional Chinese Confucianism. Some Muslims have studied Confucian works such as the Four Books and Five Classics since childhood, they may not have good understanding of the meaning of the Qur'an, and some gradually become estranged from Islam to seek official positions.

Therefore, some Muslim scriptures oppose the study of Chinese, believing that learning Chinese is "exaggerated" and will lead Muslims to abandon their beliefs. Under such circumstances, some Muslim people use Chinese in their daily lives, but do not understand Arabic in religious activities, and even some religious personnel only know how to read the religious text and do not understand its meaning. To continue to survive and develop in China, to maintain the foundational beliefs and teachings of Islam, and to adapt to traditional Chinese Confucian culture, a group of people of insight within Islam in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties launched the "Interpreting the Classics with Confucianism" movement to interpret Islamic classics in Confucian discourse.

This movement, which organically combined Confucian discourse with the basic teachings of Islam, not only played an important role in consolidating the spread and development of Islam in China but also expanded the academic research of Islam from

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<sup>4</sup> Jin Yijiu 金宜久, 《王岱舆思想研究》 (Research on Wang Daiyu's Thought) , Chapter 2, has a section on "The Rise and Development of the Chinese School of Islam and Sinology" (Beijing: Minzu Publishing House, 2008), pp. 51-61.

<sup>5</sup> See Kuwata Rokuro (translated by An Mu Tao), "Confucianism in the Late Ming and Early Qing Dynasties", in Li Xinghua and Feng Jinyuan, eds., *Selected Reference Materials on the History of Islam in China* (1911-1949) (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 584-588.

Monastery Classics Institute, and was valued by non-religious people, and Islamic religious literature with literary level also came into being.<sup>6</sup>

However, writings that have lasting impact on Chinese Muslims mutual understanding are not the fragmentary remarks on Islam by the Chinese but voluminous works by Chinese Muslims on their religious beliefs.

As far as we know, the earliest translated works still extant in Chinese on Islamic religion is the *Zhenjiao Zhenquan* 正教真詮 (True Interpretations of the Orthodox Religion) by Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (c.1592-1685), published in 1642. Soon afterwards is a series of translations by Chinese Muslims or Muslim Confucians who were well versed in both Islamic teachings and Confucianism. Among them, the following are some of the representatives scholars and their translations:

Wang Daiyu 王岱輿	Zhengjiao Zhenquan 正教真詮	20	1642
	Qingzhen Daxue 清真大学	1	?
	Xizhen Zhengda 希真正答	1	1658
Zhang Shizhong 张时中	Guizhen Zongyi 归真总义	1	1661
	Sipian Yaodao 四篇要道	4	1653
Ma Minglong 马明龙	Renji Xingwu 认己醒悟	1	1661
Ma Boliang 马伯良	Jiaokuan Jieyao 教款捷要	1	1678
Ma Junshi 马君实	Weizhen Yaolue 卫真要略	1	1661
Wu Zixian 伍子先	Xiuzhen Mengyin 修真蒙引	1	1672
	Guizhen Yaodao 归真要道	4	1678
Sun Ke'an 孙可庵	Qingzhen Jiaokao 清真教考	4	1720
Ma Zhu 马注	Qingzhen Zhinan 清真指南	10	1683
Liu Zhi 刘智	Tianfang Xingli 天方性理	5	1704
	Tianfang Dianli Zeyaojie 天方典礼择要解	20	1708
	Tianfang Zhizheng Shilu 天方至圣实录	20	1721
	Wugong Shiyi 五功释义	1	1710
	Tianfang Zimu Jieyi 天方字母解义	1	1710
	Tianfang Sabzijing 天方三字经	1	?
	Jin Tianzhu 金天柱	Qingzhen Shiyi 清真释疑	1

<sup>6</sup> For reference, see Zvi Ben Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Chinese Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

In Donald Leslie's Islamic works in Chinese, a detailed bibliographical study of the Chinese writings by Muslim scholars in late Ming and early Qing, he enlisted altogether 59 works published during the period. Most of them went through several editions and printings.<sup>7</sup> He singled out Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi and Ma Fuchu, whose works are continually referred to by later writers, and maintained that "these key scholars and their works symbolize renaissance periods for Chinese Islam."<sup>8</sup> Donald Leslie's calculation may be conservative and incomplete, and based on the works he has seen. The actual number of translations should be more than that.

