

Transforming Islamic Customs with Confucian Rituals:

Flexible Identities of the Muslim Ding Family in Late Ming Quanzhou

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In sixteenth-century Quanzhou, the Ding family of Chendai, Fujian, reclaimed their Islamic religious identity. This claim reveals Chinese Muslims' adaptation to historical changes during the Yuan-Ming dynastic transition through changing their family name and cultivating their children in a Chinese way. Among the Ding family of Chendai twenty-four descendants held government positions and a few of them received the *jinshi* degree in the Ming and Qing. This study focuses on the Dings of Chendai to examine how they adapted to the Ming sinification policies through accepting Neo-Confucian education and lineage practices, while trying to preserve their religious identity. It argues that their flexible religious identity was not driven by Confucian ideals but rather by the strategies that helped the family deal with state policies.

Keywords: Quanzhou, Ding clan of Chendai, Muslim identity, Confucian education, clan, Ming dynasty sinification policies

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Quanzhou 泉州, the largest sea port in the world under the Mongol empire, attracted seafaring men and merchants from Arabia, Persia, and Central Asia for centuries before the Mongol conquest. The Mongol court classified those foreigners who lived within its empire as “*semuren*” 色目人 (people of various or assorted categories) and granted them high social status, just below that of the Mongol ruling house and far above Chinese subjects. The *semuren* included sojourning Muslim traders and sailors who married native Chinese women and their children, and they in turn comprised a neo-ethnic group in China—the “Hui,” 回 or Chinese Muslims. The fall of the Mongols and the founding of a native Chinese dynasty in the late fourteenth century brought a complete change of fortune for the Hui, a change that shaped their status in late imperial times. With a new identity as “minority people” rather than privileged foreigners, they were subject to the Ming (1368-1644) sinification policy and the Qing (1644-1911) “civilizing project” among the borderland peoples.

As Zvi Ben-Dor Benite has pointed out, Chinese Muslims from the Song (960-1279) through the early Ming considered themselves as sojourners, for a temporary stay in China. In contrast, in late imperial period, Chinese Muslims understood their presence in China to be “the result of dislocations.” Eastern urban Chinese Muslim communities can be seen as a diasporic group, living beyond the borders of the House of Islam and displaced from Chinese elite society.¹ Chinese Muslim scholars of the late imperial period had long understood their Islamic identity through genealogy. They drew life both from centuries of genealogical memory and from cultural flexibility.² Quanzhou Muslims were maritime Muslims, a unique category within the population of Chinese Muslims. They were mostly merchants or from merchant families, who enjoyed privileges with higher social

¹ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad: A Cultural History of Muslim in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005), 16-17.

² Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 12.

status since the Tang-Song transition. The examination of Quanzhou Muslims' cultural transformation during the Ming is critical for our understanding of Chinese Muslims' changing identities.

In the seventeenth century the Ding family of Chendai 陳埭, in Quanzhou, Fujian 福建, became known for its family learning and government service. Local historian He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠 (1557-1633) wrote, "Among those prestigious families in our Quanzhou, the Ding of Chenjiang 陳江 [Chendai] is the best."³ He Qiaoyuan's writing portrays the Dings as a family of Confucian scholars; even its female members were well educated with Confucian morality and served as mother-teachers for their sons. Another popular Quanzhou elite Li Guangjin 李光縉 (1549-1622) also had connections with the Dings. A son-in-law of Li Guangjin's cousin was from the Ding family and he was also a student of Li Guangjin. According to Li Guangjin, the Dings and Lis were relatives by marriage for generations. Li Guangjin's writing about the Ding family also emphasizes their whole-hearted devotion to Confucian learning and praises its family members' morality by using Confucian principles.⁴ Li Guangjin and He Qiaoyuan were respectively born thirty-one and thirty-nine years after Ding Yanxia 丁衍夏 (1518-1599). Since both were familiar with the Dings, they most likely knew of Ding Yanxia's claim of the Dings' Muslim ancestry. However, their writings record little information about the family's religious identity, especially in regard to Islam.

On the one hand, Quanzhou elites like He Qiaoyuan and Li Guangjin portrayed the Dings as a family devoted to Confucian learning and government service; on the other hand, Ding Yanxia, the tenth generation of the Dings, claimed

³ He Qiaoyuan 何喬遠, "Ding zengong Zhuang yiren hezhuan 丁贈公莊宜人合傳," in He Qiaoyuan, *Jingshan quanji* 鏡山全集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe 福建人民出版社, 2015), juan 60, 1562-1564.

⁴ Li Guangjin 李光縉, "Tai xuesheng shuoquan gong ji shi ruren cishen Chenshi zhenyi Zhuangshi muzhiming 太學生碩泉公及室孺人慈慎陳氏貞儀莊氏墓誌銘," in Li Guangjin, *Jingbi ji* 景璧集 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 2012), juan 16, 799-802.

a Muslim identity. Both of these opinions existed within thirty years of each other, during the turn of the seventeenth century. The changing identities of the Dings have drawn attention from current scholarship. In the PRC era, anthropologists have extended their pioneering studies of Chinese “minority nationalities” in the borderlands to include Chinese Muslims. Quanzhou is one of the four sites they selected to study the identities of Chinese Muslims. Their research revealed that Quanzhou Muslims took a long time to reclaim their ethnic identities, and that they emphasized their ethno-history more than religious identity due to the local impact of lineage practices.⁵ Those findings challenged the PRC’s terminology for Chinese Muslims, pointing to diversity and regional differences among Chinese Muslim groups. Inspired by anthropologists’ work, local historians collected and collated the Hui (Chinese Muslims) family genealogies, including that of the Ding family of Chendai.⁶

Regarding the Dings’ changing identities around the turn of the seventeenth century, a 1978 collaborative work attempted to prove Ding Yanxia’s claim by referring to the historical record of Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar’s 賽爾赤·贍

⁵ Dru C. Gladney, *Muslim Chinese: Ethnic Nationalism in the People’s Republic* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991). Their religious identity was internalized / ritualized into lineage practices, such as family rituals. See below.

⁶ The Chendai Ding family started compiling its genealogy in the early Ming. As discussed below, there were several versions of the Ding family genealogies. Ding Shishen 丁時慎, in the seventh generation of the Ding family firstly completed his compilation. However, this version was mostly used to enhance the Dings’ Chinese or Han affinities with a forged Han ancestor. Later, Ding Zishen 丁自申 and Ding Yanxia 丁衍夏 compiled another version of the genealogy eliminating a previously forged Han ancestor. During the Qing and Republic era, several versions were produced. In the 1990s, Zhuang Jinghui 莊景輝 collected various versions of the genealogies to produce the current 1996 version, which is the major primary source of this work. I also collate it with Ding Zishen’s *Sanling ji* 三陵集 and the reprinted Ming edition.

思丁 (1211-1279) descendants in Quanzhou from *Jami'al-Tarikh* by Rashid al-Din (1247-1317), and a 1952 archaeological finding of a tombstone inscribed with the Arabic name of Sayyid Ajjal's descendant in Quanzhou.⁷ Since then no further effort has been made to argue with Ding Yanxia's recovered Muslim identity.⁸ Although the Dings reclaimed their Muslim identity in the late Ming, throughout 700 years (from the 1300s to present), the Dings nearly lost their Islamic religion and other ethnic markers. In the 1990s, local historians and anthropologists tuned their research questions to how the Ding family of Chendai was assimilated or sinicized by Confucian culture.⁹ Based on his extensive reading of the Dings' genealogies, Zhuang Jinghui has suggested that intermarriage and Confucian education were the primary reasons for the Dings' loss of their religious and ethnic identity.¹⁰

Fan Ke has done intensive studies on southern Fujian Muslim identities. He argues that the crisis of Islamic identity during the Ming-Qing period was mainly caused by the powerful force of signification.¹¹ Ke suggests that Quanzhou Muslims' identity was an alternative identity instead of "one based previously on

⁷ Fujian Quanzhou Maritime Museum Investigation Team, "Chendai Dingxing yanjiu 陳埭丁姓研究," *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 海交史研究 1 (1978): 17-19.

