

The Heart of Wang Daiyu's Philosophy: The Seven Subtleties of Islamic Spiritual Physiology*

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Abstract

The True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching (Zhengjiao zhenquan 正教真詮), published in 1642 by Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (ca. 1590–1658), is the oldest extant text in the *Han Kitab*, a Sino-Islamic canon. This literature employed Confucian, Daoist, and Buddhist language and imagery to explain Islamic thought. Wang was a pioneering figure in the institutionalization of this distinct Sino-Islamic discourse and crystallized much of the terminology used throughout subsequent *Han Kitab* literature. In the *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, Wang analyzes the spiritual nature of the heart, dividing it into three aspects and seven levels. These seven levels are correlative of the classification of subtleties (*laṭā'if*) or stages (*aṭwār*) developed by authors affiliated with the Kubrawi Sufi order. In this article, Wang's spiritual taxonomy is analyzed in comparison with delineations of the multiple levels of the heart determined by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 1256) and Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317). Through a close reading of the sources I establish the intellectual influences from these authors' thought on Wang's explanation of Islam. By doing so we begin to determine the various sources for Sino-Islamic thought and determine an exact lexical register of Chinese language Islamic literature.

Résumé

Publié en 1642 par Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (c. 1590–1658) *La véritable explication de l'enseignement orthodoxe (Zhengjiao Zhenquan 正教真詮)* est le plus ancien texte dans le canon sino-islamique appelé le *Han Kitab*. Cette littérature utilise des lexiques et des images confucéenne, taoïste et bouddhiste pour expliquer la pensée islamique. Wang était un défricheur dans l'institutionnalisation de ce discours sino-islamique, et formalisée de la terminologie utilisée dans le *Han Kitab*. Dans le *Zhengjiao Zhenquan* Wang analyse la nature spirituelle du cœur, en le divisant en trois aspects et sept niveaux. Ces sept niveaux correspondent de la classification des subtilités (*laṭā'if*) ou des niveaux (*aṭwār*) développés par des auteurs affiliés à la confrérie soufie de la Kubrawiyya. Dans cet article la taxonomie spirituel de Wang est analysée en comparaison avec les délimitations des multiples niveaux de cœur ont déterminé par Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (m. 1256) et Nūr al-Dīn

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Isfarāyīnī (m. 1317). Par à une lecture attentive des sources je décris les influences intellectuelles de la pensée de ces auteurs sur l'explication de l'Islam de Wang. Ce faisant, nous commençons à déterminer les différentes sources de pensée sino-islamique et de déterminer un registre lexical de la littérature islamique en la langue chinoise.

Keywords

China, *Han Kitab*, heart, Kubrawiyya, Najm al-Dīn Rāzī, Neo-Confucianism, Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī, scripture hall education (*jingtang jiaoyu*), Sino-Islamic literature, subtleties, Sufism, translation, Wang Daiyu

The True Explanation of the Orthodox Teaching (*Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮), published in 1642 by Wang Daiyu 王岱輿 (ca. 1590–1658), is the oldest extant text in the *Han Kitab*, a Sino-Islamic canon.¹ Wang was a principal author in this intellectual dialogue and his influence on subsequent Chinese language texts within this catalog was paramount. He was the pioneering figure in the institutionalization of a distinct Sino-Islamic discourse and crystallized terminology used throughout the subsequent *Han Kitab* literature, which used Daoist, Buddhist, and Confucian expressions to discuss Islam. Previous scholarship on Wang Daiyu focused on his use of a Neo-Confucian vocabulary to render expressions from Persian and Arabic and his reliance on Sufi texts for his interpretations of Islam but did not demonstrate any textual evidence for this process outside of the school of Ibn al-‘Arabī.² This article demonstrates one example of the influence of authors affiliated with the Kubrawiyya Sufi order on Wang Daiyu’s explanation of Islam, specifically Najm al-Dīn Rāzī

¹ The first Islamic texts in Chinese, of which there are no extant copies, are the *Investigation of the Teachings of Pure and True* (*Qingzhen jiaokao* 情真教考), the *Lord’s Book of Explaining Obstructions* (*Junshu shiyi* 君書釋疑), and the *Teachings of the Arabian Sage* (*Tianfang shengjiao* 天方聖教), all of which are only known from their inclusion in Liu Zhi’s 劉智 (ca. 1670–1724) *Veritable Records of the Most Sagely of Islam* (*Tianfang zhisheng shilu* 天方至聖實錄). Donald Daniel Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese* (Canberra: Canberra College of Advanced Education, 1981), 21. For background on the *Han Kitab* see Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Chinese Muslims in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

² The most comprehensive work on Wang Daiyu in English is Sachiko Murata, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light: Wang Tai-yu’s Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih’s Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000). See also idem, “Islam in China: Wang Daiyu’s Real Commentary on the True Teaching,” in *Windows on the House of Islam: Muslim Sources on Spirituality and Religious Life*, ed. John Renard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 278–83; Cheuk Yin Lee, “Islamic Values in Confucian Terms: Wang Daiyu (ca. 1580–1658) and his Zhengjiao Zhenquan (Genuine Annotation of the Orthodox Teachings),” in *Islam and Confucianism: A Civilizational Dialogue*, ed. Osman Baker and Cheng Gek Nai (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1996), 75–94; and Jonathan Lipman, *Familiar Strangers: A History of Muslims in Northwest China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), 75–9; and Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 134–7.

(d. 1256) and Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī (d. 1317). Moreover, previous work on the *Han Kitab* determined the Islamic texts that were utilized by Sino-Muslim authors through an examination of transliterated titles in bibliographies or located in libraries.³ However, few of these investigations have looked closely at the content of the Chinese works and demonstrated how the texts mentioned in these bibliographies influenced them. This study will determine one instance of the theological and literary connections between the Chinese treatises in the *Han Kitab* and the Islamic original sources using Wang's description of the spiritual function of the heart in *The True Explanation* as an illustration of this relationship. This example clearly demonstrates Wang's reliance on previous texts while writing *The True Explanation* and the creative inspiration they provided for rendering an Islamic perspective through a Chinese

³ For examinations of the Arabic and Persian Islamic texts found or mentioned in China see Donald Daniel Leslie and Mohamed Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih," *Central Asiatic Journal* 26 (1982): 78–104; Donald Daniel Leslie, Yang Daye and Ahmed Youssef, "Arabic Works Shown to the Qianlong Emperor in 1782," *Central Asiatic Journal* 45 (2001): 7–27; Leslie, *Islamic Literature in Chinese*; Isaac Mason, "Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature," *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 56 (1925): 172–215; idem, "Supplementary Notes on Chinese-Mohammedan Literature," *Friends of Muslims* 11 (1937): 14–26; Ludmilla Panskaya and Donald Daniel Leslie, *Introduction to Palladi's Chinese Literature of Muslims* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1977); Mozafar Bakhtyar, "China," in *World Survey of Islamic Manuscripts*, vol. IV, ed. Geoffrey Roper (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1994), 61–116; M.J. Shari'at, "The Library of the Tung-his [sic Tongsi] Mosque at Peking," *Asian Affairs* 11.1 (1980): 68–70; Zhao Can 趙燦, *Jingxue xi chuan pu* 經學系傳譜 (*Genealogy of the Transmission and Lineage of Classical Learning*), unpublished manuscript, 1677; *ibid.* punctuated edition, ed. Yang Yongchang 楊永昌 and Ma Jizu 馬繼祖 (Xining: Qinghai Renmin Chubanshe, 1989); Yang Huai-zhong 楊懷中 and Yu Zhengui 余振貴, eds., *Yisilan Yu Zhongguo Wenhua*. 伊斯蘭與中國文化 (*Islam and Chinese Culture*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1995), esp. 347–68; Pang Shiqian 龐士謙, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yan'ge ji keben" 中國回教寺院教育之沿革及課本 (A History of Madrasa Education in China and its Textbooks), (1937) reprinted in Bai Shouyi, *Zhongguo Yisilan Shi Cungao* 中國伊斯蘭史存稿 (*Manuscripts of the History of Islam in China*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia People's Press, 1982), 366–74; Yu Zhengui and Yang Huai-zhong, eds., *Zhongguo Yisilan wenxian zhuyi tiyao* 中國伊斯蘭獻文著譯提要 (*Summary of Original and Translated Chinese Islamic Literature*) (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 1993); Tazaka Kodo, *Chugoku ni okeru Kaikyō no denrai to sono guzu* (Tokyo: Toyo bunko, 1964); Rokuro Kuwata, "Ryu Chi no saikyō shomoku ni tsuite," in *Ichimura Hakushi Koki Kinen Tōyō Shi Ronsō* (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1933), 335–53; Saguchi Toru, "Chugoku Isuramu no kyoten," *Toyogakuko* 32 (1950): 480–508; Edgar Blochet, "Notice sur onze manuscrits persans rapportés du Kansou," in H.M.G. d'Ollone et al., *Recherches sur les Musulmans chinois* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1911), 583–9; Henry Blodget, "Arabs in Peking," *Journal of the Musulman Oriental Society* 8 (1866): xxi–xxii; L. Bouvat, "Une bibliothèque de mosquée chinoise," *Revue de Monde Musulman* 4 (1908): 516–21; Martin Hartman, "Littérature des Musulmans chinois," *Revue de Monde Musulman* 9 (1908): 275–88; R. Majerczak, "Littérature musulmane: Analyse d'un recueil composé par l'Archimandrite Palladius," *Revue de Monde Musulman* 28 (1914): 108–64; and Arnold Vissiere and L. Bouvat, "Quelques papiers de la mission d'Ollone en Chine: Catalogue d'une bibliothèque (de A-hong)," *Revue de Monde Musulman* 6 (1908): 703–7.