During the Ming and Qing dynasties, the Islamic Jinling School was represented by Wang Daiyu, Zhang Zhong, Ma Zhu, Liu Zhi and others. Among them, Wang Daiyu is the most famous. Wang Daiyu was the first Islamic scholar to publish Islamic writings in Chinese. His masterpiece *True Interpretation of the Orthodox Religion* is divided into two volumes, a total of forty chapters. The first volume of the ten chapters talks about the study of returning to the truth and understanding the mind, and the second volume of the twenty chapters talks about the method of self-cultivation and practicing the way. This book is mainly a record of Wang Daiyu's conversations with his disciples and was engraved and published in about the fifteenth year of Chongzhen 崇禎 (1642). Wang Daiyu's *True Interpretation of the Orthodox Religion* and 清真大学 (Islam Great Learning) are the earliest Chinese Islamic works in Chinese history. They are resembling of the *Analects* 论语 and the *Great Learning* 大学 in Confucian classics. To compare Islam and Confucianism, Wang Daiyu's books are a good starting point: *True Interpretation of the Orthodox Religion* is model on the style and content, also in 20 chapters, of the *Analects* by Confucius. *Islam Great Learning* is model on the style of the *Great Learning*, one of the Confucian four books.

We may ask: Are these two works considered "religious literature"? This is a more complex issue. The *Analects* and *Great Learning* are regarded as classics in traditional Confucian classification and are generally not regarded as literary creations. However, there are also literary historians who regard works such as *Analects* and the *Collected Work of Zhuangzi* as "philosophical prose". In this way, the text of *True Interpretation of the Orthodox Religion* is smooth and incisive, and it can also be regarded as a literary work.

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<sup>7</sup> See Daniel Leslie. *Islam in Traditional China: A Short History to 1800*, Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, Chapter 6, p.40.

<sup>8</sup> *Islam in Traditional China*, p.115.

However, in the Islamic writings of the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, the Islamic doctrine played in a clear literary genre, which was clearly expressed in Liu Zhi's works.

### **Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon" 五更月 and Islamic literature in Chinese**

Liu Zhi (c. 1655-1745), courtesy name Jielian 介廉, or Yizhai 一斋, self-proclaimed "Tianfang Scholar" (Arab Scholar) 天方学人, a native of Shangyuan (Nanjing) in the Qing Dynasty, was a famous scholar of the Hui ethnic group in the early Qing Dynasty. Liu Zhi was born into a family of Islamic scholars and studied Islamic scriptures under Hu Dengzhou's fifth disciples Yuan Ruqi 袁汝琦 and others since childhood. In his youth, he read Confucian classics and history, official documents, Taoist and Buddhist texts, and deeply understood the subtleties of Confucianism.

To inherit his father's wishes, he carried forward Islamic scholarship and began to study Islamic classics and related works. In addition, he was fluent in Arabic, Persian and Latin. According to Ma Zaiyuan's 马在渊 *Chronicle of Mr. Liu Jielian* 刘介廉先生编年考, Liu lived to be 96 years old, read a hundred schools of thought and Western classics, worked hard and devoted himself to writing books and theories for more than 40 years, and scholars praised him as the comprehensive scholar of Islamic thought.<sup>9</sup>

Liu Zhi wrote hundreds of books in his life, and after his father passed away, he was determined to explain Islam in Chinese, settled in the foothills of Qingliang Mountain in Jinling, and lived in the mountains for more than ten years. He translated the *Tianfang Xingli* 天方性理 (The Principles of Arab Countries) and *Tianfang Dianli* 天方典礼 (The Laws and Rituals of Arab Countries) during the period.

After that, he visited mosques all over the country and accidentally obtained the Persian book *Arab Most Holy Record* in Zhuxian County, Henan. Later, it was translated into *Tianfang Zhisheng Shilu* 天方至圣录. Besides, his works during the period include the *Wugong Shiyi* 五

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<sup>9</sup> Liu Zhi's life can be referred to Bai Shouyi, 白寿彝: 《回族人物志: 清代》 (Hui Characters: Qing Dynasty) (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Publishing House, 1992), pp. 54-65. For a discussion of his life and thoughts, please refer to Sha Zongping 沙宗平: 《中国的天方学: 刘智哲学研究》 (China's Arab Studies: A Study of Liu Zhi's Philosophy) , (Beijing: Peking University Press, 2004); *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms*, by Sachiko Murata, William C. Chittick, and Tu Weiming, with a foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Cambridge, MA: Published by the Harvard University Asia Center for the Harvard-Yenching Institute; distributed by Harvard University Press, 2009).

功释义, *Zhenjing Zhaowei* 真境昭微, *Tianfang Sanzi Jing* 天方三字经, *Tianfang Zimu Jieyi* 天方字母解义 and so on.

