

The Tomb Inscription for Liu Zhi at the End
of the Qing Period (1910).
Commemoration of an Islamic Scholar by
a Traditional Inscription to Support Modernisation

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Abstract: In 1910, a new stone stele engraved with a commemoration inscription was erected near the tomb of Liu Zhi 劉智 in Nanjing. The reason for establishing such a classical stele for this famous Muslim scholar of the 17th/18th centuries will be discussed in this article, and also the intention of the initiators of the stone inscription and of Jin Ding 金鼎 (died 1922), the composer of the text. For a better understanding of the text and in view of the lack of English translations of Chinese Islamic inscriptions, the whole text is finally translated and commented upon.

Keywords: Liu Zhi, tomb inscription, Islam in China, educational reform movement

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1. Introduction – history and meaning of a Muslim tomb

In the final stage of the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), at the turn of the 19th to the 20th centuries, there were great political and social changes in China, influencing all parts of the society. One important topic in the revolutionary plans was education of the people, to raise them from ignorance and poverty. Young Muslim intellectuals also tried to promote modern education in their religious communities. In order to support their aim of modernisation and also to combine tradition with modernity they used historical personalities. One of them was Liu Zhi, a famous Muslim scholar of the 17th/18th centuries, who wrote many books on Islam in Chinese. To commemorate and remember Liu Zhi some Hui scholars organised the composition and construction of a stone stele, which was finally erected in 1910 near his tomb in Nanjing.

In the early years of the People's Republic of China (PRC), in appreciation of culturally relevant sites, the government raised money in 1957 to repair the tomb of Liu Zhi. Later in 1982, after years of political turmoil and disturbance, the tomb was restored by the Islamic Association of Nanjing.¹ This was commemorated by a short inscription *Chongxiu Liu Zhi muji* 重修劉智墓記 (Record of the reconstruction of the tomb of Liu Zhi). In the same year the Chinese government classified the tomb as a cultural relic worthy of protection at the provincial level. The graveyard and the tomb have been repaired several times and are still kept in good condition; moreover the place is still visited by Chinese Muslim pilgrims, who can pay their respect to the great scholar. Already Isaac Mason, who translated Liu Zhi's Biography of the prophet Muhammad,² had written in his preface:

His tomb is still to be seen outside the south gate of the city of Nanking and is a spot to which Mohammedan pilgrims go for prayer and the reading of the Koran. No other writer's name is so well known or highly respected by the Chinese Moslems of to-day as that of Liu Chai-lien.³

The tomb foundation is placed in north-south orientation. Behind the grave there is an arched screen wall in which five stone steles are embedded. The central stele, being over two meters high, has two inscriptions; on top the Basmala in Arabic, written in horizontal line. In vertical Chinese script is engraved: *Qingdai Yisilan xuezhi Liu Zhi zhi mu* 清代伊斯蘭學者劉智之墓 (The tomb of the Islamic scholar Liu Zhi of the Qing dynasty), Guangxu, 29th year (1903). On both sides of the central stone there are two smaller steles with antithetical characters:⁴ *Dao xue xian jue* 道學先覺 (right) (Being first aware of the study of the Dao) and on the left side *Xue guan tian ren* 學貫天人 (Being well versed in heavenly and human affairs). These three stone steles were erected at the end of the Qing period, in the year 1903.

On the outermost left hand side is situated the above mentioned last reconstruction inscription of 1982, *Chongxiu Liu Zhi muji* 重修劉智墓記 (Record of the reconstruction of the tomb of Liu Zhi), and on the outermost right side we find the stone stele of Jin Ding from the year 1910, bearing the title *Chongxiu Liu Jielian xiansheng mubei ming* 重修劉介廉先生墓碑銘 (The inscription on the stone tablet of the reconstruction of the tomb

¹ MA 1985: 31.

² *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* 天方至聖實錄 (Veritable records of the Most Sagely of Islam) is the Chinese biography of Muhammad composed by Liu Zhi. Mason translated the title 'The true annals of the Prophet of Arabia'. MASON 1921: VI.

³ MASON 1921: XI.

⁴ MA 1985: 31.

of Master Liu Jielian). The latter is the text which is investigated and translated in this article.

2. Jin Ding – the composer of the inscription

Jin Ding 金鼎, the author of the inscription, with his personal name Zhisheng 峙生, came from Nanjing. He died in 1922 though his date of birth is unknown.⁵ When he was young he began his career as an official and travelled to many places.