religio-philosophical framework.⁴ This article also highlights the universal issue of linguistic and cultural translation of Islamic thought. Wang's work demonstrates how non-Arab Muslims negotiated the creative boundaries of religious and cultural interactions through literary products. Overall, this textual analysis of *The True Explanation* aims to demonstrate that Wang Daiyu established a pattern of synthesizing related but different systems of overlapping theories from various Islamic sources in reformulating a Sino-Islamic literary tradition.

The Setting

One of the key assertions of this article is that Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's and Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī's texts were available to Wang Daiyu. So we must ask, how did these works fall into the hands of Sino-Muslim authors? Unfortunately, this question is difficult to answer with any detail. The Sino-Islamic literature of the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries owes its creation to Sino-Muslims in the sixteenth century who were renewing textual reservoirs with sources from abroad. During the early Ming dynasty period (1368–1644), Arab, Persian, and Central Asian people were slowly assimilating, intermarrying with native people, and gradually forgetting their original languages after imperial processes were established to divide them from their homelands and accelerate acculturation into Chinese society.⁵ These social conditions had devastating effects on local Islamic learning and the distribution and preservation of textual resources.

Due to these circumstances, several Muslim scholar-teachers began to rethink Islamic education for Chinese-speaking Muslims who wanted to approach their intellectual religious heritage. As a result, some Sino-Muslim literati established an educational system, called scripture hall education

⁴ Wang was not following a single intellectual lineage, but rather, like many *Han Kitab* authors, utilized various sources that were available in China at the time in the formulation of his thought. Here, I argue that Kubrawiyya authors are an evident source, but not necessarily his only resource.

⁵ Many of these policies were instituted by the founding emperor of the Ming dynasty (1368–1644), Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328–98), which were aimed at integrating “foreigners” or “barbarians” (*yi* 夷). For example, in *The Great Ming Code* (*Daming lu* 大明律), completed in 1397, it decrees, “Mongols and Central Asians (Semu people *semuren* 色目人) shall marry with Chinese persons. They shall not marry within their own race. Any violations shall be punished by eighty strokes of beating with the heavy stick, and both the men and women shall be enslaved by the government” (Jiang Yonglin, *The Great Ming Code: Da Ming lü* [Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005], 88).

(*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育), which utilized an Islamic curriculum made up of Arabic, Persian, as well as Chinese works.⁶

This new system was founded by Hu Dengzhou 胡登洲 (ca. 1522–97) and inspired by his own pursuit of Islamic knowledge.⁷ In his early life, Hu studied the Confucian classics while receiving a traditional Islamic education in Northwest China. He became frustrated with the dialogical method of his Muslim instructors and decided to seek out greater knowledge in the Islamic heartlands. After performing the pilgrimage and studying in the Middle East, Hu returned with numerous Arabic and Persian texts that would become the basis for the new educational system.⁸

The key Islamic sources for Sino-Muslims were initially used as instructional manuals within the scripture hall education system (*jingtang jiaoyu* 經堂教育). While Sufi authors wrote many of the texts that made up advanced Sino-Islamic education *jingtang* participants had no institutional or personal affiliations with Sufi orders.⁹ Nor is there any evidence to indicate that Hu Dengzhou was a member of any *ṭarīqa*, including the Kubrawiyya.¹⁰ Hu Dengzhou and the *jingtang* system were rooted in a traditionalist interpretive framework, which is called *gedimu* 格迪目 taken from the Arabic word *qādim* (old).¹¹ This is not a particular school of thought but rather a self-identification that is characterized by the allegiance to the Ḥanafi legal school and communal

⁶ For background on the *jingtang jiaoyu* see Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*; and Kristian Petersen, “Reconstructing Islam: Muslim Education and Literature in Ming-Qing China,” *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 23,3 (2006): 24–53.

⁷ See Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 39–43; and Petersen, “Reconstructing Islam.”

⁸ Unfortunately, there is no record of what texts Hu brought back to China with him. Many of the texts translated by the first generation of *Han Kitab* authors were Sufi ones that were widely read throughout the Persianate world and were not texts exclusive to any affiliation or brotherhood. It is likely that Hu introduced these texts to the Sino-Muslim students.

⁹ Other popular Sufi works among Sino-Muslims included ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Jāmi’s (1414–92) *Rays of the Flashes* (*Ashī‘at al-lama‘āt*) and *Gleams* (*Lawā’ih*), ‘Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī’s (d. ca. 1300) *The Furthest Goal* (*Maqṣad-i aqṣā*), and *Rose Garden* (*Gulistān*) of Sa’dī of Shirāz (d. 1291 or 1294). There are still numerous copies of these texts found in mosques throughout China. See Bakhtyar, “China.”

¹⁰ Ma Tong has produced a history of the Kubrawiyya in China within the context of Islamic organizations in China, including both Sufi brotherhoods (also discussing the Jahriyya, Khufiyya, and Qādiriyya) and non-Sufi Islamic affiliations (such as the *gedimu* 格迪目, Ikhwān Yihewāni 伊赫瓦尼, and *Xidaotang* 西道堂 (Ma Tong 馬通, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai yu menhuan zhidu shilu* 中國伊斯蘭教派與門宦制度史略 [A Brief History of the Schools and Menhuan Organizations of Chinese Islam] [Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 1983]; and idem, *Zhongguo Yisilan jiao pai men huan su yuan* 中國伊斯蘭教派門宦溯源 [Tracing the Origins of the Schools and Menhuan Organizations of Chinese Islam] [Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin, 2000]). Ma Tong serves as the primary resource for Michael Dillon’s reconstruction of Islamic organizations in China. See, Michael Dillon, *China’s Muslim Hui Community: Migration, Settlement and Sects* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 1999).

¹¹ Ma, *Zhongguo yisilan jiaopai*, 88–93; and Lipman, *Familiar Strangers*, 47–51.

activities revolving around local religious institutions as opposed to transnational connections. While some local leaders may have disagreed with scripture hall education, Hu and his colleagues did not view themselves as reformers. Rather, Hu was merely responding to the instructional needs of Sino-Muslims but situated education within seemingly normative patterns of Sino-Islamic knowledge.

The scripture hall system was developed to counter the negative intellectual effects of assimilation within the larger Chinese society on Islamic learning. Concern about the loss of their Muslim heritage was the impetus for constructing an indigenous structure and process for preserving Islamic knowledge that would produce learned Muslim scholars. The scripture hall system mirrored madrasa education by creating a specific curriculum and promoting an ongoing course of study as opposed to the uneven exchanges between teacher and student, practiced by most Sino-Muslims prior to the seventeenth century and experienced by Hu himself. It was maintained by financial donations from Muslim families and the creation of professional religious teachers. Texts were copied by students and reestablished within new schools as Sino-Muslims returned to their homes and established new *jingtang* centers.¹²

Scripture hall education was offered as a parallel and complimentary system to mainstream Confucian academies, and many male participants were enrolled in both. The scripture hall system began in Northwest China but soon thrived in the cosmopolitan cities of Southeast China, such as Nanjing. Here, many of the Muslim students were firmly situated in Chinese society, several holding administrative positions and imperial degrees, and were conversant in the Chinese histories and literary classics. The major innovation of the scripture hall system was the introduction of Chinese as a language of instruction. Its characteristic quality was the emphasis on the dissemination of knowledge based on key texts written in Arabic, Persian and Chinese.¹³ The limited linguistic capacity of many of the Chinese students prompted the more advanced

¹² Often Sino-Muslims scholars viewed themselves as rescuers or preservers of Islamic knowledge achieved through translating, copying, and disseminating texts. See Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 82–8.