The *Tianfang Dianli* was included in the *Complete Book of the Four Libraries* compiled during the Qianlong 乾隆 period (1736-1796) . Liu Zhi explained the style of his Chinese translation of the scriptures:

These books are all in the language of heaven, translated into Chinese into text, some of which can be translated, and some are not translatable. Narrating events and explaining reasoning is something that can be translated. Names of people and places are untranslatable. For example, the name of the saints, the names of mountains and cities are not translatable. Occasionally, there are texts that cannot fulfil the meaning of the translation, so they exist and use them interchangeably, such as Muslim, which is a beautiful name for the people of Tianfang, or translated as gentlemen 君子, or translated as believers 信士, or translated as followers 顺者, all of which do not depart from the meaning of Muslim.<sup>10</sup>

Liu Zhi also understands the difficulty of translating foreign civilizations and beliefs in Chinese, and in the process of translation, it is difficult to avoid the cultural differences between "Wen" 文 and "Yi" 义, which cannot fully express the meaning of the text, such as translating "Muslim" as "gentleman" and "believer", which can only help understand the moral and religious components contained in the original text, and cannot reflect the meaning of Muslims as a specific identity.

Liu Zhi also discussed the difference between "language" 语 and "text" 文, lectures and translations in the Preface, continuing Wang Daiyu's attention to written expression, and criticizing the slang atmosphere at that time:

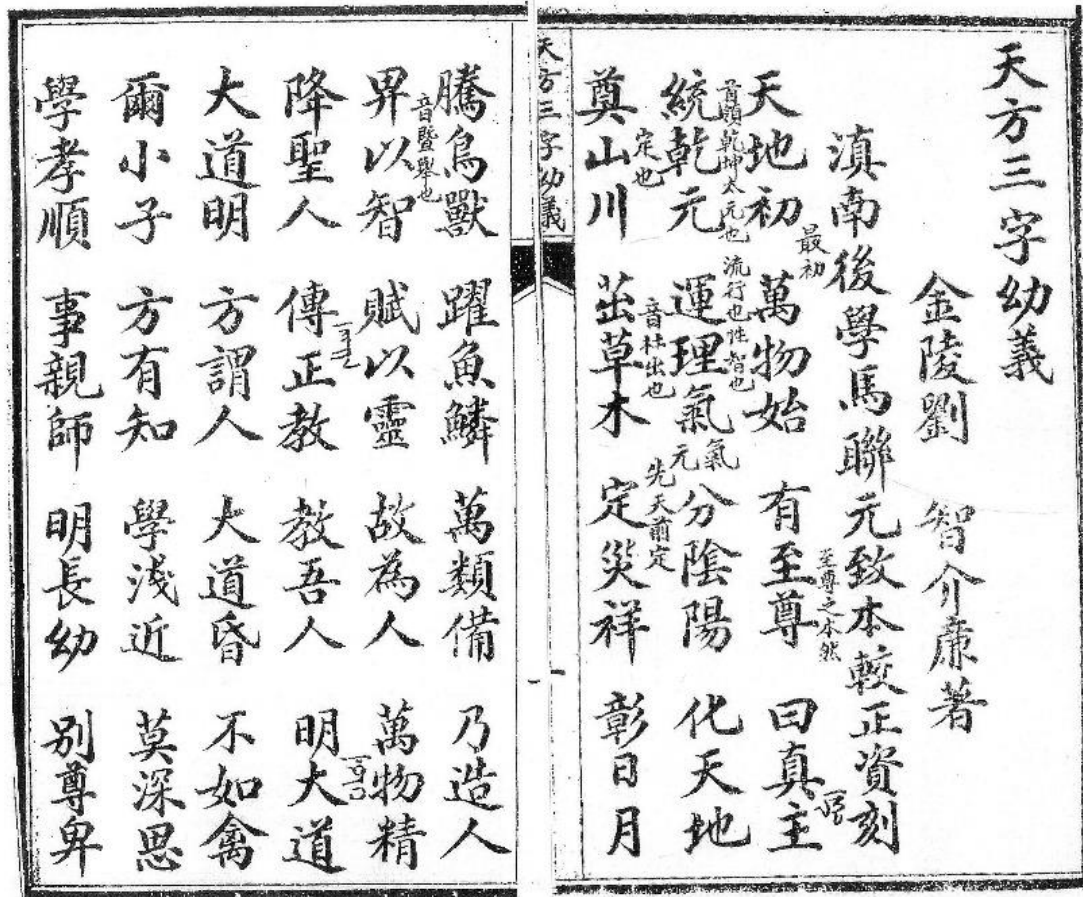
The scriptures and Chinese texts are originally consistent, but scholars talk about scriptures and slang and is inevitably fragmented and deviates from the purpose of the scriptures. I am not afraid of trouble, and every time I explain words, I must copy and scrutinize them to make the two meanings fit perfectly before writing. Readers should not think that foolishness is contrary to the classics and conventions; \ \ \ the tone of the book is inconsistent with the tone of the scriptures, it cannot be controversial. However, there is no need to comment. This book is not written for those who do not know the text. Probably those who do not know how to write should be taught by the scriptures, and there is no need for this book. And those who need to write this book are more familiar with the three religions than those who do not understand the etiquette of our teachings. Reading the text and understanding its meaning is beneficial. Know that I am guilty, listen to this world.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Liu Zhi, 《天方典礼摘要解》 (Tianfang Ceremony Selection) , Qing Qianlong 5th year (1740) Jingjiang Tong's reprint. In *The Complete Book of the Hui Collection*, Volume 20, pp. 50-51.