⁸ A 1990 research suggests that the inscribed Arabic name was Sayyid Ajall Toghan shah, which was not the name of a descendant of Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar. See Chen Yuanxi, "Lüetan Chendai Huizu xingshi jiqi shehui xisu 略談陳埭回族姓氏及社會習俗," in *Chendai Huizushi yanjiu* 陳埭回族史研究 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe 中國社會科學出版社, 1990), 213.

⁹ *Chendai Huizushi yanjiu*.

¹⁰ Zhuang Jinghui, "Chendai Dingshi Huizu Hanhua yuanyin de tantao 陳埭丁氏回族漢化原因的探討," *Xueshu yuekan* 學術月刊 9 (1997): 96-102.

¹¹ Fan Ke, "Maritime Muslims and Hui Identity: A South Fujian Case," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 2:2 (2001): 319.

religion.”¹² Benite also suggests that Muslim identity during the Ming-Qing period can be seen as a “genealogical identity,” and that we cannot assume that all Muslims of China can be defined as Muslims because of rituals that they observed.¹³ Even though Chinese Muslims adopted Chinese names, language, and material culture, through those mysterious tales of the intimate bonds between the Ming founder and his Muslims, discussed by Benite, Chinese Muslims continued forging and maintaining their sense of identity.¹⁴

Shifting the theoretical framework away from cultural assimilation or sinification, this study reexamines the Dings of Chendai in terms of their adaptations to historical changes and the impact of their acculturation on their life and religious identity. Rather than considering their passively assimilated roles, this approach will reveal more about the Dings’ subjectivity. It includes three sections: firstly, a brief history of the Muslim Ding family with an emphasis on their adaptations to historical changes in the context of Ming sinification (a sketched family tree, see the appendix); secondly, a detailed examination of the Ding family genealogies stressing how Quanzhou Muslim scholars manipulated genealogies as a way to consolidate their group identity; thirdly, fitting Ding family genealogies’ discussions of Confucian teachings and family rituals into the larger picture of lineage practice in the Ming to explore its historical significance. The essay argues that the Dings attempted to preserve their religious identity through family ritual reform; and their compilation of the genealogies aimed to unite their group

¹² Fan Ke, “Ups and Downs: Local Muslim History in South China,” *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23:1 (2003): 82.

¹³ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Dao of Muhammad*, 12.

¹⁴ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, “‘The Marrano Emperor’: The Mysterious, Intimate, Bond between Zhu Yuanzhang and His Muslims,” in Sarah Schneewind ed., *Long Live the Emperor!: Uses of the Ming Founder across Six Centuries of East Asian History* (Minneapolis: Society for Ming Studies, 2008), 295.

members and to consolidate their unique membership, i.e. with that of Chinese Muslims.

Adaptations to Historical Changes

Current scholarship on early Ming sinification policies has revealed that the founding emperor of the Ming, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋 (1328-1398), carried out a series of reforms to revive the Han Chinese features found among his people but targeting the Mongol and other outside influences found within the empire. Zhu Yuanzhang aimed to restore native Chinese glory from a century of Mongol occupation by implementing Tang hairstyle, clothing, and rituals. During the Mongol Yuan (1260-1368), foreign names and customs were popular, even among Han Chinese.¹⁵ For instance, Bettine Birge's research shows some Han Chinese families adopted the Mongol levirate marriage practices to force widows to remarry within their in-laws' families, which was seen as incest from a Han Chinese perspective.¹⁶ As a counterpart to this, the contemporary observation of Chinese Muslims' tombstones demonstrates that in the Mongol Yuan, the Hui people had begun to adopt Chinese names that reflected the sound of their Arabic names. This is evidence of mutual cultural influence in the multi-ethnic society.

Ming literati and court officials vigorously debated whether it was appropriate to allow foreigners to adopt Han family names. Some suggested that Han family names were a symbol to differentiate natives from foreigners, something that should be preserved as a native marker. Following this suggestion, in 1372, Zhu Yuanzhang issued an edict to forbid foreigners from adopting Chinese names in

¹⁵ Zhang Jia 張佳, *Xin tianxia zhihua: Mingchu lisu gaige yanjiu* 新天下之化：明初禮俗改革研究 (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe 復旦大學出版社, 2014).

¹⁶ Bettine Birge, "Levirate Marriage and the Revival of Widow Chastity in Yuan China," *Asia Major* 8:2 (1995): 107-146.

order to preserve the Chinese-foreigner distinction. This edict only signaled the official concern about the blurred boundary between Chinese and foreigners, and in reality it was rarely to put into practice. In the same year, Zhu Yuanzhang also issued another edict to enforce intermarriage between Chinese and non-Chinese, and prohibit endogamy among the non-Chinese.¹⁷ These two edicts seemed, on the surface, contradictory to each other. While the former was meant to preserve the Chinese-foreigner distinction and prevent foreigners from blending in with Han Chinese, the latter intended to assimilate non-Han peoples through intermarriage with Han Chinese (*yixia bianyi* 以夏變夷). In fact, they both suggested that the non-Han peoples were passively manipulated by the emperor's demonstration of the Han primacy of subjectivity. Hence, certain studies have regarded Chinese Muslims' taking Han family name and intermarrying with Han families as typical markers of their assimilation by the Ming sinification policies. Benite's examination of the mysterious tales about the intimate bonds between Zhu Yuanzhang and his Muslims suggests the opposite argument. Muslims in Ming China forged and maintained a sense of identity.¹⁸

My close reading of the Ding genealogies reveals that the Ding family consciously adapted to historical changes during the dynastic transition through their adoption of a Han family name, relocation in a new place, and change of occupation and registration. According to the genealogies, the first generation of the Dings of Chendai, Ding Jiezhai 丁節齋 (1251-1298), was a sojourning Muslim merchant from Suzhou 蘇州. He came to Quanzhou, the chief seaport along the Maritime Silk Road that attracted many foreign traders from the Arab world, Persia, India, and other countries in the Nanyang region. According to Ding Yanxia, Ding Jiezhai was a descendant of the Muslim official Sayyid Ajjal Shams

¹⁷ Fu Fengxiang 傅鳳翔, *HuangMing zhaoling* 皇明詔令 (Taipei: Chengwen chubanshe 成文出版社, 1967), *juan* 2, 93.

¹⁸ Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, "The Marrano Emperor," 295.

al-Din Omar. The 1952 discovery of the tombstone of Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar's descendant in Quanzhou, which noted his death year in Arabic, as 1302, suggested Ding Yanxia's claim was not entirely inaccurate. Some of the descendants adopted the Han family name Ding, for it mimics the sound of al-Din, though not all Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar's descendants shared the same Han family name. Others adopted Sai, Sha, Ma and other family names, for these all mimic part of their ancestor's Arabic name.¹⁹

In a manner similar to the Dings' adoption of a Han family name, other Chinese Muslim families changed their family name, such as the Pus. The family name "Pu" might derive from Arabic "Abū."²⁰ Around the 1270s the Muslim official Pu Shougeng 蒲壽庚 was very influential in Quanzhou. He occupied a very important position as Maritime Trade Supervisor, to check and tax imported commodities. The Pu family maintained its influence in Quanzhou under the Mongol Yuan due to its decisive support of the Mongols and betrayal of the Song royal family.²¹ Since the Ding and Pu families' adoption of Han family names during Chinese Muslims' heyday in Quanzhou, this was not in any way a marker of passive assimilation by Han culture or acceptance of the sinification policy.

¹⁹ Ma Enhui and Zhu Changping, *Saidianchi shansiding* 賽典赤瞻思丁 (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe 寧夏人民出版社, 1987), 40.

²⁰ Huang Tianzhu 黃天柱, "Mantan Quanzhou diqu alabo Musilin de houyi jiqi yiji 漫談泉州地區阿拉伯穆斯林的後裔及其遺跡," in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao yanjiu lunwen xuan* 泉州伊斯蘭教研究論文選 (Fuzhou: Fujian renmin chubanshe, 1983), 204. See also Billy So, *Prosperity, Region, and Institutions in Maritime China: The South Fukien Pattern, 946-1368* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 109. Lin Chang-Kuan 林長寬, "P'u Shou-Keng," in P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W.P. Heinrichs eds., *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Brill Online, last modified September 08, 2014, http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_6144.