¹³ It would be impossible to reconstruct the textual curriculum developed under Hu Dengzhou and his followers because there is no historical catalogue of texts gathered during the sixteenth century. Liu Zhi 劉智 (1670–1724) was the first author to provide an extensive list of sources that he used to inform his writings in his *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (*Nature and Principle in Islam*) (1704) and *Tianfang Dianli* 天方典禮 (*Rituals of Islam*) (1710). Textual sources from nineteenth century Islamic education in China have also been examined and could help reveal early programs of study. For a close analysis of the sources to these texts see Leslie and Wassel, “Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih.” For nineteenth-century curriculum see Pang, “Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yan’ge ji keben,” and Yang and Yu, *Yisilan Yu Zhongguo Wenhua*, 346–68.

scholars to translate Arabic and Persian knowledge into Chinese. Therefore, translation became the centerpiece of the creation and maintenance of Sino-Islamic knowledge.

The *Han Kitab* literature was a direct product of the scripture hall system and owes its genesis to the leaders of this educational network. This body of literature was the result of scholars' interplay between traditional Chinese philosophical and religious thought and Islamic sources. The establishment of a new educational system led to the transformation of the local Islamic discourse, which was articulated through the *Han Kitab* texts. Sino-Islamic texts were dialogical creations that were marked and bound by their particular cultural repertoire.¹⁴ Rendering foreign knowledge intelligible within the local context generated vernacular discourses and thus the translational processes were not merely a linguistic search for equivalence.¹⁵ Either the self-identification or styled appearance of a Chinese text as a translation of an Arabic or Persian source sought to represent and acquire the authority of the broader Islamic discursive tradition. Therefore, rendering Arabic and Persian ideas into Chinese was a flexible process, which does not necessarily correlate with our modern notion of translation. The *Han Kitab* texts were cultural articulations of an inherited system of beliefs that was interpreted and mediated through local modes of meaning and signification.¹⁶ Outlining hermeneutical patterns and methods of Sino-Muslims authors can also assist scholars in recognizing and articulating these strategies that were employed in other Asian contexts.¹⁷ Wang Daiyu, the pioneer of Sino-Islamic literature, is significant because he represents the nascent stage of this development and a foundational example of Sino-Islamic literature.

¹⁴ For the theory of dialogics see M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). For the concept of cultural repertoire see Robert Campany, "On the very idea of religions (in the modern West and in early medieval China)," *History of Religions* 42.4 (2003): 287–319; and idem, *Making Transcendents: Ascetics and Social Memory in Early Medieval China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

¹⁵ Tony Stewart, "In Search of Equivalence: Conceiving Muslim-Hindu Encounter through Translation Theory," *History of Religions* 40.3 (2001): 261–88.

¹⁶ For a synthesis of the various translational avenues for authors in heteroglossic intellectual settings see Peeter Torop, "Translation as Translating Culture," *Sign Systems Studies* 30.2 (2002): 593–605.

¹⁷ For example, Ronit Ricci's work has been formative in understanding translational practices across Asian Muslim communities. See Ronit Ricci, *Islam Translated: Literature, Conversion, and the Arabic Cosmopolis of South and Southeast Asia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Introduction to Wang Daiyu

Wang Daiyu was one of the first Sino-Muslim authors to expound the theological perspective of Islam using written Chinese, and he was influential in developing the initial Chinese discourse for explaining Islamic knowledge.¹⁸ This formative period of the *Han Kitab* literature is indebted to Wang's work because he clarified a reliable view of Islam in a clear and simple language, which could easily be understood by the educated Chinese-speaking Muslims of the time. Wang received a traditional Islamic education as a child. He was trained in Arabic and Persian, and studied Qur'anic commentaries (*tafsīr*), Hadith literature, jurisprudence (*fiqh*), practical morality, theology (*kalām*), along with theoretical Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) and perhaps Islamic philosophy (*falsafa*).¹⁹ By the age of twenty, Wang began learning literary Chinese but he never received a formal education in the Chinese classics and probably learned to read and write Chinese in the scripture hall system in Nanjing.²⁰ At thirty, he wrote, "I was so ashamed of my stupidity and smallness that I started to read [Chinese] books on metaphysics and history."²¹ As a Muslim scholar, Wang's concern about his lack of knowledge was a result of his inability to converse with educated Sino-Muslims: those who had undertaken a traditional Chinese education, who understood the Confucian classics, but were unable to understand the principles of Islam.²² This situation appeared to be the motivating factor for Wang to commence his work on synthesizing Islam and Confucianism and clarifying their differences.²³

The major goal of Wang's writings was to resolve his students' and coreligionists' confusion about Islam. This is consonant with his writing style, which was concise and explanatory. Wang employed a predominantly Neo-Confucian lexicon, which would be clear and comprehensible to his intended audience, the Chinese-speaking, educated Muslims within the scripture hall system. He maintained the superiority of Islam over Chinese systems of thought while

¹⁸ Little is known of Wang Daiyu's personal life. There are several Chinese biographies of Wang Daiyu but they are all based on his own description presented in the preface to his first book, *Zhengjiao zhenquan* 正教真詮. See Wang Daiyu 王岱輿, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, *Qingzhen daxue*, *Xizhen zhengda* 正教真詮, 清真大學, 希真正答, ed. Yu Zhengui 余振貴 (reprint) (Yinchuan: Ningxia Renmin Chubanshe, 1987), 16–17.

¹⁹ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 20.

²⁰ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 135.

²¹ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 16. Quoted in Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 20.

²² Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 21.

²³ Wang Daiyu's writings often followed "Neo-Confucian" style and themes but he also employed terminology from Buddhist and Daoist discourses. The main goal of this article, however, is to demonstrate how Wang appropriated teachings from Islamic sources to structure his writings.

simultaneously describing his tradition in a self-consciously Neo-Confucian vocabulary. It is likely that his work was not necessarily intended to have a comprehensive influence. Its original purpose was to further the spiritual development of Wang's students and closest colleagues.²⁴ The textual nexus of previous Arabic and Persian Islamic works certainly inspired much of Wang's writing, however, like most *Han Kitab* authors, these works were not cited and his works generally lacked attribution to early texts.²⁵ Despite Wang's initial intentions, his writings established much of the terminology that would be employed by later *Han Kitab* authors and became the archetype for the literary heirs in the scripture hall educational network.

The Heart of Wang Daiyu's Philosophy

Wang Daiyu outlined the Islamic understanding of the heart in a simple and clear manner, reflecting several Sufi influences but also deeply rooted in traditional conceptions taken from the Qur'an and Hadith. The heart is central to his teachings because it is the locus of knowledge and faith and plays a key role in the spiritual journey. Wang's goal was to clarify the connection between God and human beings and demonstrate how they could actualize their own true nature and become the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Wang explains this through his *sanyi* 三一 theory (three ones), which is made up of the notions the Real One (*zhenyi* 真一), the Numerical One (*shuyi* 數一), and the Embodied One (*tiyi* 體一).²⁶ In his more general terms, these can be understood as, the Real One is God in his essence (*dhāt*), the Numerical One is divinity (*ulūhīyya*), and the Embodied One is the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*).²⁷ He focused on the role of the heart because it is the essential spiritual faculty in achieving this goal. Purification of the heart is essential in actualizing this inherent perfection. The perfect human being exhibits all of God's attributes and lets the separation between the individual identity and

²⁴ Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 136–7.

²⁵ While non-attribution is not common within many Arabic and Persian Islamic traditions it is not a total anomaly. See, for example, the striking instance of non-attribution in the famous *tafsīr* by Abū l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī (d. 1072) as discussed in Martin Nguyen, *Sufi Master and Qur'an Scholar: Abū'l-Qāsim al-Qushayrī and the Laṭā'if al-ishārāt* (London: Oxford University Press, 2012).