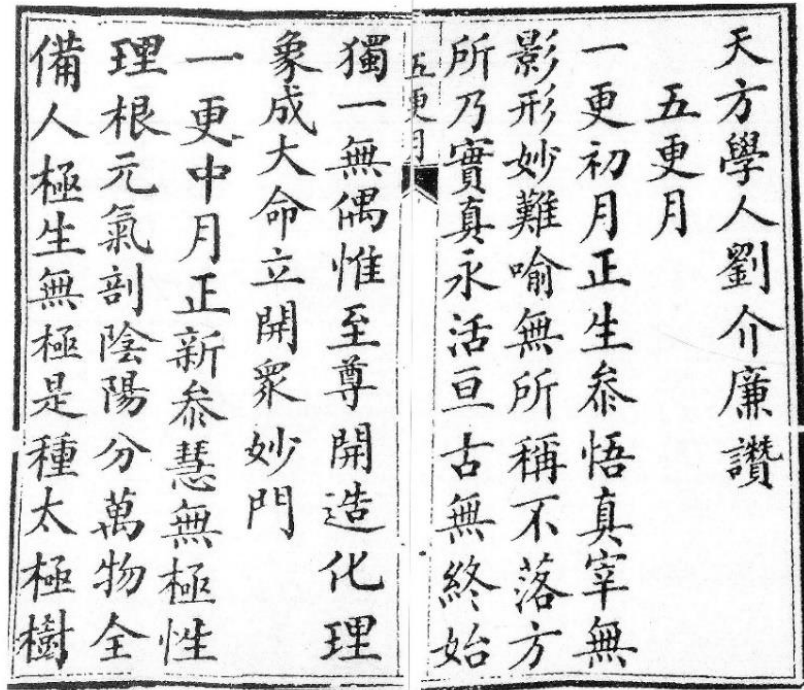
<sup>11</sup> Liu Zhi, 《天方典礼摘要解》 (Heavenly Ceremony Selection) , pp. 52-53.

Liu Zhi's so-called "anti-vulgarity" means that he does not use the "tone of the scriptures". The so-called "every instruction must be copied and scrutinized" is to seek the correctness and elegance of the translation, and strive to match the original meaning and the translation.



Qing woodcut edition *Tianfang Three Character Classic*

Looking at the Chinese works of scholars in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties, Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon" may be the most prominent religious literary work of that time. Although some records say that Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 (1522-1597), the founder of Chinese Jingtang Education, was proficient in poetry creation and composed many persuasion songs, which were widely circulated, they have not been seen so far. Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon" can be said to inherit this genre of persuasion songs, and it is a song of persuasion and sobering up the world with brilliant literary talent and quite meaning. Because of its streamlined and harmonious characteristics, easy to memorize, and easy to preach, it is said that it was soon promoted among the Hui community, and it was almost a household name and known to everyone.



Qing woodcut edition *Five Watches of the Moon*

"Five Watches of the Moon" is different from Liu Zhi's other Chinese translations in terms of genre structure, it is not a translation, it is a complete literary creation, and the text is concise and profound. The full text consists of five parts, each part includes three paragraphs, which respectively explain the three stages of the beginning, middle and end of the moon in five changes, with a total of 636 words.

Because it is easy to memorize, it is arranged in an orderly manner, composed of neat short sentences, without the rigorous rhyme and syntax of poetry, but it can be catchy, so it is also called "Five Watches of the Moon Song".