In 1908, he was elected President of the Association of East Asian Islamic Education 東亞清真教育總會 Dongya qingzhen jiaoyu zonghui in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu.⁶ This cultural organisation for Muslims had already been founded in 1906 by the reformer and scholar Tong Zong 童琮 (1864–1923).⁷ As the name of the association implies, its aim was to propagate and promote education among the Hui,⁸ the Sino-Muslims. Therefore the organisation was supported by many Hui intellectuals and merchants, who saw the necessity of modern western education to overcome China's technical and scientific inferiority. Influenced by the great reforms and western modernisation taking place in Meiji Japan (1868–1912), many Chinese scholars also tried to change the traditional educational system and were active in founding new schools, which used modern curricula including natural sciences and foreign languages.

Already in 1905, Tong Zong had opened the first modern Muslim school, the Muyuan School 穆原學堂 in Zhenjiang, and moreover he founded a printing house to publish books and journals for discussions on modern education.⁹ When in 1912 the interim government in Nanjing had been established, Jin Ding and other Muslim personalities, like Ma Defu 馬德甫 submitted a request to the government for the organisation of a new Confederation of the Hui People; however they did not receive authorisation for this. Later, Jin Ding assumed the post of the president of the Islamic Federation of Nanjing, and was very active in his position. The construction of the stone stele for Liu Zhi in 1910, and also the organisation of the repair of his tomb in Nanjing were managed by Jin Ding during his time as president of the Association of East Asian Islamic Education.

⁵ ZHD 1992: 704.

⁶ ZHD 1992: 993.

⁷ ZHD 1992: 704–705; CEI 1994: 136; Li et al. 1998: 739.

⁸ There are about 21 Mio Muslims living in China, belonging to ten different nationalities having their own language and culture. These are Bonan, Dongxiang, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Salar, Tajik, Tatar, Uzbek Uyghur and the Chinese-speaking Hui, the so-called Sino-Muslims.

⁹ On the reform of the traditional Islamic education and the foundation of modern schools by the Chinese Muslims, see STÖCKER-PARNIAN 2003: 62–69.

But what was the reason for Jin Ding to arrange the carving and erection of a new stone stele for Liu Zhi and the repair of his burial side? Considering the life and activities of Jin Ding it is obvious that the Qing scholar Liu Zhi was an important symbol and model for progressive Hui scholars, who were trying to modernise education at the turn from the 19th to the 20th centuries. Two hundred years earlier Liu Zhi had done a great deal for Islamic education in China, by translating Arabic and Persian books and creating Chinese Muslim literature as part of the literary canon known as the *Han kitab*.¹⁰ Jin Ding and many combatants wanted to do the same for the Hui, modernising education and creating new literature. Especially the publication of journals and newspapers was of great importance. One of the earliest journals were the *Xinghuijian* 醒回篇 (Wake up Hui), published by oversea Chinese students in Tokyo in 1908, and in 1915 Muslims of Yunnan promulgated the *Qingzhen yuebao* 清真月报 (Muslim Monthly).¹¹ Thereafter the publication of Islamic journals and newspapers rose significantly nationwide. Moreover, Islamic associations were established in Hui communities, supporting the reform project by establishing schools and pushing the Hui into modern times.¹² Their religion was not a hindrance, but an identity to find a common way of moving forward into a modern, educated Hui society. In this sense Liu Zhi was a guide for the forward-looking reformers and could be used as a model for the young students in a time of change. So, at the end of the inscription Jin Ding mentions why he composed the inscription for Liu Zhi, whom he saw as a great figure of the past and a model for future generations.

Therefore I recorded the main deeds and achievements (of his life) on the stone stele, so that the people know the location of the tomb of the great virtuous man of our religion; and further I intend to give the later generations something that can be modelled on and pondered upon. (lines 17–18).¹³

On the one hand he wanted to honour the most important author of Chinese Islamic literature, and on the other he also intended to strengthen the memory

¹⁰ Han Kitab 漢克塔布 *Han ketabu*, a combination of *Han* (Chinese) and *kitāb* (Arab. book) is a collection of Islamic books, written in Chinese between the 17th and 19th centuries by Chinese Muslims using Neo-Confucian, Buddhist and Taoist terminology to explain Islamic doctrine. Famous authors are Wang Daiyu, Ma Zhu, Ma Dexin and especially Liu Zhi. See WANG 2001: 46, MURATA et al. 2009: 3–4, BEN-DOR BENITE 2005: 5, STÖCKER-PARNIAN 2003: 193, PETERSEN 2018: 6.

¹¹ LI et al. 1998: 748. These early journals however had only limited editions, *Xinghui* only one and *Qingzhen yuebao* five numbers. Later many journals and newspapers have been published by Muslims.