²⁶ The three ones are addressed in the first chapter of the *Zhengjiao zhenquan* and in the entire *Qingzhen daxue*. See Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, *Qingzhen daxue*, *Xizhen zhengda*, 19–23 and 227–49; and Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 70–112.

²⁷ These terms, and especially *al-insān al-kāmil*, were developed by Ibn al-'Arabī. See William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-'Arabī's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

him dissolve into union. Hence, *al-insān al-kāmil* is both the ontological archetype of humans and the universe, and the model to be followed to achieve perfection. The heart is the physical and spiritual axis of the perfect human being. Wang taught how one can open up one's heart to knowledge and faith in order to achieve union with God and to demonstrate one's innate excellence.

The Qur'anic Heart

The Qur'an describes the heart as the seat of faith and the supreme spiritual organ that distinguishes human beings from other beings because it is through the heart that one can understand the nature of reality. The root meaning of the word is "to return, go back, overturn, fluctuate, or undergo transformation."²⁸ The term *qalb* (heart) is used 132 times in the Qur'an and synonyms are employed several times. I will only briefly outline the major Qur'anic themes concerning the heart here in order to situate Wang's discussion.²⁹ The heart is the site of divine revelation for Muhammad and the bridge to God for all individuals.³⁰ The Qur'an tells us that keeping a pure heart is the gateway to God. For those who maintain faith in their hearts and have been guided by God's will enter Paradise.³¹ The heart, as the foundation of knowledge and faith, becomes the central faculty for engaging God and understanding his nature. However, not everyone is able to actualize the qualities of the heart because they have been shut off from God due to their faithlessness.³² Even worse than a seal is

²⁸ Murata, *The Tao of Islam*, 289.

²⁹ For interpretations of the Qur'an I have consulted Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, Translation and Commentary* (Brentwood, Md.: Amana Corp., 1983); Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York: New American Library, 1953); Mohammedali H. Shakir, *The Holy Qur'an: Arabic text and English translation* (Tehran: Tahrike Tarsile Qur'an, 1999); and A.J. Arberry, *The Koran Interpreted* (New York: Macmillan, 1955). I use passages from all four texts throughout the article.

³⁰ The Qur'an says: "Say: Whoever is an enemy to Gabriel-for he brings down the (revelation) to thy heart (*qalb*) by God's will, a confirmation of what went before, and guidance and glad tidings for those who believe" (Qur'an 2:97). See also Qur'an 26:192–4 and 53:11.

³¹ E.g. "Whosoever fears the All-merciful in the Unseen, and comes with a penitent heart (*qalb*): 'Enter it in peace! This is the Day of Eternity!'" (Qur'an 50:33–4). "No affliction befalls, except it be by the leave of God. Whosoever believes in God, He will guide his heart (*qalb*). And God has knowledge of everything" (Qur'an 64:11). See also Qur'an 2:118, 7:2, 25:32.

³² E.g. "If God willed, He could seal up thy heart (*qalb*). And God blots out Vanity, and proves the Truth by His Words. For He knows well the secrets of all hearts (*dhāt al-ṣudūr*)" (Qur'an 42:24). *Ṣadr* is the chest, bosom, breast, or heart. The phrase *dhāt al-ṣudūr* means "the innermost secret thoughts." See also Qur'an 2:6–7, 10:74, and 40:35.

the diseased heart, which can cause it to be sinful, hard, and full of evil.³³ The heart must remain soft and receptive to God's guidance, for those who reject his guidance will suffer greatly. God concentrates on the heart because it is by the intentions of the heart that individuals are judged.³⁴ Furthermore, individuals should not try to hide their intentions because God's all-encompassing knowledge allows him to perceive all that is in one's heart.³⁵ Altogether, the heart is the location of union with God, where he instills knowledge and faith, and where he looks for judgment.

The Heart in Sufism

Wang Daiyu's description of the heart reflected the understandings of many Sufi authors who developed a detailed psychological picture of humans and their various levels of being. In this general schema, the heart lies at the intersection between the *nafs* and the *rūḥ*. The Qur'anic use of the term *nafs* generally designates an individual with reference to the lower human soul, described as the "self."³⁶ It designates the features of an individual's animal nature, where the person is caught up in the material world of multiplicity. In the Qur'an, *rūḥ* refers to God's breath and is that which gives life to humans.³⁷ According to this arrangement, the heart is the incorporeal, luminous substance that is situated at the battleground between these two worlds of unity (*rūḥ*) and multiplicity (*nafs*), being pulled in both directions. According to the Qur'an it also has several levels, which have been interpreted in various ways by the Sufis: the outermost breast (*ṣadr*), the fleshy heart (*qalb*), the pericardium (*fu'ād*), and

³³ "Those in whose hearts (*qulūb*) is a disease—thou seest how eagerly they run about amongst them, saying: "We do fear lest a change of fortune bring us disaster." Ah! perhaps God will give (thee) victory, or a decision according to His will. Then will they repent of the thoughts which they secretly harbored in their hearts (*qulūb*)" (Qur'an 5:52). See also Qur'an 2:10 and 10:57.

³⁴ "God will not take you to task for a slip in your oaths; but He will take you to task for what your hearts (*qulūb*) have earned; and God is All-forgiving, All-clement" (Qur'an 2:225). See also Qur'an 17:36, 22:32, 26:89, and 33:5.

³⁵ "And know that God Knoweth what is in your hearts (*qulūb*), and take heed of Him; and know that God is Oft-forgiving, Most Forbearing" (Qur'an 2:235). See also Qur'an 2:283, 3:119, 5:116, and 33:51.

³⁶ However, it can have different meanings within a given framework because of the various levels of the *nafs*, such as the "soul that commands evil" (*al-nafs al-ammāra bi-l-sū*) (Qur'an 12:53), "the blaming soul" (*al-nafs al-lawwāma*) (Qur'an 75:2), or the "soul at peace" (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna*) (Qur'an 89:27). See Carl Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1997), 45.

³⁷ "He Who has made everything which He has created most good: He began the creation of man with (nothing more than) clay, . . . and breathed into him something of His spirit (*rūḥ*)" (Qur'an 32:7–9).

the inner heart (*lubb*).³⁸ The ultimate goal is to attain the higher level of the *rūḥ* through the inner conflict against the animal instincts of the *nafs* (*riyādat al-nafs*).³⁹

The True Heart

Wang's reliance on earlier Islamic texts becomes evident when we examine his explanation of the heart directly. He addressed the role of the heart throughout his work but specifically focused on the topic in chapter twelve of the *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, titled “*Zhenxin*” 真心, or “*True Heart*.” The heart, in both the Islamic and Chinese understandings, is the spiritual organ that is particular to the highest human possibilities and knowledge of reality. As a result, the heart becomes the essential feature in understanding and carrying out the religious life. Wang divided the heart into three aspects and seven levels that together make up the human's divine composition. These seven levels correspond to the classification of subtleties (*laṭā'if*) or stages (*aṭwār*) developed by the Kubrawi Sufi order. Through an analysis of the spiritual taxonomy of the heart, we will see that Wang's explanation of the heart demonstrates that he systematically synthesized conceptual frameworks from various authors of the Kubrawi Sufi order. It is apparent that his understanding was shaped by these classifications but was sophisticatedly adapted to reflect native sensitivities and terminology. Through his writings he transformed these systems into an intelligible interpretation of the heart that would be informative and effective for the local population.

Like many Sufis, Wang opened his commentary on the heart by quoting the oft-cited *ḥadīth qudsī*, “The Scripture⁴⁰ says ‘Heaven and Earth are not able to encompass the True Lord,⁴¹ only the heart of the correct person can [encompass Him].’”⁴² Here Wang asserted the spiritual significance of the heart and

³⁸ Ernst, *The Shambhala Guide to Sufism*, 45.

³⁹ For further discussion see E.E. Calverley, “Doctrines of the Soul (*nafs* and *rūḥ*) in Islam,” *Muslim World* 33 (1943): 254–64.

⁴⁰ The term *jīng* 經 may refer to the Qur'an but in this case refers to the larger supporting body of Islamic literature, the Hadith, or recorded sayings and actions of the prophet Muhammad.

⁴¹ Wang was the first to employ the term *zhenshu* 真主 to refer to God, which was reiterated by most Sino-Muslim authors up until the present day.