²¹ Kuwubara Jitsuzō, *Pu Shougeng kao* 蒲壽庚考, trans. Chen Yujing 陳裕菁 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju 中華書局, 2009), 119-121, 149-152.

Unlike the Dings and Pus who adopted Han surnames for their whole family, a well-known Muslim poet Ding He'nian 丁鶴年 (1335-1424) changed his own surname to the Han family name “Ding,” while the rest of his family, including three of his brothers who received their *jinshi* degree during the Zhizheng 至正 reign (1341-1368), still kept their Arabic names.²² According to one of Ding He'nian's biographers, many Muslims from the west shared the same name “Ding” when they came into the Middle Kingdom. They used their given name as a surname (*yiming weixing* 以名為姓). Both Ding He'nian's grandfather's and father's Arabic names shared “al-Din,” so He'nian adopted the surname “Ding.”²³ The Muslim poet Ding's adoption of a Chinese surname was in many ways a conscious adaptation to his new cultural surrounding. In a similar manner to Ding He'nian, the Dings and Pus in Quanzhou adopted Han family names as their self-adaptation to the multi-ethnic culture. It was an interesting contrast to many Han peoples' adoption of Mongol or *semu* names under Mongol rule.²⁴ The free adoption of names from other ethnic groups reflected the mutual influence among peoples in the multi-ethnic society, far beyond the linear assimilation either by the majority Han or the ruling Mongols.

Around the turn of the thirteenth century, even though the Dings had relocated to Quanzhou, Ding Shuode 丁碩德 (1298-1379), the third generation still kept business contacts with Suzhou and traveled between Suzhou and Quanzhou. As a hardworking merchant, Ding Shuode gradually accumulated wealth and finally arranged a good match for his only son, Ding Shan 丁善 (1343-1420). According to the Dings' genealogy, Ding Shan married a Han woman, Madame Zhuang, who

²² Ding He'nian 丁鶴年, *Ding He'nian shiji jizhu* 丁鶴年詩集輯注(Tianjin: Tianjin guji chubanshe 天津古籍出版社, 1987), 285-287.

²³ Yang Shiqi 楊士奇, “Ding He'nian shi 丁鶴年詩,” in Ding He'nian, *Ding He'nian shiji jizhu*, 337.

²⁴ Li Zhi'an 李治安, “Yuandai Hanren shou Menggu wenhua yingxiang kaoshu 元代漢人受蒙古文化影響考述,” *Lishi yanjiu* 歷史研究 1 (2009): 33-38.

was from a prestigious family in Quanzhou where both her brother and nephew received the *jinshi* degree in the early Ming.²⁵ Madame Zhuang and Ding Shan's marital union occurred during the dynastic transition from the Mongol Yuan to the Ming. There was little information about how the match was decided in the genealogy, except that the two families lived close to each other. According to the ninth-generation descendant, Ding Zishen 丁自申 (1521-1583),²⁶ it was Madame Zhuang who suggested that her husband move out of the city and relocate to Chendai.²⁷

During the late Zhizheng era, Quanzhou suffered the chaos caused by the Isbah rebellion (1357-1367). "Isbah" in Arabic or Persian language means "militia" or "soldier." Here it alludes to a former Mongol garrison headed and primarily composed by Persian soldiers in Quanzhou. The *semu* Muslims, i.e. the military merchant group mostly of Persian origin fought with each other for the right to supervise maritime trade.²⁸ That decade-long rebellion disturbed trade and commerce in Quanzhou, and negatively affected Quanzhou as the chief port city along the Maritime Silk Road. Following the rebellion, with the collapse of the

²⁵ Ding Zishen, "Er Zhuang ruren zhuan 二莊孺人傳," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu* 陳埭丁氏回族宗譜 (Hong Kong: Lüye jiaoyu chubanshe 綠葉教育出版社, 1996), *juan* 3, 64.

²⁶ According to the catalogued information of the National Library of China, Ding Zishen was born in 1526 and died in 1583. But the Ding genealogy records that Ding Zishen was born in 1521.

²⁷ Ding Zishen, "Er Zhuang ruren zhuan," 64

²⁸ Liao Dake 廖大珂, "'Yi-si-ba-xi' chutan 「亦思巴奚」初探," *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 1 (1997): 75-78. Shiniji Maejima, "The Muslims in Ch'uan-chou at the End of the Yuan Dynasty, Part 2," *The Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko* 32 (1974): 47-71. Different interpretations also see Chen Dasheng 陳達生, "Quanzhou Yisilan jiaopai yu Yuanmo yisibaxi zhanluan xingzhi shitan 泉州伊斯蘭教派與元末亦思巴奚戰亂性質試探," *Haijiaoshi yanjiu* 4 (1982):113-126.

Mongol Yuan, more Muslim traders left Quanzhou sailing overseas. Those who remained, such as the Dings who moved to Chendai in Jinjiang 晉江, relocated to nearby areas.

The Dings' relocation to Chendai during the late Zhizheng era was in many ways an adaptation to historical changes. There is no direct evidence about how the Isbah rebellion affected the Ding family in Quanzhou, however, according to Ding Zishen, the family moved out of the city near the end of the Zhizheng era, when the Isbah troops fought with each other in Quanzhou. Madame Zhuang suggested that her husband give up his trading business and move with her brother to Chenjiang [Chendai], with the plan to reclaim coastal land from the sea to make arable lands.²⁹ The fourth-generation descendant, Ding Shan, accepted his wife's suggestions and moved with his father to Chendai, about twenty *li* from the southern city gate. This relocation was a critical turning point in the Ding family history. Not only did they relocate to a suburb county near the sea, they also switched their occupation from urban merchant to farmer.

The relocation was not a smooth transition. When the Dings moved to Chendai, there were already a few established families who had resided there since the Five Dynasties (907-960).³⁰ Between the sea dams, there were several slope gates that controlled the sea tide in and out. Inside the sea dams was arable land. In 1381, the Ming court registered its subjects into four categories, military (*jun*) 軍, commoner (*min*) 民, artisan (*jiang*) 匠, and stove (*zao*) 灶 household. The "stove" alludes to salt-producing households, where they boiled seawater and gathered the resulting salt.³¹ According to Ding Zishen, local government encouraged people to

²⁹ Ding Zishen, "Er Zhuang ruren zhuan," 64.

³⁰ Yang Siqian 陽思謙 ed., *Wanli chongxiu Quanzhou fuzhi* 萬曆重修泉州府志 (Taipei: Taiwan xuesheng shuju 臺灣學生書局, 1987), *juan* 3, 195.

³¹ Xue Zongzheng 薛宗正, "Mingdai zaohu zai yanye shengchan zhong de diwei 明代灶戶在鹽業生產中的地位," *Zhongguo lishi bowuguan guankan* 中國歷史博物館館刊 5 (1983): 63.

register in either the “military” or “stove” category. Ding Shan registered his three sons under the “stove” category, even though their lands did not produce salt at all. The Dings preferred to pay a salt tax in response to the government’s order.³² Regarding taxation, the most heavily taxed among the households were salt, military, and artisan categories; and among the three categories the salt-producing households paid the highest tax.³³ Besides this heavy taxation, salt-producing households’ social status was also very low. In the early Ming, the government even categorized prisoners into the stove category.³⁴ What then would motivate the Dings to take on such a heavy taxation and low status registration?

According to Ding Zishen, registering as a “stove” household was a quick way for the Dings to settle down in Chendai. As Madame Zhuang suggested, the Dings moved into Chendai for the purpose of changing the family occupation from a sojourning merchant household in Quanzhou city to a farmer household. In the early Ming, it was not easy to register for the farmer or commoner household status. As a newly migrating household in Chendai, if they wanted to change their “guest status” (*keji* 客籍) through registration (*zhanji* 占籍), the least popular “stove household” was one of their limited choices. As Ding Zishen described, Ding Shan rushed to take the registration (*jiyu yingling* 急於應令), with the assumption that his family would be prosperous and eventually could escape the hold of salt taxation.³⁵ Here the text alludes to the exemption rules for those households of scholar-officials and *juren* degree-holders.³⁶ It is obvious that the Dings consciously used government policy to serve their own ends. For the Dings, the early Ming

³² Ding Zishen, “Fujun ren’an gong zhuan 府君仁庵公傳,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 61.