Five watches in one night mark the passage of time. Liu Zhi gave full play to his imaginative talent and divided each watch into "beginning, middle, and end", as the beginning of a poem, each poem focused on a truth, and the organization was clear. The second sentence of the fifteen poems representing the five watches depicts the movement position of the moon from rising to setting, such as the moon: rising, new, high, bright, round, brilliant, clear, bright, end, partial, west, waxing, lacking, remnant, falling and other light forms, and at the same time showing the fifteen forms of the moon phase during the fifth watch. For example, the three sentences of the first watch say:

At the beginning of the first watch, the moon was rising, and the true sovereign had no shadow. No product, no matter how much it grows, and what does not fall into the square. Eternal life is the original and endless, and the unique and unmatched is the supreme. All exist, great use, and movement and stillness open the door.

In the middle of the first watch, the moon is new, and it will be in the infinite nature. The vital energy is divided, yin and yang are divided, and all things are complete, and humanity is extremely generated. Wuji is a Taiji tree, and the fruit inside the tree is planted. It is very clear, you must be serious, don't be a root planter.

At the end of the first watch, the moon is high, and our religion is determined to believe in different religions. Cultivate the hereafter, hope for forgiveness, obey the mandate of heaven and the holy rules, enjoy the infinite blessings of heaven, and punish hell and be imprisoned. Advise comrades to scrutinize carefully and not cry after death.<sup>12</sup>

一更初，月正升，参悟真宰无影形。不产物，物不生，不落方所不落空。永活原有无始终，独一无二为至尊。全体存，大运用，动静一显开妙门。

一更中，月正新，方会无极性理中。元气剖，阴阳分，万物成备人极生。无极是种太极树，树藏果内果即种。甚分明，须认真，莫把种作种根人。

一更末，月正高，吾教定信异诸教。修后世，望恕饶，遵行天命与圣条，顺享天堂无限福，逆罚地狱受刑牢。劝同志，细推敲，休教死后哭嚎啕。

The center of the first song "First Watch" is "Understanding the True Ruler", firmly believing in my teachings, and abiding by the Mandate of Heaven and the Holy Doctrine. The author was inspired by the silence of the silver river and the turnover of the jade plate, and realized that Allah, who dominates the ups and downs of the universe, has no shadow and no end, "eternal life has no beginning and end, and is unique and supreme".

"Five Watches of the Moon" uses the rhapsody (fu) and comparison techniques of traditional poetry, and explores and praises a series of Islamic philosophies such as Allah, creation, religion, life, future, asceticism, truth-seeking, clarity, seeking the way, the spirit, cultivating the nature, the end, returning to the truth, the afterlife, and the restoration of the name. Ding Qian and Ma Deliang's analysis pointed out that what "The Five Watches of the Moon" talks about is a series of ethical principles of Islam such as recognizing the uniqueness of the Lord, cultivating oneself and virtue, returning to the truth, and the unity of heaven and man.

Although Liu Zhi has repeatedly elaborated on these issues in his "Nature and Reason" and "Ceremony", some of the narratives are relatively lengthy, while "Five Watches of the

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<sup>12</sup> Liu Zhi: 《五更月》 (The Five Watches of the Moon) , in 《回族典藏全书》 *The Complete Book of the Hui Collection*, Volume 26, pp. 217-239.

Moon" is sung in beautiful and soft poetry according to a wider range of needs, in a short and limited space, after full extraction and extraction.<sup>13</sup>

We can say that "The Five Watches of the Moon" is a popular simplification of the content of the books *Nature and Principles* and *Ceremony* and summarizes and concentrates it. Therefore, "The Five Watches of the Moon" is not Liu Zhi's whim, but the essence and literary expression of the Chinese translation of Islamic classics. We can look at the discussion of the second watch and the fifth watch in "The Five Watches" to better understand the subtlety of Liu Zhi's exposition of Islamic religious doctrines:

At the beginning of the second watch, the moon is bright, and life is not secure. Love glory, work all day long, and go deep into the sea of suffering. A hundred years and thirty-six thousand days, a life of seventy is rare since ancient times. Turn back early, don't be carefree, hurry up and get impermanent.

In the middle of the night, the moon is full, and the breath of the air is not idle. Eat less, sleep well, and often keep the mantra in mind. Do not leave the azure dragon sword, severing love and all bonds. From then on, before the walk, Dan landed on the shore to see the mechanism.

At the end of the second watch, the moon is shining, and the people's hearts are only in danger. The monkeys and horses are inferior, the dragons and tigers are mighty, and the passes are layered and the mountains are particularly majestic. Although it is difficult to fight with the green front, how can it be generous to break out of the siege. Visit the master, ask for a guard, and get the real opportunity through the entrance.

At the beginning of the third watch, the moon is clear, and the road is not separated from its own guidance. The universe is big, and things are infinite, all in the small body. The Tao encompasses heaven and earth, and people encompasses the Tao and implements all things without leaving dust. The essence of knowledge, good work, recognize the master when it is clear.