⁴² Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 58. The original reads, “Neither the earth nor the heavens are wide enough for Me, but there is room for Me in the gentle, meek heart of My faithful servant.” Cited in al-Ghazālī, *The Elaboration of the Marvels of the Heart* (*Kitāb sharḥ 'ajā'ib al-qalb*), book 21 of the *Revival of the Religious Sciences* (*Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*), quoted in John Renard, *Knowledge of God in Classical Sufism: Foundations of Islamic Mystical Theology* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004), 304.

its centrality in the quest for knowledge of God. He informed us that the heart is absolutely necessary in the journey for knowledge: “The significance of the correct heart belongs to those who recognize the True Lord. Not every person possesses this true heart.”⁴³ For those who do not possess a true heart, Wang outlined the heart’s spiritual physiology, in order for all individuals to embody the true heart.

The Seven Levels of the Heart

Wang divided the heart into three aspects and seven levels that make up the human’s divine anatomy and include all the features of human perfection. He explained,

The heart possesses three aspects, called ‘the animal heart,’ ‘the human heart,’ and ‘the true heart.’ These three hearts altogether possess seven levels; these are called [1] ‘the level of desire,’ [2] ‘the level of wisdom,’ [3] ‘the level of benevolence,’ [4] ‘the level of seeing,’ [5] ‘the level of joy,’ [6] ‘the level of mystery,’ and [7] ‘the supreme level.’⁴⁴

Each of these hearts encompasses several of the various levels and demonstrates the practitioner’s advancement towards perfection.

Wang Daiyu’s Seven Levels of the Heart

1. level of desire (*yupin* 慾品)
 2. level of wisdom (*zhupin* 智品)
 3. level of benevolence (*renpin* 仁品)
 4. level of seeing (*jianpin* 見品)
 5. level of joy (*xipin* 喜品)
 6. level of mystery (*xuanpin* 玄品)
 7. supreme level (*zhipin* 至品)
-

It is this aspect of Wang’s categorization that draws on the seven subtleties or stages developed by Kubrawi Sufis.⁴⁵ Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 1221), the

⁴³ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 58.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 58–9.

⁴⁵ Many earlier Sufis have mentioned subtle entities, beginning with Junayd (d. 910), and including many famous scholars, such as Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 896), ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān al-Makkī

eponymous founder of the Kubrawiyya, and his disciples focused on mystical experiences that advanced the spiritual human psychology through an analysis of visions. Kubrā first explained the spiritual tetrad that would be the basis for later writers to develop a sophisticated system of subtle levels. In his *Aromas of Beauty and Preambles of Majesty* (*Fawā'ih al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl*), he explained the nature and interrelationship of the intellect (*‘aql*), spirit (*rūḥ*), heart (*qalb*) and mystery (*sirr*), demonstrating the role of the three fields of the spirit, heart and mystery.⁴⁶ Human perfection could be cultivated through visualization practices induced by the remembrance of God (*dhikr*). Varying states would be represented by several inner hues of color.⁴⁷ Najm al-Dīn Rāzī expanded this explanation to five hierarchical spiritual levels: intellect, spirit, heart, mystery and the hidden (*khafī*).⁴⁸ He then went on to develop a seven-tiered gradation of the spiritual and physical heart, which outlined the function for cultivating oneself towards perfection. Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī developed his own systemization of seven stages of the heart in his *Unveiling of Secrets* (*Kāshif al-asrār*).⁴⁹ In the technical classification of the heart both Rāzī and Isfarāyīnī move from general references regarding subtleties (*laṭā’if*) to a detailed discussion of seven stages (*aṭwār*).

Wang Daiyu was most explicitly exposed to these conceptual arrangements through the work of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī whose popular text, *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (*Mirṣād al-‘ibād min al-mabdā’ ilā l-ma‘ād*), was elevated to one of the primary books in advanced Sino-Islamic curriculum.⁵⁰ The *Mirṣād* was designated as one of the three scriptures on “the principle learning of human nature and mandate.”⁵¹ In 1651 the *Mirṣād* had been

(d. 909), Ḥallāj (d. 922), Sulamī (d. 1021), Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), and Abū Ḥafṣ ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234). See Arthur Buehler, *Sufi Heirs of the Prophet: The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998), 106 with relevant notes. For a later development of the *laṭā’if* system see Marcia K. Hermansen, “Shāh Walī Allāh’s Theory of the Subtle Spiritual Centers (Laṭā’if)-A Sufi Model of Personhood and Self-Transformation,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 47 (1988): 1–25.

⁴⁶ Fritz Meier, *Die Fawā’ih al-ḡamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-ḡalāl des Naḡm ud-dīn al-Kubrā* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1957), 168–74. For an English gloss of this treatise’s content see, Gerhard Böwering, “Mystical Circles and Colors in Kubra’s Philosophical Kaleidoscope,” in *Beyond Conventional Constructs*, ed. G. Irfān (Lahore: Maktaba Jadeed Press, 1987), 82–101.

⁴⁷ Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Pearson (New York: Omega Publications, 1994), 61–97.

⁴⁸ Hamid Algar (trans.), *The Path of God’s Bondsmen from Origin to Return* (Delmar, NY: Caravan Books 1982), 18–9 and 134–5.

⁴⁹ Hermann Landolt (trans.), *Le Révélateur des Mystères: Kāshif al-Asrār* (Paris: Verdier, 1986).

⁵⁰ See also Mason, “Notes on Chinese Mohammedan Literature,” 199 n. 197; and Leslie, *Islamic Literature*, 27 n. 13. For an English translation and an explanation of this text’s importance throughout the Islamic world see Algar (trans.), *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*.

⁵¹ Two other Sufi texts were translated early within the *Han Kitāb* literature: ‘Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī’s *The Furthest Goal* (*Maqṣad-i aqṣā*), translated as *The Scripture of Studying the Truth*

translated into Chinese as *The Essentials of Returning to the Truth* (*Guizhen yaodao* 歸真要道) by Wu Zixian 伍子先. This text was so popular within the Sino-Islamic system that several people created their own translations, under different titles, to use in their local scripture hall schools.⁵² It is very likely that Wang had knowledge and access to this important work and its influence is reflected in Wang's classifications.⁵³ Wang's explanation is closely related to the seven levels delineated by Rāzī but it is difficult to confirm the direct correlation with certainty because Wang did not cite his name or this text in his account of the heart.⁵⁴ However, Wang's terminology and designations may be understood in relation to Rāzī's interpretation because Wang's arrangement is analogous with his categorizations.

The Kubrawī account of the seven levels of the heart originated with Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's *Mirṣād*. In the *Mirṣād*'s classification, the heart's seven levels correspond to their physical divinity and their function for spiritual progress. Rāzī explains:

Know that the heart in man is like the heavens, and his body like the earth, for the sun of the spirit shines on the earth of the bodily frame from the heavens of the heart, illuminating it with the light of light. As the earth has seven climes and the heavens have seven spheres, the bodily frame has seven members and the heart seven aspects, corresponding to the seven spheres of the heavens—'and He created you in stages and aspects' (Qur'an 71:14).⁵⁵

The first of these levels is the breast (*ṣadr*), which is the outer skin of the heart and is susceptible to the temptations of the physical world because it

(*Yanzhen jing* 研真經) by She Yunshan 舍蘊善 (1638–1703); and Jāmī's *The Rays of the Flashes* (*Ashī'at al-lama'āt*), translated as *The Mysterious Secret of the Original Display* (*Zhaoyuan mijue* 昭元秘訣), attributed to Po Nachi 破納痴, possibly She Yunshan's penname. See Zhao Can, *Jingxue xi chuan pu*, 19, 90.

⁵² Benite, *Dao of Muhammad*, 127 n. 20.

⁵³ Handwritten Persian copies of the *Mirṣād*, dating from the seventeenth century, still exist in some areas of China. See Bakhtyar, "China," 101.