¹² YANG 1991: 68.

¹³ The stone has altogether 23 vertical lines of characters.

of Liu Zhi for the young generation; in order to remember this eminent scholar forever and save him from oblivion, Jin Ding composed an inscription, which was carved in stone in the traditional, cultivated Chinese way.

3. Liu Zhi – a man devotedly reading and writing Islamic books¹⁴

Liu Zhi 劉智 (style name: Jielian 介廉; assumed name: Yizhai 一齋), who lived in the early Qing dynasty, was one of the most famous Islamic scholars of China. There are no exact dates of his life.¹⁵ He was probably born during the Kangxi reign (1662–1722) and died in the beginning of the Qianlong reign (1735–96).¹⁶ On the stone inscription Jin Ding makes the following statement on this uncertainty of Liu Zhi's lifetime:

The dates of the vitae of the Master can neither be known. Estimating from his generation sequence, his lifetime started from the middle of Kangxi and ended in the beginning of Qianlong, his lifespan covered about 50 or 60 years. (lines 15–16).

According to this inscription Liu Zhi was born in the middle of Kangxi, (1662–1722) i.e. around the year 1680 to 1690, and died at the beginning of Qianlong (1735–1796), i.e. around 1740.¹⁷ The reason that we have no exact dates is the destruction of all material due to political upheavals long after the death of Liu Zhi. Nanjing, Liu Zhi's hometown became the capital of the Taiping rebels. During the capture of Nanjing in 1853 many inhabitants were killed and the city was destroyed in the course of fighting. Jin Ding writes:

The tomb of the Master is located outside of the Qubao gate. In the upheaval of the bandits of Yue¹⁸ the whole family was wiped out. Neither genealogy nor official documents can be found; the generations before Master Hanying¹⁹ cannot be inquired. (lines 14–15).

¹⁴ On the life and works of Liu Zhi see the monographies by JIN 1999 and SUN 2006, also the works of BEN-DOR BENITE 2005: 144–153, MURATA et al. 2009: 4–7, FRANKEL 2011: 5–10, STÖCKER-PARNIAN 2003: 114–122, and the articles of BAI 1983: 16–19 and MA 1985: 31.

¹⁵ The dates of his life vary between 1655, 1660, 1662, 1664, 1671 for his birth, and 1730, 1736, 1739, 1745 for his death. There are also speculations that he was over 60 years old when he passed away. See SUN 2006: 210.

¹⁶ BAI 1983: 18, MA 1985: 31.

¹⁷ According to the inscription Liu Zhi died in the beginning of Qianlong (around 1735–40), and his lifespan was about 50–60 years. So his birth was around 1670–80, which is not in accordance to the generally accepted birthdate of 1660 by most scholars.

¹⁸ Yue Fei 粵匪 refers to the Taiping Rebellion, which lasted from 1850 to 1864 and caused millions of victims. The leader Hong Xiuquan had some visions, whereby he identified himself as the younger brother of Jesus. With his Christian influenced ideology he wanted to destroy the power of the Manchus, Confucianism and change the society.

¹⁹ Master Hanying is the father of Liu Zhi, Liu Hanying 刘汉英.

Personal information about Liu Zhi is transmitted through his own writings, particularly his personal notes in the preface *Zhushu shu* 著書述 (On writing books) of his biography of the Prophet Muhammad, the *Tianfang zhisheng shilu* 天方至聖實錄 (Veritable records of the Most Sagely of Islam). The main source of this biographical book, which is also called *Zhisheng shilu*²⁰ 至聖實錄, *Zhisheng lu* 至聖錄 or *Zhisheng shilu nianpu* 至聖實錄年譜 was the Persian translation *Tarjuma-i Mawlūd-i Muṣṭafa* from the Arabic biography *Sīrat al-Nabī al-Muntaqā* written by al-Kāzarūnī.²¹

The phrases in which Liu Zhi depicted his life were later adopted by many authors doing research on the great scholar. Jin Ding also took direct citations from the preface, especially where Liu Zhi gives us information on his life, his education and his studies, and the troubles and labours he experienced while searching for original Islamic books. As Jin cites:

When he was fifteen years old, he sincerely set up his aim in diligent learning. He studied through the books of the classics, histories, and of philosophies of the various schools for altogether eight years. Then he began to read the Arabic scriptures, for another six years. (lines 3–4).

However, his study of books for fourteen years was not enough for Liu Zhi to do adequate translations and compose Islamic literature in Chinese and so he went on to further years of study:

As he was about to engage himself in translation, he felt suddenly again that he did not have enough self-confidence. Therefore he began to study the Buddhist canons and commentaries for further three years, and the Taoist scriptures for one year. After that he forwarded to study 137 Western books. (line 4).

