

Contextualization of Chinese Muslims

— A Case Study of Muslims in Quanzhou, Fujeng

(An abstract)

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The attitudes of Muslims to contextualization are varied and may be one of the following: (1) *reversed contextualization* as exemplified by the Taliban in Afghanistan who refuses to modernize; (2) *secularization* as demonstrated by the Turkish government who tries progressively to westernize its people to the fullest extent; and (3) *syncretism* as exemplified by the Muslims in Indonesia and Africa who have mixed their folk religions with Islamic faith. The Muslims in China, however, have been isolated from other Islamic countries for several hundred years, and thus we find in them a very different attitude.

The Muslims in Quanzhou of Fujeng province are descendants of the earliest Islamic group from Arabia and Persia who came through the maritime silk road. However, after living in China for almost one thousand years, they are now fully sinicized to the Chinese cultures from their neighborhood. Thus they have almost totally forsaken their Islamic religion and cultures.

This study indicates that their sinicization occurred through the following three major ways: 1) mixed marriage with Han people since the Ming dynasty in the 15th century; 2) social interaction with Han people in proximity for more

than seven hundred years; and 3) active participation in the imperial civil examination system, with many of them becoming officers of the government.