⁵⁴ Non-attribution, of course, was common within Sino-Islamic works. Wang did mention specific individuals on occasion but usually to exemplify a point. For example, he narrates the following in his chapter on the heart; "Someone asked their senior Rābī'a (*labian* 喇必安) [al-'Adawiyya (d. 801)] saying, 'Do you take pleasure in the Lord?' She said, 'That is correct.' 'Do you hate the Devil?' She said 'No!' 'Why is this?' She said, "I only have one heart, how could I ever possess two?" This story is found in the Persian text *Memorial of the Friends of God* (*Tadhikrat al-awliyā*) by Farīd al-Dīn 'Aṭṭār (d. ca. 1230). Rābī'a's response in the original reads, "Out of love of the compassionate, I have no occasion for hatred toward Satan. I saw the Prophet in a dream. He said, 'Rābī'a, do you love me?' I said, 'O Prophet of God, who is there that doesn't love you? But love of the real has so pervaded me that there is no place in my heart for love or hatred of another.'" Quoted in Michael Sells, *Early Islamic Mysticism: Sufi, Qur'an, Miraj, Poetic and Theological Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1996), 163.

⁵⁵ Algar (trans.), *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, 207.

is the barrier between the *nafs* and the heart. The second level is the heart (*qalb*), which is the seat of faith and the light of the intellect. The pericardium (*shaghāf*), the third level, is the site of affection, love, and compassion. The fourth level is the inner heart (*fu'ād*), which is the source of witnessing and vision.⁵⁶ These first four levels were related to Qur'anic passages but the last three levels were developed by Najm al-Dīn Rāzī and are not directly derived from Qur'anic terminology. The fifth level is the grain of the heart (*ḥabbat al-qalb*), the locus of love of God which has no room for love of any created thing. The core of the heart (*suwaydā'*) is the sixth level, which is the location of the unveiling of God-given knowledge. The final level is the blood of the heart (*muhjat al-qalb*), and is the site of the appearance of the lights of manifestation of the divine attributes.⁵⁷

In Wang's explanation, the first five levels of desire, wisdom, benevolence, seeing, and joy are equivalent in meaning and function with Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's account. Rather than a linguistic rendering of technical terminology Wang decided to rephrase the various levels in relation to their subtle physiology within the human being. Wang's designations reflect Chinese cultural signifiers that relate to notions of self-cultivation and human emotions. Here, we witness an example of the flexibility of translational patterns for Sino-Muslim authors, where recognizable local meanings displace the importance of specific specialized foreign terminology. Wang labeled the first subtlety the level of desire (*yupin* 慾品) because it corresponds to the physical body, which is dominated by earthly wants. He equated the second subtlety with the level of wisdom (*zhipin* 智品) because it is the position that one is involved with worldly matters but is awake to the goal of humanity. The third subtlety is the level of benevolence (*renpin* 仁品), because the individual has cast off immorality and embodied compassion.⁵⁸ Wang labeled the fourth subtlety the level of seeing (*jianpin* 見品) because the individual has opened up their eyes to faith and knowledge and begins the ascent to the highest spiritual levels. Wang identified the fifth subtlety as the level of joy (*xipin* 喜品) because the individual is only content when reflecting on God.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 207–9.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 209–10.

⁵⁸ Wang certainly had in mind the Confucian virtue Humanity (*ren* 仁) when selecting this term. One of the inaugurators of Neo-Confucianism Cheng Hao 程顥 (1033–1107), declares, "The man of *ren* forms one body with all things without any differentiation. Righteousness, propriety, wisdom, and faithfulness are all [expressions of] *ren*." See Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 523.

 Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's and Wang Daiyu's Seven Levels of the Heart

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. The breast (<i>ṣadr</i>) | level of desire (<i>yupin</i> 慾品) |
| 2. The heart (<i>qalb</i>) | level of wisdom (<i>zhipin</i> 智品) |
| 3. The pericardium (<i>shaghāf</i>) | level of benevolence (<i>renpin</i> 仁品) |
| 4. The inner heart (<i>fu'ād</i>) | level of seeing (<i>jianpin</i> 見品) |
| 5. The grain of the heart (<i>ḥabbat al-qalb</i>) | level of joy (<i>xipin</i> 喜品) |
| 6. The core of the heart (<i>suwaydā'</i>) | level of mystery (<i>xuanpin</i> 玄品) |
| 7. The blood of the heart (<i>muhjat al-qalb</i>) | supreme level (<i>zhipin</i> 至品) |

It appears evident that Wang also adopted the meaning of Persian designations that corresponded to Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī's systemization of the heart in his *Unveiling of Secrets*. Isfarāyīnī's Persian classic reproduced much of the same terminology from earlier scholars but in a new sequence. Similar to Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's hierarchy, Isfarāyīnī delineated the functions of the various stages of the heart (*aṭwār-i dil*) and did not refer to them directly as subtleties (*laṭā'if*). He used terminology comparable with the *Mirṣād* in his arrangement; the breast (*ṣadr*), the heart (*qalb*), the pericardium (*shaghāf*), the inner heart (*fu'ād*), the blood of the heart (*muhjat al-qalb*), the mystery (*sirr*), and the hidden (*khafī*). His purpose was to outline the relationship between the various levels of the heart and the seven spiritual and corporeal realms and demonstrate how one navigates towards perfection through visionary experiences. Isfarāyīnī went into little detail to describe the precise function of each level but he explained that "... located in each of these spheres of the heart is a good fruit of virtuous action of the soul at peace (*nafs-i muṭma'inna*)."⁵⁹ We can see from this outline that Wang employed identical terminology from the Persian text.⁶⁰ Wang's level of mystery used the same phrase as Isfarāyīnī

⁵⁹ Landolt (trans.), *Le Révélateur des Mystères*, 139, Persian text, 10.

⁶⁰ Again, Wang does not cite Isfarāyīnī as a source; however, it may be possible that *Unveiling of Secrets* was available to him. In Liu Zhi's *Tianfang xingli*, completed in 1704, he cites a text transliterated as *Keshifu esilaer* 克實福額思刺而 and translated into Chinese as *Xingxue qimeng* 性學啓蒙 (*Introduction to Philosophy*). Leslie notes that there are several works by this name but suggests the work is actually *Tafsīr al-Nasafī* by 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, following Hartman's designation and Pang's citation. Yao Jide and Wang Genming are less confident in their attribution and conclude more generally that it is a Persian work of philosophy by an unknown author. Based on this preliminary reading, I would propose that associating Liu's *Keshifu esilaer* with Isfarāyīnī's *Kāshif al-asrār* is the most likely counterpart. See, Liu Zhi, *Tianfang xingli* 天方性理 (Shanghai, 1863; Beijing, 1922; Shanghai, 1928); Leslie and Wassel, "Arabic and Persian Sources Used by Liu Chih," 91 n. 16; Hartman, "Litterature des Musulmans chinois"; Pang Shiqian, "Zhongguo Huijiao siyuan jiaoyu zhi yan'ge ji keben"; and Yao Jide and Wang Genming 姚繼德, 王根明, "Liu Zhi 'Tinafang xingli' cai ji jingshu wenxian kao 劉智《天方性理》採輯經書文獻考 (Arabic and

and the supreme level reflects the meaning of *khafī* by being fundamentally beyond ordinary human observation.

Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī and Wang Daiyu's Seven Levels of the Heart

| | |
|---|--|
| 1. The breast (<i>ṣadr</i>) | level of desire (<i>yupin</i> 慾品) |
| 2. The heart (<i>qalb</i>) | level of wisdom (<i>zhīpin</i> 智品) |
| 3. The pericardium (<i>shaghāf</i>) | level of benevolence (<i>renpin</i> 仁品) |
| 4. The inner heart (<i>fu'ād</i>) | level of seeing (<i>jianpin</i> 見品) |
| 5. The blood of the heart (<i>muhjat al-qalb</i>) | level of joy (<i>xipin</i> 喜品) |
| 6. The mystery (<i>sirr</i>) | level of mystery (<i>xuanpin</i> 玄品) |
| 7. The hidden (<i>khafī</i>) | supreme level (<i>zhīpin</i> 至品) |

Overall, Wang incorporated concepts from both Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's and Isfarāyīnī's categorizations in his labeling of the seven levels of the heart. He used terminology analogous to that of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī and Isfarāyīnī for each of the seven levels which appears to match in both function and meaning with these systems. All of these interpretations should have been available to him and taken together they indicate his knowledge of them and his accurate understanding of the heart in this school of thought.⁶¹

The Three Levels of the Heart

Wang's spiritual taxonomy also divided the heart into three components, the animal heart (*shouxin* 獸心), the human heart (*renxin* 人心), and the true heart (*zhenxin* 真心), which reveals the battle between the spirit (*rūḥ*) and soul (*nafs*) that takes place within the heart. Each of the three hearts encom-

Persian Sources used in Liu Zhi's Tianfang Xingli" *Huizu Yanjiu* 回族研究 (*Journal of Hui Muslim Minority Studies*) 88.4 (2012): 5–13.