In the middle of the night, the moon is bright, and the pearl is hidden under the sea. Busy running to the shore, sailing alone, turning into the dragon's den and the waves. After suffering infinitely, the treasures are priceless. Protect carefully, don't be debauched, and be rich and restore your hometown.

At the end of the third watch, the moon is at the end, and the bamboo shoots are playing in the imperial garden. Ascending the ninth stomach, knocking on the jade ring, the fairy child persuaded the cage with the cup. Collect several elixirs and make them into the world's wonderful golden elixir. When he encountered a sick man, he gave a pill to get rid of fatigue and landed on the shore of longevity.

At the beginning of the fourth watch, the moon was biased, and Chang'e was dressing up in front of the jade building. The body is like a crispy dough, a flour ball, and a sword. It is destined to pour out the soul and tell the mortal world to marry. Yin and Yang intercourse, men and women are happy and love each other for infinite years.

In the fourth watch, the moon is due west, how can the turbid rest return to the true one. Shanghai sister-in-law, jealousy in the fire, refining all lead to save essence. The repair is

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<sup>13</sup> Refer to Ding Qian 丁谦 and Ma Deliang 马德良, 《五更月浅识》 (The Five Watches of the Moon) , in 《中国穆斯林》 *Chinese Muslims*, No. 5, 1991, pp. 33-35.

completed and the treasure is stored in gold, and it is not stained with dust or mud. The master calls, don't dare to be late, and all return to the truth.

At the end of the fourth watch, the moon is full, and self-denial and repetition are righteousness. Practicing the three vehicles, passing through the five elements, and fulfilling the four treasures is a real person. The Kunlun Treasure Mirror originally belonged to me, and the first reason was me. Support the charity of the voyage, help the charming, and lose the sincerity of the hidden heart.

At dawn, the moon was waning, and I hid a pot of true sun and moon in my chest. The sky has rolled, the earth has cracked, and the eyes of wisdom are open without obstruction. My own obstacles have been erased, and the true appearance is revealed, and the wonderful second generation is thorough. Although there is a mouth, there is no tongue, how can you tell the secret to mortals.

In the middle of the fifth watch, the moon is waning, and the clear heart manifests the fulfilment of the path. The rise and fall are combined, and the cycle is completed, and the true meaning of the name is revealed. The unity of heaven and man must be muddled, and when the three forgets are exhausted, the original is clear. The mysterious is wonderful, the mysterious is the mystery, difficult to speak, silent and natural.

At the end of the fifth watch, the moon was setting, and he was ordered to return to the true palace to ascend the Great Luo. There is no colour, no nest, no sound and no smell, true loneliness. Tear the pure brocade curtain and break the real jade circle nest. There is no morning or evening, there is nothing to do, and it is still the first time to be alone.<sup>14</sup>

二更初，月正皎，人生斯世命不牢。恋荣华，终日劳，深入苦海受煎熬。百年三万六千日，人生七十古来少。早回头，莫逍遥，急忙下手无常到。

二更中，月正圆，呼吸二气莫放闲。少饮食，聊睡眠，常把真言记心间。青龙宝剑休离手，斩断恩爱与万缘。从此间，放步前，诞登道岸见机关。

二更末，月正辉，人心惟危道心微。猿马劣，龙虎威，关口层盈山尤巍。虽有青锋难敌斗，怎能慷慨出重围。访明师，求护卫，透过玄关得真机。

三更初，月正清，大道不离本身导。乾坤大，物无穷，尽在微躯方寸中。道包天地人包道，贯彻万物不遗尘。知的精，好用功，认已明时认主明。

三更中，月正朗，一顺明珠海底藏。忙奔岸，驾孤航，翻入龙窝层层浪。受尽千般无限苦，捞得珍宝无价偿。谨护持，莫放荡，富贵好还原家乡。

三更末，月正端，一心笋玩御花园。登九胃，叩玉环，仙童把盏劝御筵。采得几般灵药料，制成济世妙金丹。遇病汉，赠一九，医脱疲斑登寿岸。

四更初，月正偏，嫦娥梳妆玉楼前。体似酥，面粉团，袅娜编班赛天仙。注定精神倾魂魄，谕下尘凡配姻缘。阴阳交，男女欢，相亲相爱无限年。

四更中，月正西，浊休怎能归真一。沪里嫂，火中嫉，炼尽铅华存精实。修成完宝贮金哑，不染尘垢不染泥。主人唤，莫敢迟，全体归真上清虚。

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<sup>14</sup> Qing Liu Zhi, "Five Watches of the Moon", Qing engraving, see *The Complete Work of the Hui Collection*, Volume 26, pp. 217-239.