³³ Xue Zongzheng, “Mingdai zaohu zai yanye shengchan zhong de diwei,” 64.

³⁴ *Ming taizu shilu* 明太祖實錄 (Taipei: Zhongyang yanjiuyuan lishi yuyan yanjiusuo 中央研究院歷史語言研究所, 1962), 2146.

³⁵ Ding Zisheng, “Fujun ren’an gong zhuan,” 61.

³⁶ Lin Qing 林煙 ed., *Fujian yunsi zhi* (Taipei: Zhongyang tushuguan, 1981), 256.

registration policy was so critical that it helped their household to officially relocate to Chendai.

In Chendai, the Dings made all efforts to build up connections with the government. In early Ming Quanzhou, following the Mongol and *semu* customs, many neighborhoods still had a branch of the White Lotus Society. Persisting even though the government prohibited such secret societies, they were not easy to find. Allegedly, the local officials asked Ding Shan to watch his neighborhood. Ding Shan found several neighbors suspected of participating and reported them to local officials. According to the Ming legal code, if someone wrongly reported those suspected of severe crime more than ten persons, the reporter should be sentenced to death. Ultimately, Ding Shan, his eldest son, and the suspected White Lotus members were all put into jail in the capital.³⁷ Only after the second son, Ding Guanbao 丁觀保 (1369-1436), went to the capital and beat a drum outside the court did the emperor review the legal case. Ding Shan was finally released and returned to Chendai.³⁸ One study argues that Madame Zhuang's brother, Zhuang Jiancai 莊兼才, who received his *jinshi* degree in 1397 and served at the Ministry of Justice, might have assisted his nephew Ding Guanbao in contesting the charge.³⁹ Although Ding Shan's service was not a successful example, its happy ending encouraged the Dings to continue their pursuit of connections with the government.

Scholars have long recognized that examination success, literary cultivation, and lineage were the primary ways for families to gain social status. Since the sixth-generation family member, Ding Min 丁敏 (1407-1456), the Dings started studying Confucian literature. The seventh-generation descendant Ding Geng 丁庚 (1445-1535) selected a student of Cai Xuzhai 蔡虛齋 (1453-1508), the well-known

³⁷ Ding Zishen, "Fujun ren'an gong zhuan," 61.

³⁸ "Guanbao gong zhuan 觀保公傳," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, *juan* 3, 63.

³⁹ Zhuang Jinghui, "Chendai Dingshi zongci de jianli jiqi zuxian chongbai 陳埭丁氏宗祠的建立及其祖先崇拜," in *Chendai Huizushi yanjiu*, 146.

Neo-Confucian thinker in Quanzhou, to be his son's tutor. Eventually, in 1505, the eighth-generation descendant Ding Yi 丁儀 (1473-1521) passed the civil service examinations and became the first *jinshi* degree holder of the Ding family.⁴⁰ Following Ding Yi's example the ninth-generation descendant Ding Zishen, his son Ding Rijin 丁日近 (1553-1604), and his grandson Ding Qijun 丁啟濬 (1569-1636) succeeded in receiving the *jinshi* degree. Within one family, three generations successively received the *jinshi* degree (*sanshi liandeng jinshi* 三世聯登進士). This was an outstanding record in civil service examination history even for Han scholarly families. Throughout the Ming, there were only three families in Quanzhou that successively received *jinshi* degree for three generations.⁴¹ The Dings were one of them. He Qiaoyuan presented a placard with the inscription "three-generation *jinshi*" to the Ding family.⁴² How did they achieve such a record? How did they use their outstanding government service to serve their family ends?

Ho Ping-ti has pointed out that "Fujian's ratio of 262 *jinshi* of humble non-degree-holding families per million mean population was the highest of all."⁴³ Ho also suggests that the cultural and social dynamism of the Ming originated in the southeast. Within Fujian province, early Ming Fuzhou 福州 had the highest number of *jinshi* degree holders, and Quanzhou was only the fifth. During the mid-Ming, Quanzhou advanced to the third; and in the late Ming, became the first in the number of degree holders.⁴⁴ The Dings' success in the civil service examination

⁴⁰ Shi Yuguang 史于光, "Fenxi fujun xingzhuang 汾溪府君行狀," in *Zhuang Jinghui, Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 73-74.

⁴¹ Wang Yinghui 王映輝, *Quanzhou jiaoyushi* 泉州教育史 (Fuzhou: Fujian jiaoyu chubanshe 福建教育出版社, 2015), 215.

⁴² Yang Daye 楊大業, *Ming-Qing Huizu jinshi kaolie* 明清回族進士考略 (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2011), 363.

⁴³ Ho Ping-ti, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), 238.

⁴⁴ Wang Yinghui, *Quanzhou jiaoyushi*, 209.

started in the mid-Ming, which reflected the historical trend of Quanzhou's advance. Scholarship on the Dings' education has suggested that inviting Han tutors for their children and motivating their children with government service were critical components of the Dings' "sinicized" education.⁴⁵ The Dings' genealogies also suggest that those Han women who married into the Muslim family played a crucial role in teaching their sons in Han literature and in the Confucian classics. For instance, Ding Zishen's mother, Madame Zhang who was from a Confucian scholar family and who studied Ban Zhao's *Nüjie* 女誡 (Prefects for My Daughters) in her natal home, read books to her toddler son.⁴⁶ Having benefitted from Madame Zhang's teaching, her son loved books throughout his entire life, and eventually received his *jinshi* degree in 1550. Ding Zishen married Madame Zhuang and had four sons. Their third son, Ding Rijin, received the *jinshi* degree in 1589. Ding Zishen's eldest son married another Madame Zhuang (perhaps a niece of the older Madame Zhuang through a cross-cousin marriage), and their son, Ding Qijun, received the *jinshi* degree in 1592. Ding Qijun recalled that his mother and grandmother both loved and taught him very seriously.⁴⁷ Regarding Han women's contribution to the Ding children's education, I will detail my examination elsewhere.

In many cases the Dings' Confucian education was motivated by the promise of government service. For instance, Ding Wei 丁煒 even sold part of his family property to support his study at the Imperial Academy in the capital.⁴⁸ The Dings' government service indeed served their own ends. The family had been involved

⁴⁵ Zhuang Jinghui, "Chendai Dingshi Huizu Hanhua yuanyin de tantao," 96-102.

⁴⁶ Ding Zishen, "Feng anren xianbi anren cishu Zhangshi xingshi 封安人先妣安人慈淑張氏行實," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 71-73.

⁴⁷ Ding Wei 丁煒, "Xingbu shangshu Zu liaochu gong xingzhuang 刑部尚書祖蓼初公行狀," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 84.

⁴⁸ Li Guangjin, "Tai xuesheng shuoquan gong ji shi ruren cishen Chenshi zhenyi Zhuangshi muzhiming," 799-802.

with lawsuits for almost two decades during the Chinghua era (1465-1487), after having been falsely charged with evading military service by changing the family name (*cheshu yixing* 撤戍易姓). If this charge were found to be true, the Dings would lose their residential right in Chendai.⁴⁹ The local yamen's registration copy was rotten, so the Ding family members had to go up to the capital to find the court's copy to clear the charge.⁵⁰ During the lengthy lawsuits, the Ding family lost its essential legal protection and the Dings' ancestral tomb yard had been occupied by the tomb watcher family. Even though the Dings had their tomb yard purchase contracts, the local yamen did not stand on their side. Household registration, while intended for tax purposes, had come to have legal and social implications. The legal implication was that a member of a registered household could appeal to the yamen if his rightful ownership of registered property was contested, whereas someone without registration or with false registration did not enjoy this protection.⁵¹

At this difficult moment, Ding Yi received his *jinshi* degree, and returned home from his post. His father ordered him, "If you do not take care of the tomb yard, it is not necessary to be an official." The genealogy suggests that Ding Yi and his brother obeyed their father's command and they finally found the grave-site markers, which were buried under the earth. That helped them solve the tomb yard issue, and Ding Yi went to his office to continue his government service.⁵² However, I surmise that it was not the grave-site markers but the family's good

⁴⁹ Chen Dasheng, "Mingchao shiqi Chendai Dingxing Musilin de gaizong jiqi qingzhensi 明朝時期陳埭丁姓穆斯林的改宗及其清真寺," in *Chendai Huizushi yanjiu*, 190.