⁶¹ Liu Zhi echoed Wang's knowledge of the various levels of the heart in his *Tianfang xingli*, as he explained "The heart contains seven virtues which bring about spiritual clarity. Obedience is in the heart's wrap, faithfulness in its outward, kindness in its inward, clear discernment is in the spiritual, authentic realness is in the kernel, issuing forth the hidden is the subtlety, and the appearance of the Real is the first heart." He then dedicated an entire diagram and chapter explicating their function. Ma Lianyuan 馬聯元 (1841–1903), or Nūr al-Ḥaqq, translated Liu Zhi's *Root Classic* (*benjing* 本經) into Arabic, and utilized Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's exact terminology for his seven levels despite Liu's lack of employment of similar terms; breast (*ṣadr*), heart (*qalb*), pericardium (*shaghāf*), inner heart (*fu'ād*), grain of the heart (*ḥabbat al-qalb*), core of the heart (*suwaydā'*), blood of the heart (*muhjat al-qalb*). See Sachiko Murata, William Chittick, and Tu Weiming, *The Sage Learning of Liu Zhi: Islamic Thought in Confucian Terms* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 132–3 and 422–7.

pass some of the seven levels and exhibit the individual's tendency towards the *nafs* or the *rūḥ*. This process culminates in the possession of the true heart, which is demonstrated by selflessness (*wuji* 無己) and obedience to the will of God (*míngmìng* 明命).⁶² Wang explained that, because the battle between the spirit and soul is only won by the perfect human being (*al-insān al-kāmil*), for the most part, “common people only possess the three levels of desire, wisdom, and benevolence; only the correct person can have all seven.”⁶³

He illustrated this spiritual conflict through the relationship between the human heart and the animal heart with the image of a niche of light. “The animal heart occupies the level of desire. Because of its aware nature, it can be compared internally to bravery and strength and externally to the light of a lamp.”⁶⁴ The individual who possesses the animal heart demonstrates an aware nature (*juexing* 覺性), which means they employ their rational faculties but associate them with the *nafs* or the lower human characteristics. In fact, at this level individuals are not really considered humans. The Qur’an declares, “surely the vilest of animals in God’s sight are those [individuals] who disbelieve (Qur’an 8:55).” These individuals are able to act within the world but are without faith in God and are, therefore, unable to actualize their humanity. Wang’s imagery evokes the famous “light verse” (*āyat al-nūr*) of the Qur’an (24:35).⁶⁵ Najm al-Dīn Rāzī explained the correlation of the lamplight to the lower human faculties, “The inner space of the niche itself, having received the reflection of the glass, came to form the human faculties. The rays that penetrated through apertures from within the niche to the outside

⁶² The term *míngmìng* is difficult to translate because in order to overcome its Chinese connotations one may lose some its Islamic nuances. *Míng* 命 is most readily associated with the Mandate of Heaven (*tianmìng* 天命), which was the cosmological authority given to an emperor in order to maintain rule. It also commonly meant “fate” or “destiny” in Neo-Confucian discourse on human nature. I translate *míng* as “command” to encompass the notion of God’s will, in both the narrow prescriptive sense of the sharia but also in the broader meaning of God’s trust (*amāna*), which was given to his people, “We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were afraid of it; and man carried it” (Qur’an 33:72). This trust implies something entrusted to humanity, which is thus a sacred obligation of those individuals. Wang understood the search for knowledge of God to be the crux to this trust and illustrated “The Sage said, ‘Both the male and the female of the True Teaching have the clear mandate [明命] to learn and practice.’” This is his translation of the *hadith* “The search for knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim, man and woman.” Quoted from Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 54 plus notes.

⁶³ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 59.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁵ “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The Parable of His Light is as if there were a niche and within it a lamp: the lamp enclosed in glass: the glass as it were a brilliant star: Lit from a blessed tree, an olive, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil is well-nigh luminous, though fire scarce touched it: Light upon Light! God doth guide whom He will to His Light: God doth set forth Parables for men: and God doth know all things” (Qur’an 24:35).

were called the five outer senses.”⁶⁶ Through these three lowest levels of being, Wang conveyed the meaning of the animal heart as a vessel that was prepared to be filled with the light of God but has yet to recognize His divine nature.

Individuals who embody the human heart begin to associate with their spirit but still struggle to overcome the *nafs*. Wang maintained, “The human heart occupies the two levels of benevolence and wisdom. Filled with the spiritual nature, internally it can be compared to perception and action; externally it can be compared to swimming fish and the streams and oceans.”⁶⁷ These people are concerned about their responsibilities as faithful and submissive followers of God and are active in their piety. Their pious actions lead them to their spiritual nature (*lingxing* 靈性), which is equated with the *rūḥ*, or spirit.⁶⁸ Here Wang invoked the image of individuals in the ocean of life, which the Qur’an uses in a similar manner, “And He it is Who has made two seas to flow freely, the one sweet that subdues thirst by its sweetness, and the other salt that burns by its saltiness; and between the two He has made a barrier and inviolable obstruction” (Qur’an 25:53). Those who possess the human heart oscillate between the sweet sea, the spiritual world, and the salty sea, the corporeal world, because they are caught between the *nafs* and the *rūḥ*. They primarily dwell in the barrier (*barzakh*), which is the intermediary reality known as the world of imagination or images (*‘alam al-khayāl* or *‘alam al-mithāl*), where entities are understood as being simultaneously real and unreal.⁶⁹ In this ocean of the soul (*baḥr al-nafs*) the human heart enables individuals to recognize their goal of human perfection but they are still restrained by the *nafs*.

Only those who possess faith and have completely embodied *rūḥ* actualize the higher levels of the true heart. Wang explained that, “The true heart occupies the four levels of seeing, joy, mystery and the supreme level, selflessly it

⁶⁶ Algar (trans.), *The Path of God’s Bondsmen*, 144.

⁶⁷ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 59.

⁶⁸ *Lingxing* is equated to *rūḥāniyya*, which was traditionally used to indicate spiritual beings but came to refer to spirituality or the spirit, *rūḥ*. According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, the *rūḥāniyya* is the spiritual essence of a prophet or a deceased saint (*baraka*), which is closely related to the original meaning of *ling* 靈, spiritual potency. Michel Chodkiewicz, “Rūḥāniyya,” in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, vol. 8 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960), 593–4; Jin Yijiu 金宜久, *Yisilanjiao Cidian* 伊斯蘭教辭典 (*Dictionary of Islam*) (Shanghai: Shanghai Dictionary Press, 1997), 186.

⁶⁹ According to Ibn al-‘Arabī, the human being, consisting of the body (*jism*), soul (*nafs*), and spirit (*rūḥ*), is a theomorphic entity reflecting the macrocosm, made up of the corporeal (*jismānī*), imaginal (*khayālī*), and spiritual (*rūḥānī*) worlds. In this schema, the cosmos is conceptually divided into three categories of being, God, not God, and an intermediary level of being. Everything is God because all things rely on him for their existence but at the same time the things are certainly not God. Therefore, one can say that things are he, not he, and he/not he. See Henry Corbin, *Alone with the Alone: Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); and Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*.

obeys the bright command [of God]. Internally it can be compared to the subtle light and pure clarity; externally it can be compared to the shining sun in a cloudless sky.⁷⁰ Passing through these ascending levels the individual begins the process of human perfection. They have abandoned their personal self and have reached the station (*maqām*) of unification (*ittiḥād*), overcoming the *nafs*. They appear as the bright sun because, as Najm al-Dīn Rāzī illustrated,

When the mirror of the heart attains perfect purity and begins receiving the light of the spirit, that light will be witnessed in the likeness of the sun. The brightness of the sun is in proportion to the degree of the heart's purity, until a point is reached at which the heart is a thousand times brighter than the external sun.⁷¹

This is the ultimate goal in the spiritual journey, according to Wang, becoming an individual who recognizes God and embodies the true heart.