四更末，月正盈，克己复礼为正伦。践三乘，过五行，成全四藏是真人。昆仑宝镜原属我，理气首原我为宗。撑慈航，济迷人，便输真诚侧隐心。

五更初，月正缺，胸藏一壶真日月。天已卷，地已裂，慧眼睁时无蔽遮。已障已消真容显，绝妙二世具透彻。虽有口，却无舌，怎与凡人说秘诀。

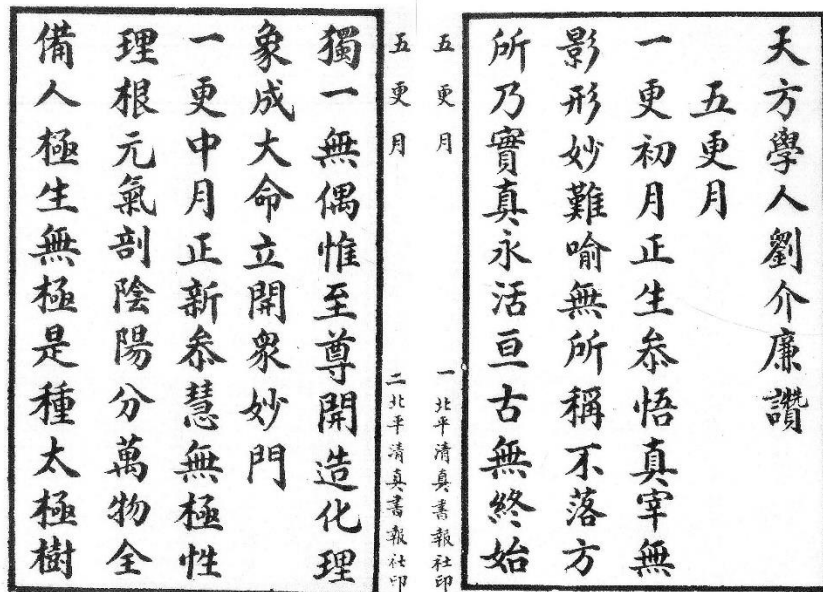
五更中，月正残，清心显性道成全。升降合，循环完，更超名相真谛显。天人合一要浑化，三忘尽时本然湛。玄中妙，妙中玄，难语难言默自然。

五更末，月正落，复命归真上大罗。无色府，无相窝，无声无臭真寂寞。扯破纯一锦幔子，钻碎一真玉圈巢。无晨夕，无如何，依然最初独自乐。

The center of the second song "Second Watch" is to break the shortness of life, and the world chases glory and wealth day and night, and in the end it is just "flowers in the mirror, moon in the water". Liu Zhi pointed out that selfish desires are endless, and people often love things more than themselves, which affects their bodies and minds. And life is like a passerby, life is short, you need to hurry up, and turn back early. "A life of 70 is rare" is from a famous Tang Dynasty Confucian poet Du Fu 杜甫 (712-770), because of medical condition of his times, he said that life is so short that one should not be infatuated with material and the passing things.

"The idea that a life of 70 is rare" is mentioned many times in Confucian text: The Confucius said in the *Analects*. The Master said: "At fifteen I set my heart on learning; at thirty I took my stand; at forty I came to be free from doubts; at fifty I understand the Decree of Heaven; at sixty my ear was attuned; at seventy I followed my heart's desire without overstepping the line." Therefore, in Islam and Confucianism both regarded age 70 as a demarcation line that one should be more prudent and cautious. Only by "visiting famous teachers and asking for protection" and through the real opportunity of the entrance can we "cut off love and all connections", get rid of all selfish distractions that are greedy for the world, and "from now on, before letting go, we can go to the shore to see the organs". As for the practice of "breathing two qi", it is one of the contents of Islamic meditation. "Mantra" 真言 refers to the truth of the true master, which is the language of Islam, but it is often obscured by material obstacles and desires, and it is necessary to practice devoutly and persevere in order to clear the mind and manifest oneself. Liu Zhi also emphasized that in the face of many difficulties in retreat, it is important to ask the master for guidance as a medium to get close to Allah. Only under the guidance and protection of the Master can we get out of the dangers and overcome all difficulties.

The fifth poem is to explain the arrival of the heavens and the earth, how to tell the secret with mortals, the state of difficult words and silence, and finally achieve "at the end of the fifth watch, the moon is setting, and the return to the true great nature". That is, when Allah nurtured all things and gave birth to all things, it was called "great transformation", and all things in all generations must "return to their roots", "return to their true nature", and call it "total return", that is, return to the realm of "above the three realms, the vast and distant Nature, the colorless roots above, and the clouds are majestic".