The fact that Liu Zhi read and was familiar with 137 Western books has also been mentioned by Paul Pelliot in his review of Mason's translation of Liu Zhi's biography on Muhammad and he writes: 'Il est intéressant de noter cette familiarité de Lieou Tche avec les publications des missionnaires.'²²

Even if it is not quite clear which western books Liu Zhi was reading, they were almost certainly of Jesuit origin and written in Chinese, according to Pelliot. More than 200 oeuvres had been published by the missionaries at this time. The books are on different topics of the Christian religion, but also

²⁰ JIN 1999: 18.

²¹ The original Arabic biographical work was written by the Persian Sufi scholar Sa'īd al-Dīn Muḥammad bin Mas'ūd al-Kāzarūnī (died 1357) and in the year 1383 it was translated into Persian by his son 'Afīf. See BEN-DOR BENITE 2005: 151, footnote 89.

²² PELLIOU 1922: 415, footnote 2.

on sciences, geography and cartography, astronomy and philosophy. This Christian literature certainly had a strong influence on Liu Zhi, notably on the religious terminology of his Islamic treatises.²³

During the process of searching, reading and writing, Liu Zhi became aware of his shortcomings concerning authentic Islamic literature. So he started on a long journey throughout China in search of original Islamic literature and for intellectual exchange with learned scholars. In Henan he luckily could find a Persian scripture about the life of the prophet Muhammad. Jin Ding writes:

When he was looking for the original Islamic scriptures 天方經典, he received a complete version of the *Zhisheng lu* 至聖錄²⁴ from the Sai family 賽氏²⁵ in the town of Zhuxian 朱仙 in Henan, and he obtained scriptures of the Wu family 吳氏 in several dozen volumes from a person in Beijing. (All these texts) were written in Western horizontal script, and came to China during the Yuan dynasty, and were stored in the secret archive (imperial library), until the period of turmoil of bandits during Ming times did (these scriptures) start to spread into the world. (lines 8–9).

So, according to Jin Ding, this original Islamic literature, written in Persian or Arabic, had already been in China for a long time, since the Yuan dynasty (1279–1368), when Muslims held high official positions under the Mongols. Because of turbulent times these books were scattered and by chance came into private Muslim libraries, where they were finally found by Liu Zhi. These books became sources for his comprehensive writings on Islamic theology, philosophy, law and rites, and the biography of the Prophet.

From his youth until old age the Master wrote altogether several hundred volumes. (line 10).

²³ One famous book of the time was the *Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義 (*The true meaning of the Lord of Heaven*) by Matteo Ricci (1552–1610). This theological work discusses the meaning of the Christian god, Christ, Holy Spirit etc. The book was first published in 1603 in Peking, later also in Canton (1605) and Hangzhou (1607). So it is quite possible that Liu Zhi had one of these editions among his ‘western books’. The *Tianzhu shiyi* was translated by Douglas Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuo-chen: *Matteo Ricci, S.J. The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (T'ien-chu Shih-i)*, St. Louis, Taipei 1985.

²⁴ *Zhisheng* is the Chinese translation for the Prophet Muhammad, literally meaning the Most Wise, that is the nabī or Prophet. ZHD (1992: 817). The original text on the stone has only the three characters *Zhisheng lu* 至聖錄 and not the four characters *Zhisheng Shilu*, which has been incorrectly printed by Yu 2001: 646.

²⁵ Sai is a Muslim family name in China; and may be a hint that he was a Sayyid, a descendant of the Prophet.

Towards the end of his life Liu Zhi retreated and lived like a hermit in the Qingliang Mountain.

In the later part of his life the Master returned to Jinling 金陵, he lived in the Saoye House 掃葉樓 (House of Sweeping Leaves) in Qingliang-Mountain 清涼山 for more than ten years. There he closed his doors and delved into deep thoughts. At that time all famous lords, high ministers and wise men knew about the hermit Liu in Jinling. (line 13).

Despite his fame he did not receive any special burial stone after his death. The stones near his tomb were all erected in later times by the Hui community in commemoration of the great Master. The stone inscription of 1910 (Xuanton, 2nd year) was composed by Jin Ding.