Three Levels and Seven Subtleties of the Heart

1. Animal heart (*shouxin* 獸心)
 - i. level of desire (*yupin* 慾品)
 2. Human heart (*renxin* 人心)
 - ii. level of wisdom (*zhipin* 智品)
 - iii. level of benevolence (*renpin* 仁品)
 3. True heart (*zhenxin* 真心),
 - iv. level of seeing (*jianpin* 見品)
 - v. level of joy (*xipin* 喜品)
 - vi. level of mystery (*xuanpin* 玄品)
 - vii. supreme level (*zhipin* 至品)
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Microcosm

Human beings embody all the qualities of the cosmos because they have been created as a microcosm of all existence. They were created from clay, the most inert entity, but also from God's spirit, the most luminous light of existence.⁷² Wang observed,

⁷⁰ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 59.

⁷¹ Algar (trans.), *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, 296.

⁷² "And He originated the creation of man out of clay, then He fashioned his progeny of an extraction of mean water, then He shaped him, and breathed His spirit in him. And He appointed

The reason why the human body has shape and spirit is because their heart also has form and subtleness. The human body, then, is the most refined and subtle of the shapes and forms of Heaven and Earth and the myriad things; the human nature, then, is the original focal point of Heaven and Earth and the myriad things. Further, the heart's form is the choicest element of the body; the wonders of the heart are the mystic pivot of nature.⁷³

The heart is the seat of the macrocosm because it possesses all the properties of existence. The body reflects the corporeal world and the heart's form is shaped by an individual's physical practice. Human nature mirrors the spiritual world and God portions the heart's subtlety as he wishes.⁷⁴ When the faithful have attained perfection their personal distinctiveness is shed and all that is left is God's spirit:

Arriving at the moment when it is revealed, the three lives are completely cast off, and only then, for the first time, there is no inside, no outside, no past, and no present. Therefore, the virtuous say, 'Within the true heart is all the myriad things, because it is great and nothing is outside of it; within the myriad things is the true heart, because it is minute and without anything inside of it.'⁷⁵

The three lives signify the stages of the arc of ascent and descent, where one is in union with God, then is manifest in the physical world of multiplicity and finally returns to God. The individual has returned to God and allowed his luminous light to shine forth from him or herself. The myriad things are reflected through his or her heart, as it is just a mirror image of all of God's creations.

Polishing the Heart

The heart is described as a mirror because it is through a clean heart that one is able to exemplify God's attributes and reflect his will. But if the heart is rusted, practitioners will not be able to manifest their inherent divinity. This imagery is adopted from the Qur'an, "Nay, but that which they have earned is rust upon their hearts" (Qur'an 83:14). The spiritual path that Wang described was

for you hearing, and sight, and hearts; little thanks you show" (Qur'an 32:79). See also Qur'an 15:28–9 and 38:71–2.

⁷³ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 60.

⁷⁴ Subtlety (*latifa*) was also used to denote the higher realms of the human being, as opposed to the dense (*kathif*) lower aspects, and usually referred to the human soul inasmuch as it was difficult to comprehend. William C. Chittick, *The Self-Disclosure of God: Principles of Ibn al-'Arabi's Cosmology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 291.

⁷⁵ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 60.

a method for purification of the heart and he employed the imagery of the mirror to reveal human beings' inherent divine quality:

It is like saying that outside of a mirror there is no light or outside of the ocean there is no water. A beautiful woman's features can be trapped in the mirror, and the bright moon will appear to be at the bottom of the water, but you certainly cannot say that outside of the mirror's luminosity there are no people, or outside the ocean's water there is no moon. Although people are able to become [a part of] the mirror, the mirror cannot then be people. The moon is able to emerge from the water, so the water cannot then be the moon.⁷⁶

When the heart is clean the image will appear clearly and the mirror is able to become whatever it reflects. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī also explained, "As the polishing of the heart increases, the lights will strengthen and multiply."⁷⁷ Therefore, cleansing of the heart becomes a necessary spiritual discipline to display the light of God. This process is intended to erase everything that stands in the way of reflecting God's light. Arriving at this station, the individual abandons their own identity and allows God to shine through them.

Wang Daiyu ultimately wanted all Muslims to receive God's grace (*rahma*) and providential guidance (*hudā*). All of his elucidations of the features of the Islamic worldview constantly go back to attaining knowledge of God and being a good Muslim. He asserted that, "After learning you can know; after knowing, you can be faithful; after being faithful, you can be sincere; and after being sincere, you can be loyal. If you are loyal, you will surely not waiver."⁷⁸ Attaining the true heart allows one to acquire real knowledge of God and the cosmos:

The true heart's grand nature grasps the sage's knowledge and sees what has been and what shall come, what has appeared and what has not yet appeared; all appear before him and the cosmos is as one. These are all because this heart's function is to act in obedience to the bright command.⁷⁹

When faith grows in the heart and guidance directs the heart to what is right, the individual will manifest all of God's attributes. Attaining the true heart allows an individual to embrace God's qualities and become an eternal reflection of his majesty. True knowledge of the way things are only opens up to the individual if they abandon their own self and allow the light of God to come forth from their being.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 61.

⁷⁷ Algar (trans.), *The Path of God's Bondsmen*, 294.

⁷⁸ Murata, *Chinese Gleams*, 97.

⁷⁹ Wang, *Zhengjiao zhenquan*, 60.

Wang Daiyu, the *Han Kitab*, and Islamic Discourses

Wang Daiyu wrote at a time when the Muslim community of eastern China had developed advanced institutions for Islamic education in the scripture hall system, which presented a consistent interpretation of Islam through the terminology of Chinese thought. This community was well educated, prosperous and involved with the greater Chinese community of the large cities of the Jiangnan region. Wang was the first Sino-Muslim to explicitly blend these two features together, the community's Islamic faith with their Chinese cultural landscape, in order to make Islamic knowledge accessible and assert its authority in understanding the cosmos. His role as a teacher is embodied in his writings, where he explained some basic interpretations of an Islamic worldview in a clear and direct language. Wang's primary purpose was to rectify his students' mistakes and provide them with a correct, and in his view orthodox, interpretation of Islam and the universe.

The scripture hall network was well established by Wang Daiyu's time; however, he fostered a new development, the Sino-Islamic text, which was a direct result of this system's educational methods and curriculum. His new literary innovation was supported by the community and replicated throughout the scripture hall system. Wang's work ultimately provided a model for others involved in the system. He inaugurated a Sino-Muslim discourse and provided inspiration for later authors to employ concepts, terminology, and personalities from Chinese culture and philosophy in order to present Islam in an intelligible and lucid language for Sino-Muslims, who were deeply involved in Chinese society and not conversant in Islamic languages or sciences. However, he never lost sight of the classic texts from the Islamic tradition that informed his knowledge.

More generally, the *Han Kitab* literature stood on the shoulders of a self-styled canon of Arabic and Persian works that was constructed within intra-Asian intellectual circles and preserved through institutional transmission. The preservation of these dominant Islamic discourses was mediated through translational processes, which occurred in parallel ways throughout Asia. Sino-Islamic thought is comprehensible only when it is situated at the intersection of these imported religious discourses and it is necessary to perceive local formulations of Islam as the nexus of interpretive exchange. Through translation religious norms were structured, contested, and maintained in a dialogical manner through textual frameworks of both foreign and local authority. Delimiting a genealogy of textual sources and rendering them accessible to scholars is the starting point for understanding indigenous knowledge production and

opens up issues of attribution, authority, authenticity, translation, and textual production within Sino-Muslims communities.

Here, I have shown that Wang's explanation of Islam was indebted to the teachings of Najm al-Dīn Rāzī and Nūr al-Dīn Isfarāyīnī but further analysis of Wang's writings, and the *Han Kitab* in general, should reveal the influence of many other authoritative Muslim authors from the Islamic heartlands.⁸⁰ Additional work is needed to discover the theological and literary connections between the Chinese works of the *Han Kitab* and their Arabic and Persian counterparts. Wang's writings demonstrated the links between the philosophical themes of China and the Islamic subject matter of the scripture hall instructional discourse. From his writings we are able to hear the implicit dialogue between Islam and Neo-Confucianism that this community was engaged in and understand their effort to position themselves within both spheres simultaneously.

⁸⁰ For example, Murata has discovered two further unknown sources used by Liu Zhi in his *Tianfang xingli*: 'Aḍud al-Dīn al-Ījī's (d. 1355) *The Standpoints in the Science of Theology* (*al-Mawāqif fi 'ilm al-kalām*) and al-Qāḍī 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar al-Bayḍāwī's (d. 1286) *The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation* (*Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl*). See Murata et al., *The Sage Learning*, 14–15.