Peking Muslim Book Company edition lithograph *Five Watches of the Moon*

Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon" uses the change of moon phases to clarify Islamic doctrine, and its religious meaning can be described as far-reaching. The moon is mentioned many times in the Qur'an, and some chapters are called "moon". In Muhammad's view, the new moon represents a new force, from the new moon to the full moon, marking the destruction of Islam, the victory over darkness, the completion of merit, and the brightness of the world. The rising of the new moon is the beginning of the first day of the month. Ramadan in Islam is also a month from the first day of the new moon to the time of breaking the fast again. From Liu Zhi's "Five Watches of the Moon", we can also see traces of the influence of Confucianism when Islamic intellectuals expounded their teachings. For example, in "Five Watches of the Moon", "self-denial and return to etiquette", "great use of all", "unity of heaven and man", "people's hearts are in danger", etc., obviously borrow the concepts commonly used in Confucianism to interpret Islamic philosophy.

Liu Zhi once commented on his writings: "Collection and research, many Confucian words. I have translated the text from various classics from Arab, and each explanation must be carefully examined to ensure that the two meanings are exactly right, and then I write. Ma Haicheng believes that the so-called Confucian language is used as a metaphor, although the nouns are similar, but the meaning is not the same, the reader's views are different, reflecting their respective level of understanding, even Sufi scholars, there are also practical differences, how can what be seen and obtained be slightly the same."<sup>15</sup>

### **Conclusion: Religious Translation and Islamic Literature in Chinese**

Islamic religious literature created in Chinese in Chinese history involves the complex problem of abandoning the "mother tongue" and writing in Chinese. The "Chinese Interpretation of the Classics" provides favourable conditions and environment for the emergence of Islamic religious literature.

When Islamic scholars in the late Ming and early Qing dynasties made decisions about translating the Qur'an, they had to solve a series of technical problems in language and writing. If they use the method of translating scriptures when Han Dynasty Buddhism was introduced to China, they must transliterate and create many new words in Chinese. Their upbringing and mastery of Confucian and Taoist literature led them to use the expressions common to scholars at that time when translating their religious classics into Chinese, and to look for words with similar meanings from Confucian classics.

The two main sources of Chinese translation are Islamic doctrine and Confucian thought, which inevitably leads to the situation of "interpreting the scriptures with Confucianism" in the process of translation. Obvious examples can be seen from Wang Daiyu's writings.<sup>16</sup>

Secondly, in addition to the writings of Confucianism and Taoism at that time, the translations of Jesuit missionaries also provided reference for Islamic scholars. The foreign Jesuit missionary Michele Ruggieri (1543-1607) published the *Records of God* in 1584, and

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<sup>15</sup> For details, see Ma Haicheng's 马海城: 《学习五更月之心得》 (Experience of Learning the Five Geng of the Moon) , published in Gansu's 《穆民论坛》 *Mu Min Forum*, pp. 21-23.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion, see Lee Cheuk Yin, "Islamic Values in Confucian Terms: Wang Daiyu and his *Zhengjiao Zhenquan*", in Osman Bakar ed., *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue*, Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC-IIUM Publications, 2019, pp.87-106.

Matteo Ricci published *The Truth of God* in 1604, which provided a reference for the translation work at that time. Although the translations of Muslim works were published later, we cannot say that the Muslim scholars of that time imitated the methods of the Jesuit.

Lectures in the Ming Dynasty Islamic scriptures began to explain the principles of the Qur'an in Chinese before the Jesuit missionaries came to China, and the two sides were working on Chinese translation at about the same time, and Nanjing became a centre of cultural exchange and translation between the East and the West at that time. On the other hand, both sides studied Chinese through Confucian classics, and for Jesuits and Muslims, "interpreting the classics with Confucianism" may be the most ideal and logical choice.

As mentioned earlier, the emergence of Islamic Chinese scriptures can be said to be a product of the times. People who are engaged in Chinese writings are native Muslims born and raised in China, who think, write in Chinese, and convey Islamic teachings in Chinese. On the one hand, their root education comes from Islamic civilization, and on the other hand, they also have a deep understanding and accumulation of Confucianism and even Buddhism and Taoism. This background provides favourable conditions for their Chinese scripture writing. At the same time, their special education enabled them to create Islamic literary works with Chinese characteristics. The emergence of Islamic Chinese literature in the early Qing dynasty can be said to have blossomed under the interlacing of many internal and external factors.

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