⁵⁰ "Xue shu shuo 雪戍說," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, *juan 2*, 30.

⁵¹ Liu Zhiwei 劉志偉, *Zai guojia yu shehui zhijian: Ming-Qing Guangdong lijia fuyi zhidu yanjiu* 在國家與社會之間：明清廣東里甲賦役制度研究 (Guangzhou: Zhongshan daxue chubanshe, 1997), 9.

⁵² "Dongtang zumu jilüe 東塘祖墓紀略," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, *juan 5*, 137.

reputation furthered by winning the civil service examinations that helped the Dings in their lawsuit. Not only did Ding Yi's *jinshi* degree affect the result of the lawsuits, it also exempted his household from the heavy salt taxation. The Dings used Confucian education and government service as a ladder for upward mobility to enhance their family influence in the neighborhood. Even though the Dings valued government service to gain social status, as the above case suggests, Ding Yi's father weighed family business as much important than government service. Even though Ding Yi was qualified to serve in the government, his father would not allow him to leave before solving family issues. The Dings were too practical to allow their sons to take government service as their priority over family matters. This was, in a certain way, a self-serving use of Confucian education, unlike those who embraced Confucian learning not for an official position or private benefit, such as the poet Ding He'nian in the late Yuan.

In later generations, such self-serving use of Confucian education was seldom seen in family genealogies, replaced by parents' encouragement of their sons to take government service as a priority, similar to the exemplary parents portrayed in Han family genealogies. The Ding family made various adaptations, including their strategic use of Confucian education, conscious adoption of a Han family name, and taking the "stove household" registration to serve their own ends, such as relocation in Chendai and enhancement of the family reputation. As a Muslim family, how did such adaptations affect their religious and group identity?

Lineage Practice and the Consolidation of Group Identity

Michael Szonyi's study of the historical development of kinship organization in villages of the Fuzhou region shows that kinship was a strategic practice

undertaken to serve family purposes.⁵³ The Dings' lineage practice included their strategies to deal with the social surroundings in order to consolidate their unique group identity. Ding Min, of the sixth generation, began the compilation of the family genealogy and then the seventh-generation descendant Ding Shishen 丁時慎 (1445-1523), whose literary name was Yangjinggong 養靜公, stepped in to continue the work. In the eighth generation, the *jinshi* degree-holder Ding Yi took over the work and almost completed the genealogy. He asked his *tongnian* (same-year degree-holder 同年), Lu Shen 陸深, for a preface to the Ding family genealogy.⁵⁴ Lu Shen traced the origin of the use of family genealogy as a supplement to government records. Many families lost their genealogies due to their relocation and Lu pointed out that since the Six Dynasties (220-589), many families also falsely traced their ancestry to certain famous people for nearly automatic access to government posts.⁵⁵ However, Ding Yi's compilation obeyed the Song style of focusing on establishing family rules. Lu praised Ding Yi, saying that "while his rules were strict; ... his intention was kind(fayan yihou 法嚴意厚)."⁵⁶

Ding Yi himself also wrote a preface to the genealogy in 1515. In the preface, he traced their ancestry to Ding Jiezhai, the migrating merchant from Suzhou, but did not expose his religious identity at all. He claimed that their relocation to

⁵³ Michael Szonyi, *Practicing Kinship: Lineage and Descent in Late Imperial China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

⁵⁴ Lu Shen 陸深, "Chenjiang Dingshi shijia xu 陳江丁氏世家序," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 1, 3.

⁵⁵ The Nine Rank System instituted a set of local assessments of character and talent into a procedure for assigning government posts according to the standing of the candidate's family. The aristocrats judged themselves and others on the basis of their ancestors. They compiled genealogies of eminent families to secure almost automatic access to higher government posts through the Nine Rank System. See Patricia Ebrey, *Cambridge Illustrated History: China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 89, 91.

⁵⁶ Lu Shen, "Chenjiang Dingshi shijia xu," 3.

Chendai made the family transform from a merchant household to “farming and studying” (*gengdu* 耕讀) family. According to Ding Yi, Yangjingong once consulted with a private tutor named Zeng about how to compile the Dings’ genealogy. Tutor Zeng showed him their family genealogy and then Yangjingong followed his example to compile the Dings’ record.⁵⁷ At this moment, not only did tutor Zeng show his family genealogy, he also recommended that Yangjingong falsely identify Ding Du 丁度 (990-1046), a prominent Song scholar-official as an ancestor, something that was called “switching genealogy” (*banpu* 扳譜).⁵⁸ Yangjingong accepted tutor Zeng’s suggestion as the family had just recovered from the lengthy lawsuits spurred by the false charge of their wrong registration. Yangjingong desperately “switched genealogy” to trace their ancestry to a certain famous person in an attempt to make the family look good, and this was the kind of practice scolded by Lu Shen. Eventually, Ding Yi, in his compilation, deleted the false Han ancestor from the genealogy and started the first generation from Ding Jiezhai.

Even though the above-mentioned two prefaces were preserved to the present, Ding Yi did not complete his compilation before his death in 1521. The ninth-generation *jinshi* degree-holder, Ding Zishen, continued the work and played a critical role in the Dings’ lineage practice. Ding Zishen studied Confucian rituals and he highly valued Ouyang Xiu’s 歐陽修 (1007-72) and Su Shi’s 蘇軾 (1037-1101) rules for genealogy (i.e. emphasizing near descendant-lines).⁵⁹ Inspired by his ritual studies, Ding Zishen turned to his own family genealogy. He found the old copy of his family genealogy and a draft copy of lesser descendant-lines (*xiaozongpu* 小宗譜)

⁵⁷ Ding Yi 丁儀, “Pu xu 譜序,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 1, 3.

⁵⁸ Ding Yanxia , “Zupu jilüe yin 族譜記略引,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 1, 8.

⁵⁹ Ding Zishen, “Xin’an Chenshi zupu xu 新安陳氏族譜序,” in Ding Zishen, *Sanling ji*, in Wu Haiying ed., *Huizu diancang quanshu* (Yinchuan: Ningxia renmin chubanshe, 2008), juan 2, 94.

by his nephew Ding Yanxia, and then refined the work.⁶⁰ Following the Ou-Su style, Ding Zishen also set his own rules for obeying the rituals. For instance, for those who had no sons, the genealogy just recorded the line as “stopped,” rather than saying “extinct” to show them sympathy instead of scolding them. Women, it was suggested, should follow their husband’s name, but if they lost chastity, they should not be recorded after their husband, rather their name would be saved with that of the son to prove that no son was motherless. Respect was particularly paid to family education and Ding Zishen exemplified those who held degrees from the civil service examinations.

Following the Song example, Ding Zishen also emphasized the importance of ancestral memorial halls.⁶¹ He said, “Offering sacrifices to a tomb is wild; while offering sacrifices to a memorial hall is proper.”⁶² Ding Zishen’s father, Ding Yii 丁懌 (1484-1573, Yii is used to distinguish him from the other Ding Yi) once donated half of the cost to build the ancestral hall and several *mu* of land to support sacrificial offering to ancestral tombs.⁶³ Ostensibly, building an ancestral hall was one way to obey Confucian rituals; yet, the Ding family held religious rituals in their ancestral hall, which acted as a family mosque.⁶⁴ Similarly, the Muslim tomb sacrificial rites were quite complex.

In Quanzhou Muslims followed a custom to offer sacrifice to the sacred tombs of early Islamic missionaries at Lingshan 靈山. While the Qur’an does not allow believers to revere saints, Sufism initiated the rites for such reverence. They

⁶⁰ Ding Zishen, “Zupu yin 族譜引,” in Ding Zishen, *Sanling ji*, juan 6, 170.

