Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, and Language in the Han Kitab

A distinctive Chinese Islamic intellectual tradition emerged during the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) and Qing Dynasty (1644-1911). Chinese Muslims established an educational system, scripture hall education (jingtang jiaoyu 経堂教育), which utilized an Islamic curriculum made up of Arabic, Persian, and Chinese works. The Han Kitab, a corpus of Chinese language Islamic texts developed within this system, reinterpreted Islam through the religio-philosophical lens of Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian terminology. Several Han Kitab texts were produced by a group of self-identified “Confucian Muslim” scholars (Huiru 回儒). This presentation traces the contours of the Sino-Islamic intellectual tradition and serves as an introduction to Kristian Petersen’s forthcoming book, Interpreting Islam in China: Pilgrimage, Scripture, and Language in the Han Kitab.