The inscription has been published by Weng Changsen 翁長森 and Jiang Guobang 蔣國榜 in their *Jinling Congshu* 金陵叢書 (Collected Writings of Jinling). In 2001, Yu Zhengui adopted the text in his *Zhongguo huizu jinshilu* 中國回族金石錄 (Record of inscriptions on metal and stone of the Hui nationality in China).²⁶

4. Translation of the stone inscription²⁷

The inscription on the stone tablet of the reconstruction of the tomb of Master Liu Jielian *Chongxiu Liu Jielian xiansheng mubei ming* 重修劉介廉先生墓碑銘

The (late)²⁸ Master, with his taboo name ZHI 智, and his style name JIELIAN 介廉, called himself Yizhai 一齋 in his late years. Generations of the LIU family 劉氏 of Shangyuan 上元 district (in Nanjing) practiced Islam studies²⁹. His father Master HANYING 漢英, a man of cultivation and virtue, once sighed and lamented: ‘The Islamic scriptures 天方經典 analyse the doctrine 理 to its

²⁶ The inscription has been published under the title *Liu Jielian xiansheng mubei* 劉介廉先生墓碑. YU 2001: 646–647. The correct title of the inscription is *Chongxiu Liu Jielian xiansheng mubei ming* 重修劉介廉先生墓碑銘 (The inscription on the stone tablet of the reconstruction of the tomb of Master Liu Jielian). The text has many misprints and uses modern *jiantizi* (simplified characters), which makes reading quite difficult. Yu Zhengui does not give any publisher; however there is one publication from Nanjing by Shangyuan jiangshi zhenxiu shuju 上元蔣氏慎修書屋, 1914–1916.

²⁷ For the translation I used the rubbing, which was published by NANJING 2011: 223 and YU 2001: 646–647.

²⁸ The words in parentheses are my additions for a better understanding of the text.

²⁹ 天方之學 Islamic learning/Islam studies. The term *Tianfang* 天方 can variously mean Islamic lands, Arabia, Mecca and Islam in general. Jin Ding also uses *Tianfang* for these geographical and religious expressions – Arabia and Islam – in his inscription.

very essence. It is a pity that there are no Chinese translations available, so that they (can) spread in the Eastern lands (China).³⁰ At this time the Master was still in childhood and had just received books (to begin his learning). He secretly heard these words and then silently took note of them. When he was fifteen years old, he sincerely set up his aim in diligent learning. He studied the books of the classics, histories and of philosophies of the various schools for altogether eight years. Then he began to read the Islamic scriptures for another six years. As he was about to engage himself in translation, he felt suddenly again that he did not have enough self-confidence. Therefore he began to study the Buddhist canons and commentaries for a further three years, and the Taoist scriptures for one year. After that he proceeded to study 137 Western books. Thereupon he was at ease (with his knowledge) and free from misapprehension, and therefore he took up the brush and began to write. As he was translating, he was also reciting (the Islamic texts). He wrote in the morning and thought deeply in the evening. He rejected human affairs, and regarded all things such as worldly temptations and reputation, as well as profit and office, as floating clouds passing the sky, and like a breeze (that) came fluttering through his ear (and of which he did not take notice). After a long time, he considered again that his (knowledge) was not enough. Once more he packed up food and carried his book box, and went through Qi³¹ (North Shandong), Lu (South Shandong), Yan (North Hebei), Zhao (South Hebei), and came to the capital (Beijing). There he kept company with court scholars and wise officials, and together they had academic discussions. (Then) he changed his direction and went to Xiang (Hunan) and Chu (Hubei), then entered Qin (Shaanxi) and Long (Gansu), in order to search for handed down scriptures and learned scholars. To the south he went first to Wulin (Hangzhou), then to Kuaiji (Shaoxing). There he visited the Goulou stele.³² Afterwards he ascended Tiantong and Zhu Mountain³³ in Dasong, and from there he looked down at the blue ocean, and his learning and knowledge increased immensely. In the Gengzi year of the Yongzheng reign (1724) he accepted the call of the governor Ma of Yanzhou (Shandong). He visited the monuments and temple of Confucius, his heart was filled with

³⁰ Nearly the same words can be found in the foreword of Liu Zhi in his *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (Nature and Principle of Islam).

³¹ All the following names of places and provinces were also mentioned in the *Zhushu shu*, the foreword of the biography of the Prophet, *Zhisheng shilu*.

³² There is a misprint in the collection of Yu 2001, the word *Xunlou bei* 岫巖碑 is in the original inscription Goulou-bei 岫巖碑. This stele also called *Shen Yu bei* 神禹碑, is a very old inscription, which according to tradition dates from the times of Xia Yu 夏禹 or Great Yu 大禹, the legendary founder of the Xia dynasty (ca. 21st–16th cent. BCE). The characters are cut in old seal script, having the form of tadpoles and are difficult to decipher. The text reports on the water regulation of the Great Yu. See CHENG 2019: 2.