⁶¹ Ding Zishen, “Puli 譜例,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 1, 5-6.

⁶² Mei Guolou 梅國樓, “Ding Zishen zhuan 丁自申傳,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 76.

⁶³ Ding Zishen, “Feng zhushi xiandaren houwu fujun xingshi 封主事先大人後吾府君行實,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 3, 69.

⁶⁴ Guo Zhichao 郭誌超, “Chendai Ding he Baiqi Guo Hanhua de bijiao 陳埭丁和白奇郭漢化的比較研究,” in *Chendai Huizushi yanjiu*, 308.

believed that practices could bring them good luck. Dru C. Gladney has examined the Sufi tombs in contemporary China and suggested that they provide a cohesiveness for Hui communities and play a critical role for the Hui in defining their identity at multiple levels, such as residents of a local village or lineage, members of the Hui, a Sufi brotherhood, etc.⁶⁵ In a manner similar to the Sufi tombs, the Muslim families in Quanzhou offered sacrifices to the saints' tombs at Lingshan before they went to sweep their ancestral tombs during Islamic holidays. Such religious rituals consolidated the Muslim families' group identity, which helps our understanding of Ding Yii's double donations to ancestral hall as well as the sacrificial offering to the tombs. His donated land, though similar to sacrificial land in Han families, should be understood within its unique religious context.

Ding Zishen, in his father's biography, mentioned another of Ding Yii's special donations, which was thirty tael of gold to help repair the Qingjing Mosque's tower. This repair was before the 1607 rebuilding of the mosque right after an earthquake in Quanzhou. There was no detailed discussion of Ding Yii's connection to the mosque, but in his biography, Ding Yii was portrayed as a philanthropist. As a *jinshi* degree holder, Ding Zishen was very careful about his family identity. In his explanation of the compilation rules, Ding Zishen discussed his family teachings / Islamic religion and Confucian teachings:

Regarding teachings, the one who follows Confucius does not have to follow his ancestors; if differing slightly from Confucius, one should not be restrained by his ancestor. However, isn't it inappropriate if [we] record our ancestral teachings in the genealogy? Confucius said, "Gentlemen obey the rituals, but do not seek to change the customs." "The circumstance is the most important in the rituals." I shall clarify this to my fellows to make them not to be restrained by their teachings

⁶⁵ Dru C. Gladney, "Muslim Tombs and Ethnic Folklore: Charters for Hui Identity," *Journal of Asian Studies* 46:3 (1987):510.

and also not to betray it. Reform it to accord with current circumstances.⁶⁶

Ding Zishen made it clear in the above discussion that his ancestral teachings were different from Confucian teachings and that his family should reform it to accord with current circumstances. His flexible attitude toward his family identity was obvious in the text. Then what were their ancestral teachings? How did the Ding family attempt to reform them? According to the genealogy, their ancestral teachings seemed more like family rituals than religious practice:

Observing our family rituals, they were like ancient customs not yet civilized. For instance, no formal dress for the dead; no coffin for burial; and having the burial completed within three days after death; ... At sunset, worshipping heaven toward the west; fasting one month of every year; eating only before sunrise and after sunset, with an empty stomach during the daytime; worshipping god with flowers, not wine or food; Not burning paper or silk; reciting Islamic classics (*qingjing* 清經); mimicking the inherited foreign sound (*yi yin* 夷音), without understanding the meaning, and not seeking to understand it; ... Eating meat killed by the imam; eating no pork; bathing frequently; and otherwise not daring to communicate with God.⁶⁷

This was observed by Ding Yanxia during his childhood (*xia zhinian suo xijian* 夏稚年所習見) around the 1520s. During Ding Yanxia's adult years, the Ding family gradually changed its religious practice, or to a certain extent disobeyed its ancestral teachings. The important change happened in burial rituals. The Dings followed Han funeral practices (i.e. a mixed set of Buddhist, Daoist, and other popular

⁶⁶ Ding Zishen, "Puli," 6.

⁶⁷ Ding Yanxia, "Zujiao shuo 祖教說," in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, *juan* 1, 29.

religious practices, as argued by Patricia Ebrey)⁶⁸ and abandoned their own. They did not worship heaven at sunset and the meat they ate was killed by them. They did not bathe before communicating with God and they even offered wine and food to their ancestors and burned paper and silk in the manner in which others worshipped other gods. Buddhist and Daoist practices appeared in this Muslim family, and some even ate pork.⁶⁹

In the same manner as Ding Zishen, Ding Yanxia also used Confucian rites as a standard to measure the changes to their family rituals. He said, one should “gradually make changes in order to obey the rituals.” (*jianbian yi heyu li* 漸變以合於禮)⁷⁰ In addition, Ding Yanxia also argued that the “principles of heaven and human emotions” (*tianli renqing* 天理人情) should be the rules for deciding what should be changed. “If not hurt by the ‘principles of heaven and human emotions,’ why should we change our rituals to follow secular views?” He further suggested to his family that, while obeying the rituals, they should think deeply and carefully keep their family rituals. He “wished to stay [as things were] with no more changes” (*xiangqi yi wubian* 相期以勿變).⁷¹

In contrast to Ding Zishen’s flexible attitude toward their family identity, Ding Yanxia’s essay shows that he was more conservative toward changes to their family rituals. While Ding Zishen suggested that the Dings should reform their family rituals in accord with current circumstances, Ding Yanxia thought if their family rituals, i.e. their religious practices, did not hurt the “principles of heaven and human emotions,” then there would be no need to change them to follow secular views. The difference between the two was that one called the

⁶⁸ Patricia Ebrey, “The Response of the Song State to Popular Funeral Practices,” in Patricia Ebrey and Peter Gregory, eds., *Religion and Society in T’ang and Sung China* (Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press, 1993), 230.

⁶⁹ Ding Yanxia, “Zujiao shuo,” 29.

⁷⁰ Ding Yanxia, “Zujiao shuo,” 29.

⁷¹ Ding Yanxia, “Zujiao shuo,” 29.

contemporary social surrounding “current circumstance” (*shi* 時), while the other thought it to be “secular views” (*shisu guan* 世俗觀). Besides his Confucian education background, Ding Zishen’s flexible attitude also reflected his immediate family influence. Both his mother and wife were from prestigious Confucian scholar families. Regarding his wife’s funeral ritual, Ding Zishen suggested Confucian rituals, while his sons insisted on using Daoist rituals. Finally, Ding Zishen surrendered to his sons.⁷² According to He Qiaoyuan, Ding Zishen’s daughter-in-law was good at managerial work. In her later years, she became a devout Buddhist. He Qiaoyuan praised Ding Zishen’s family as benefitting from both Confucian and Buddhist teachings (*donglu zhijiao, xizhu zhiyi* 東魯之教·西竺之義), and ascribed that to the reason his son and grandson succeeded in receiving the *jinshi* degree while his daughter-in-law was reputed to have seen Buddhist deities accompanying her before her death.⁷³ At least, He Qiaoyuan’s comments provide evidence of the freedom and flexibility in the religious practices and the coexistence of Confucian, Buddhist, Daoist, and Islamic teachings in Ding Zishen’s family.

Ding Zishen’s daughter-in-law’s Buddhist devotion and his sons’ use of Daoist burial rituals certainly supported Ding Yanxia’s criticism of the changes of the Ding family rituals. This also suggested that the Han women who married into the Muslim family did not convert to Islam as the Qur’an required. In many cases women were the primary participants in family ceremonies (at least at the preparation stage). Then if these non-converts were in charge of family rituals, they could not avoid bringing non-Islamic elements into their family ceremonies. Even though Ding Yanxia did not blame these non-converts in his family for the changes in family rituals, a 1930s’ survey suggested that non-converted women (*waijiao funü* 外

⁷² Ding Zishen, “Zu kudian wangshi anren wen 卒哭奠亡室安人文,” in Ding Zishen, *Sanling ji, juan* 14, 164.

⁷³ He Qiaoyuan, “Ding zengong Zhuang yiren hezhuan,” 1562-1564.