³³ Tiantong mountain and Zhu mountain in Dasong are situated in the Chinese province of Zhejiang.

emotion, and thereupon he departed and returned. At this stage the wealth of his vast reading and (knowledge through his) great distances of travelling, sufficed him to honour the words (of his father) and to aid him to follow his own aim! When he was looking for original Islamic scriptures³⁴, he received a complete version of the *Zhisheng lu* 至聖錄 (Biography of the Prophet) from the Sai family in the town of Zhuxian in Henan and he obtained scriptures from the Wu family in several dozen volumes from a person in Beijing. (All these texts) were written in Western horizontal script,³⁵ and came to China during the Yuan dynasty, and were stored in the secret archive (imperial library), until the period of turmoil of bandits during the late Ming dynasty (when these scriptures) started to spread into the world. These books explain extensively the heavenly calculations, geography, and are rarely seen in the world (China). Later on he again obtained the *Renjing* 人鏡 (Human Mirror) and *Gezhi quanjing*³⁶ 格致全經 (The Underlying Principles to Acquire Knowledge) (being) all books from Qin (Shaanxi); thereupon most of the old scriptures and historical works of this religion were brought together and collected. From youth until old age the Master wrote altogether several hundred volumes. His first publications are *Tianfang dianli* 天方典禮 (Law and Ritual of Islam) in twenty volumes and *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (Philosophy of Islam) in five volumes. Then he also wrote *Wu gong shiyi* 五功釋義 (Explanation of the Five Merits) in one volume and *Zimu jieyi* 字母解義 (Explication of the Meaning of Arabic Letters) in one volume. When he was older he started to write the book *Zhisheng shilu nianpu* 至聖實錄年譜 (Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam), in which he extensively adopted (information) from all Islamic books, and listed the lifetime achievements of the Prophet (Muhammad). This work resembles much the category of the book *Ziyang Outline*³⁷, in which the years were set as warps and incidents as weft. It goes through all (fields like) politics and education, law and punishment, rites and music, Yin and Yang, the Five Elements, customs, territory and people; he compiled comprehensively and forgot nothing. The book was the result of several decades of intensive work, and was (finally) finished when he was getting old. At the later part of his life the Master returned to Jinling 金陵, he lived in the Saoye House 掃

³⁴ *Tianfang jingdian* 天方經典; Here *tianfang jingdian* means Islamic scriptures in Arabic or Persian, these languages Liu Zhi could read.

³⁵ *Western horizontal script* 西文旁行 refers here to Arabic or Persian books. During Mongol Yuan times many Muslims (soldiers, merchants) came to China, and so Islamic religion spread in the East.

³⁶ The *Gezhi quanjing*, also translated as *The complete classic of investigating and extending*, is a book on dogmatic theology, originally written in Arabic. See MURATA et al. 2009: 50.

³⁷ *Ziyang gangmu* 紫陽綱目 (*Ziyang outline*) is the short form of the work *Zizhi tongjian gangmu* 資治通鑑綱目 (*Outline and Digest of the General Mirror*). *Ziyang* is the epithet of the philosopher Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130–1200), who is also called *Ziyang xiansheng* 紫陽先生.

葉樓 (House of Sweeping Leaves) in Qingliang Mountain 清涼山 for more than ten years. There he closed his doors and delved into deep thought. At that time all famous lords, high ministers and wise men knew about the hermit Liu in Jinling.

In the middle of the Qianlong period, the emperor started the *Siku* (project)³⁸ and the lost books from the past to the present were collected in China, and thereupon the *Tianfang dianli* (Law and Ritual of Islam) was included in the catalogue. The commentary praises it: ‘being acquainted with Confucian scriptures, quoting the classics (to complement religious doctrine) and the wording is elegant and admirable’, alas, how true! The tomb of the Master is located outside of the Qubaomen gate. In the upheaval of the bandits of Yue³⁹ the whole (Liu) family was wiped out. Neither family genealogy nor official documents can be found; the generations before Master Hanying cannot be inquired. The dates of the vitae of the Master cannot be known either. Estimating from his generation sequence, his lifetime started from the middle of Kangxi (1662–1722) and ended in the beginning of Qianlong (1735–1796); his lifespan covered about 50 or 60 years. There is a distant descendant of him, Dekun 德坤, who is today the religious leader of the Jingjue Mosque in Jinling. He has the ability to succeed the will of the Master and to carry the teaching of Master Jielian forward, so that his words will not diminish. In the year Bingwu year of Guangxu (1906), the commoners and the learned of the village raised money to repair the tomb of the Master. Altogether they built a tomb areal of several zhang wide, there are two ornamented columns, one stone-way, one stone stele, and they urged me, Ding, to compose a text to commemorate it. Therefore I recorded the main deeds and achievements (of his life) on the stone stele, so that the people know the location of the tomb of the great virtuous man of our religion; and further I intend to give the later generations something that can be modelled on and pondered upon.

The eulogia says:

The lofty Zhong Mountain – is full with spirits and strange beings

The referent Great Master – truly descended here

The lost books are dispersed among bushes – he sought them all and put them into order

Islam came from the West – more than 1,000 years ago

It is neither Buddhist nor Daoist – it was turning the decadent stage of the schools and declined

³⁸ *Siku Quanshu congmu tiyao* 四庫全書總目提要 (Annotated Catalogue of the Complete Imperial Library) was commissioned by the Qing emperor Qianlong (reigned 1735–1796).

³⁹ Yue fei 粵匪 refers to the Taiping Rebellion, see footnote no. 18.

The West praises philosophy – we in China honour the Confucian classics
 The wrong is not beautiful – then falls darkness down
 Shaking hands is the end – love develops its light
 He elucidated the religion and explained the principle – and read it in
 euphoric tones
 As the tumulus was shovelled even – who was to re-erect his memorial
 archway and stone
 After the tomb was filled up and trees were planted – his fellow countrymen
 paid him homage
 It admonishes our later generations – model on this outstanding behaviour

2nd year of Xuanton, in 2nd month of Gengxu, on the 1st day of the
 lunar month, Yihai, on the 16th day of Gengyin. Composed by Jin Ding 金鼎,
 registered in Shangyuan, the coloured feather second degree rank in the salt
 and law administration of Wuchang Prefecture, Hubei, recorded in the Military
 Secretariat, Prefecture Magistrate Candidate in Hubei Province.

Writing by Li Zhenghua 李正花 of Wujin.

Heading line by Jin Sifen 金嗣芬 from Buyongzhi county in Jiangxi.

Stonecutter Hou Renji 侯仁继 from Shangyuan.

5. Conclusion

More than 160 years after his death, the famous Muslim scholar Liu Zhi was honoured and commemorated by a new tomb inscription in 1910. The political and social changes at the end of the Qing dynasty and beginning of the Republic (1911–1949) forced Muslim communities to answer the needs of the time. Therefore Islamic associations were founded, whose aim were to push forward modernisation and reform education. Jin Ding, president of the Association of East Asian Islamic Education was fully engaged in this project and composed a new tomb inscription for Liu Zhi. This great scholar of the 17th/18th centuries, who was comprehensively educated in Islamic theology, Arabic and Persian, as well as in Chinese philosophy and other religions, had composed many Islamic books in Chinese by using Neo-Confucian terminology. Hence Liu Zhi was considered a symbol and figurehead in the educational reform movement, and so a new stone inscription in classical style was created. By erecting this stone stele near the tomb of Master Liu the Muslims of the early 20th century expressed their Chinese way of life and culture using traditional Chinese forms filled with Hui Islamic content in the hope for a better future.

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Fig. 1. Liu Zhi's tomb in Nanjing. Photo by B. Stöcker-Parnian.