教婦女) contributed to the hybridization of Muslim families' customs.⁷⁴ In addition, as Ding Yanxia pointed out in his essay, the Dings lost the Arabic language for generations in the early sixteenth century and they could only mimic the foreign sound at prayers without understanding its meaning at all. That was also responsible for the loss of the Dings' religious identity. Confucian education, non-converted Han women, and the loss of Arabic language all led the Ding family teachings to be replaced by a hybrid mix of family rituals. In other words, the core of their religious identity—the Islamic religion—was ritualized as family rituals, and their religious practice lost its sacred meaning and was directed toward the secular level—as customs.

Ding Yanxia was concerned about the secularization of the Ding family religious practices and that was why he called on his family to not be disturbed by secular views, and he wished there to be no more changes to the family practices. To consolidate the Ding family identity, Ding Yanxia wrote an essay to boldly reclaim his family's Muslim identity. In his essay, he traced his family origin to the Muslim official named Sayyid Ajjal Shams al-Din Omar. He explained that he had learned this from his uncle, who preserved a draft of the Ding family genealogy compiled by Ding Min. At first, when he learned about this, Ding Yanxia was not aware that such a Muslim official existed in the Yuan Dynasty but thought this was only a foreign name with no means to prove genealogical descent. Later, when he read the full story of the Muslim official, Ding Yanxia thought it was a much better idea or more appropriate to a connection between his family and the Muslim official in the Yuan than to a Han scholar in the Song as some family members were inclined to do when “switching genealogy.”⁷⁵ Ding Yanxia felt shameful for

⁷⁴ Zhang Yuguang 張玉光, “Huizu ruhua yu Quanzhou huijiao gaikuang 回族入華與泉州回教概況,” in *Quanzhou Yisilanjiao yanjiu lunwen xuan*, 36.

⁷⁵ Ding Yanxia, “Ganji jiuwen 感紀舊聞,” in Zhuang Jinghui, *Chendai Dingshi Huizu zongpu*, juan 1, 27.

his family having made the false claim of their ancestry in order to mask the family origin and obscure their religious identity. He thought this was caused by the long-term lawsuits against the Ding family registration. Ultimately, he suggested, the false claim of descending from a Han scholar could not match their inherited ancestral teachings. Therefore, Ding Yanxia encouraged his family members to further examine their family origin.

Ding Yanxia's essay suggests that the Dings' "switching genealogy," tracing a Han scholar as their family ancestor to hide their Muslim identity, was an expedience to consciously adapt to the circumstance. In certain ways, I argue that it should not be seen as a marker for the Ding family's sinicized surrender. Firstly, it was not a decision accepted by the whole group but was only the personal choice of the compiler, Yangjingong. Secondly, when the circumstances changed, none of the other genealogy compilers agreed with such "switching genealogy" practices. Thirdly, in reality the Ding family's religious practice never ceased but continued to carry their Muslim identity. And Ding Yanxia's essay has further explicitly clarified the Dings' "switching genealogy" practice in the late sixteenth century and boldly allowed them to reclaim their Muslim identity.

My examination of the Dings' lineage practices, such as their genealogy compilation, ancestral hall construction, and family ritual reform, suggests that the Dings struggled with their relocation and consciously adapted to the changes to consolidate their group identity. It is more appropriate to view the Dings' conscious adaptations as acculturation but not assimilation.

Concluding Remarks: From Religious Practice to Family Rituals

According to the *Zuo Commentary of the Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu Zuo zhuan* 春秋左傳), "Rituals can [be used to] govern the country, stabilize the state,

order peoples, and benefit descendants.”⁷⁶ The history of Chinese ritualism can be divided into three stages. The first was to use ritualism to replace religion during the pre-Qin era; the second was to empower ritualism with an apotheosized heaven during the Han; and the third was to naturalize ritualism with the principles of heaven in the Song and Ming.⁷⁷ In the Southern Song, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) redefined family rituals and promoted it as the principles used to confine commoners' conduct. Family rituals were at the heart of Neo-Confucian teachings. These included capping ceremonies for grownups, wedding ceremonies, funeral rituals, and sacrificial rites. Ancestral halls, family genealogies, and clan lands were the basic material support behind Zhu Xi's family rituals.⁷⁸ Throughout the Ming, Confucian rituals had served as a useful tool for the court and literati to order society. In 1385 the Ming court reestablished family rituals for its subjects to maintain that order. Qiu Jun 丘濬 (1420-1495) reemphasized Zhu Xi's thought and suggested to the emperor that the government should protect clan lands and enforce genealogy compilation to consolidate the family system. He adapted Zhu Xi's *Family Rituals* 家禮 with current circumstances and made it widely circulated. Within the Ming, his *Family Rituals with Specifications of Procedures* (*Jiali yijie* 家禮儀節) was reprinted in 1490, 1518, 1539, 1608, and 1618 respectively.⁷⁹ Many others in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries also reformed the four rituals to

⁷⁶ *Shisan jing* 十三經 (Beijing: Yanshan chubanshe 燕山出版社, 1991), 987.

⁷⁷ Cai Shangsi 蔡尚思, *Zhongguo lijiao sixiang shi* 中國禮教思想史 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe 上海古籍出版社, 2006), 1.

⁷⁸ Xu Yangjie 徐揚杰, *Song-Ming jiazu zhidushi lun* 宋明家族制度史論 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1995), 20,472.

⁷⁹ Lee Cheuk-Yin, *Qiu Jun zhuan* 丘濬傳 (Nanjing: Nanjing daxue chubanshe 南京大學出版社, 2005), 290. Xu Yangjie, *Song-Ming jiazu zhidushi lun*, 484. Patricia Ebrey, “The Liturgies for Sacrifices to Ancestors in Successive Versions for the *Family Rituals*,” in David Johnson ed., *Ritual and Scripture in Chinese Popular Religion: Five Studies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 105,136.

accord with the times. Maintaining social order through managing lineage practice became commonly accepted among local elites.⁸⁰

The discussions of Confucian teachings and family rituals in the Ding family genealogies also reflected social concerns of the time. One important function of the genealogy was to “respect ancestors and consolidate the clan” (*jingzu shouzhong* 敬祖收宗). The Ding family’s “switching genealogy” practice was a wrong direction, for it neither showed respect to their ancestors, nor did it protect their family teachings, such that it could not consolidate the group at all. Ding Zishen suggested another way to use Neo-Confucian teachings (i.e. to transform local customs with the rituals) to reform his ancestral teachings. He placed his ancestral teachings on an equal footing with local customs. In so doing, the Ding family did not have to betray their ancestral teachings for survival. Their ancestral teachings were a set of religious practices, including heaven worship, communication with God, and a few taboos with religious meanings. Through the reform, the Dings’ religious practice was ritualized as “family rituals” in the genealogy. Once the religious practice was ritualized, the participants did not need to know all the meanings of ritual symbols in relation to one another.⁸¹ In certain ways, such reform indeed saved the Dings’ ancestral teachings from extinction as well as consolidated their group identity. Their strategic use of Neo-Confucian teachings also served their ends well.

It is worthwhile to note that Ding Zishen was not the first Muslim scholar to initiate such a transformation. In the early Ming, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Rites, Sa Qi 薩琦 (1394-1457), who was from a Fuzhou Muslim family and who received his *jinshi* degree in 1430, reformed his family customs with Zhu Xi’s family rituals. Similar to Ding Zishen’s case, Sa Qi did not totally give up his family customs but still paid his donations to the Fuzhou Mosque. Scholars argue

⁸⁰ Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China: Ethics, Classics, and Lineage Discourse* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 71-97.