The original inscription

重修劉介廉先生墓碑銘/先生諱智字介廉晚自號一齋上元劉氏世習天方之學父漢英先生有文行嘗喟然歎曰天方經典析理甚精惜未有漢譯俾廣/其傳於東土也時先生方總角受書竊聞緒論已默識之年十五篤志劬學於經史百家之藉靡不研究凡八年乃進而讀天方經/典又六年將從事於繙譯忽復不敢自信則又進而讀釋藏經傳三年道經一年又進而讀西洋書百三十七種由是怡然渙解乃/搦筆著述且譯且誦朝作夕思屏棄人事舉凡當世聲色利祿之途視之若浮雲之過太空而飄風之入吾耳也久之又以為未足/復裹糧負笈歷齊魯燕趙走京師與朝士賢大夫游相與討論學術折而至湘楚入秦隴訪求遺經宿學南下武林上會稽尋岫嶼/碑再登天童及大嵩珠山觀滄海而學識益大進雍正庚子應兗州太守馬公之招謁孔林心愾然有所感遂辭而歸蓋至是而涉/獵之富登覽之遠足以尊所聞而副所志矣方其求天方經典原本也得至聖錄全帙於河南朱仙鎮賽氏得吳氏藏經數十冊于/京師某氏皆西文旁行自元代入中國藏於秘府至明季流寇之亂始流傳人間其書多言天算輿地之學為世所罕覩既又得人/鏡格致全經諸書於秦中於是本教中故藉雅記集略香備矣先生自少至老所著書數百卷其先刊行者曰天方典禮二十卷天/方性理五卷既又著五功釋義一卷字母解義一卷晚年始著至聖實錄年譜一書博採天方群藉臚列至聖生平事蹟頗仿紫陽/綱目之例年經事緯凡涉於政教刑法禮樂陰陽五行風俗疆域人物輯錄無遺蓋數十年心力之所萃垂老而後成之者也先生/晚歸金陵居清涼山掃葉樓十餘年閉戶覃思一時名公賢士無不知金陵劉居士者乾隆中/天子開四庫採訪天下古今遺書而天方典禮遂得收入存目中提要稱其習儒書援經義文頗雅贍嗚呼信矣先生墓在聚寶門外粵/匪之亂全家殲焉譜牒無徵其世自漢英先生以上殆不可考先生卒歲月亦不能詳以年輩計之自康熙中葉迄乾隆初年享/壽蓋五六十歲有遠孫德坤今為金陵淨覺寺掌教能善承先志繼介廉先生之學於不朽云光緒丙午鄉人士集貲葺先生墓凡/為礦若干丈華表二石坊一碑一而屬鼎為文以志之乃即其犖犖可紀者著於碑俾知吾教中大賢邱壟之所在又欲使後之人/有所考鏡觀感焉銘曰峩峩鍾山孕靈毓奇穆穆先生寔降於茲遺編榛莽廓而清之回教西來歷年逾千非釋非道末流渙焉西稱哲學我宗儒經非是/不美乃墜晦暝手振墜緒爰爇其光明教闡理厥聲琅琅坏土既夷坊表誰正既封既樹棗梓是敬告我後人式此卓行/宣統二年歲在庚戌二月朔乙亥越十六日庚寅建/花翎二品銜署理湖北鹽法武昌道軍機處存記湖北補用道上元金鼎撰 武進李正華書/江西補用知縣金嗣芬篆額 上元侯仁繼刻石



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Contents

- **MALGORZATA WIELIŃSKA-SOLTWEDEL:** Editorial 5
- **DIWAKAR ACHARYA:** The Androgynous Form of Viṣṇu and the Yet
Unpublished *Vāsudevakalpa* 7
- **HERMINA CIELAS:** Elements of Animate and Inanimate Nature
in the Practice of *Avadhāna* 29
- **MAX DEEG:** Indian Regional *nāga* Cults and Individual *nāga*
Stories in Chinese Buddhist Travelogues 51
- **NICOLAS LEVI, ROMAN HUSARSKI:** Buddha under Control.
Buddhism's Legacy in North Korea 79
- **HONG LUO:** The Karmabhedavastu of Guṇaprabha's *Vinayasūtra* 97
- **OLENA ŁUCYSZYNA:** Sāṃkhya on the Validity (*prāmānya*)
and Invalidity (*aprāmānya*) of Cognition 145
- **KATARZYNA MARCINIAK:** The Thirty-Two Marks of a Great Man
in Two Metrical Lists in the *Mahāvastu* 177
- **XIAOQIANG MENG:** A Preliminary Study of the Dunhuang Tibetan
Fragments of the *Mūlasarvāstivāda-Ekottarakarmaśataka* (I):
Tarjanīyakarman 205
- **MARTA MONKIEWICZ:** Calendrical Terminology in the Early
Vedic Astronomical Treatises of the *Jyotiṣavedāṅga* 243

- **TAO PAN:** Tocharian A *ārkiśoṣi* ‘world with radiance’
and Chinese *suo po shi jie* ‘world of *sabhā*’ 263
- **DAVID PIERDOMINICI LEÃO:** A New House for the God in Tenkasi:
Divine Dreams and Kings in 15th–16th-century Pāṇṭiya
Inscriptions and Sanskrit Courtly Production 295
- **BARBARA STÖCKER-PARNIAN:** The Tomb Inscription for Liu Zhi
at the End of the Qing Period (1910). Commemoration
of an Islamic Scholar by a Traditional Inscription to Support
Modernisation 313
- **HANNA URBAŃSKA:** The Twilight Language of Siddhas
and Sanskrit Figures of Speech in *Viśākha Ṣaṣṭi* 329
- **AIQING WANG:** *Breaking an Eagle* and Pick-Up Artists in
a Chinese Context 357
- Editorial principles 376