⁸¹ Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*, 13.

that Sa Qi's family custom reform was an expedience due to his unique position at the court, which does not mean his family and descendants betrayed Islamic belief.⁸²

As assistant to the compiler Ding Zishen, Ding Yanxia further sharpened the discussion by differentiating rituals from customs. Ding Yanxia used the concept of the “principles of heaven and human emotions” to replace generalized “ritual” (not specifically Confucian rituals). Even though the notion of “principles of heaven and human emotions” was a core concept of Neo-Confucianism, iterated in this way, it sounds much more naturalized and allows more leeway than the symbolic Confucian rituals themselves. Ding Yanxia suggested that Ding family members obey their family rituals and not follow social customs if doing so did not hurt “principles of heaven and human emotions.” According to Ding Yanxia, the Dings' funeral rituals changed dramatically. Although not from the Dings of Chendai, the Muslim poet Ding He'nian's biography shows us how a Chinese Muslim scholar obeyed Confucian rituals to perform the three-year mourning for his father instead of following the three-day short burial requirement by Islam. Ding He'nian thought Confucian mourning rituals for parents well expressed human emotions.⁸³ Ding Yanxia was not against Confucian teachings, but he intended to use the Neo-Confucian “principles of heaven and human emotions,” as a standard to measure or more appropriately, as an umbrella to preserve his family rituals. Ding Yanxia criticized Buddhist and Daoist rituals for already interfering with the family's inherited god communications, and suggested that the long delayed burial influenced by geomancy (*fengshui* 風水) custom was against “rituals.” Hence, Ding Yanxia made it clear that they could follow Confucian teachings but not secular customs to change their family rituals. Significantly, Ding Yanxia saw other religious rituals (Buddhist, Daoist, and geomancy) as “secular” customs. Ebrey has

⁸² Yang Daye, *Ming-Qing Huizu jinshi kaolüe*, 326, 349.

⁸³ Ding Shengju, *Ding He'nian shiji jizhu*, 316.

examined the historical evolution of Chinese funeral practices and argued that during the Song dynasty the unorganized, mixed set of Buddhist, Confucian, Daoist, and other popular religious practices had become conventional, performed by members of all strata of society, from the emperor to the commoners.⁸⁴ When those religious practices mixed together and became conventional rituals, their religious context yielded to the secular. Ding Yanxia borrowed Neo-Confucian concepts to preserve his family rituals at a religious level rather than to change the family rituals with secular customs.

Ding Yanxia and Ding Zishen's compilation occurred in the Jiajing reign (1522-1566) when Japanese pirates continued harassing Chendai. Many members of the Ding family left Chendai to escape the wars along the coast.⁸⁵ At this time, the religious head of the Ding family who had held religious rituals at the Ding ancestral hall, which was indeed an acting mosque for their family, also left the region. Even though the Ding ancestral hall was rebuilt in 1601, its previous religious function had been lost.⁸⁶ I would argue that the continued wars against Japanese pirates affected Ding family members' religious identity rather than their lineage practice.

In sum, even though the Ding family lost the Arabic language and the meaning of Islam, through the ritualization of their religious practices they kept their group identity as Muslims for generations throughout the Ming. Even today, the remaining family rituals testify to their unique ethnic origin. Protected by Neo-Confucian concepts and language, their lineage practice was able to provide the Muslim family with an institution through which they could increase their power at the local level without risking charges of heterodoxy by their rivals.⁸⁷ Such

⁸⁴ Patricia Ebrey, "The Response of the Song State to Popular Funeral Practices," 229-230.

⁸⁵ Ding Yanxia, "Zupu jilüe yin," 8.

⁸⁶ Guo Zhichao, "Chendai Ding he Baiqi Guo Hanhua de bijiao," 308.

⁸⁷ Kai-wing Chow, *The Rise of Confucian Ritualism in Late Imperial China*, 225.

strategic use of Confucian ritualism was neither forced assimilation by state policies nor driven by Confucian ideals but was a conscious adaptation to historical changes and social surroundings. It reflected the trend among the Neo-Confucian literati to use Confucian rituals to transform local customs and order the society. The Muslim Dings of Chendai borrowed Confucian ritualism to reform their family teachings in order to preserve their ancestral teachings and consolidate their group identity. Through the reform, they did not lose their religious identity but reclaimed it to settle their group identity onto solid ground. Such reforms also had an impact on other Muslim families in Quanzhou during the long eighteenth century.⁸⁸

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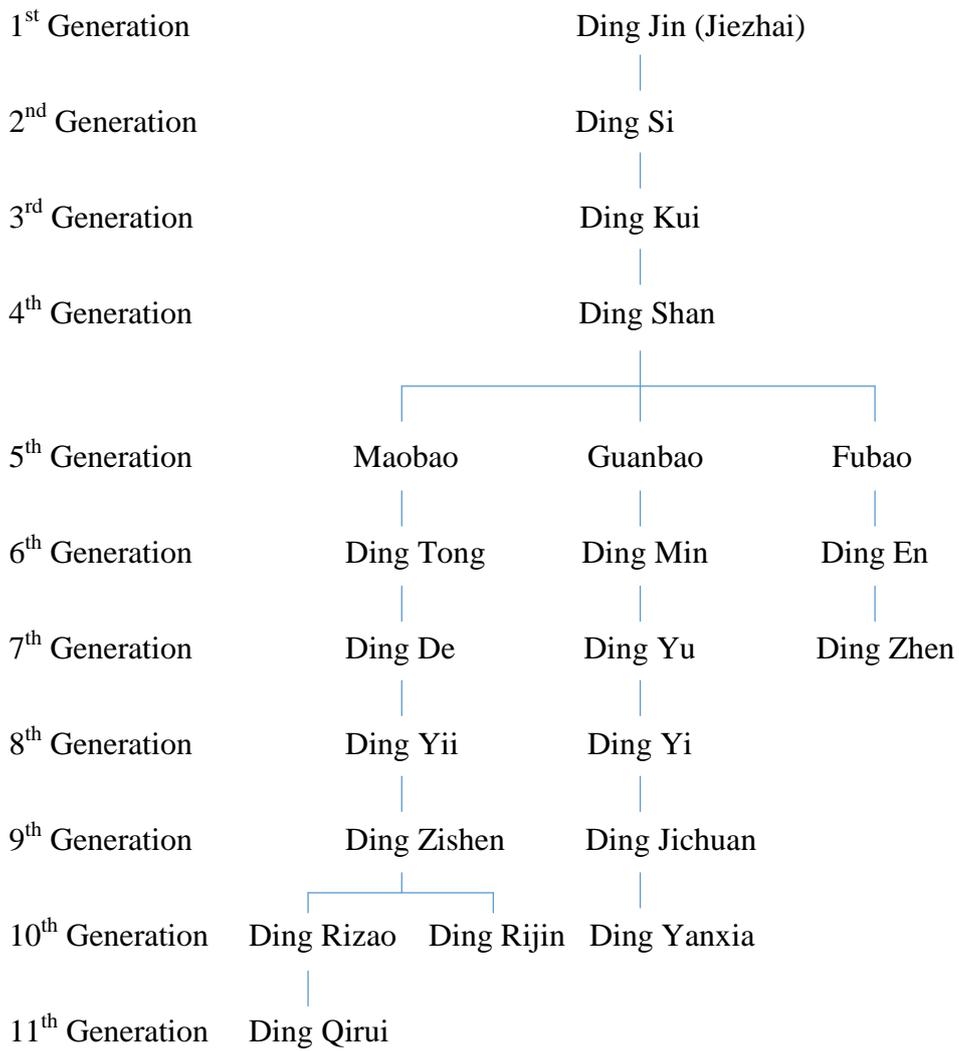
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⁸⁸ Guo Zhaofen 郭肇汾, “Shi Hui bian 適回辯,” in *Baiqi Guoshi Huizu zongpu* 百奇郭氏回族宗譜 (Unpublished type-copy, 2000), 16.

Appendix

The Chendai Dings' Family Tree



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以儒禮變回俗： 晚明泉州回族丁氏的身分變通

李國彤^{*}

福建泉州陳埭丁氏在晚明重修的家譜中重申其穆斯林宗教身分。這一申明揭示了元明之際在華穆斯林通過更名變姓和採用儒家蒙學教育以適應朝代更迭的歷史變化。明清兩代，陳埭丁氏子孫有二十四位為官，其中多位取得進士功名。本文聚焦陳埭丁氏，考察其如何通過接受儒家教育和宗族實踐應對明代的同化政策，與此同時又試圖保護其宗教身分。本文指出，陳埭丁氏變通的宗教身分並非由儒家理念感化，而是其應對國家政策的家庭策略。

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