

The Mosque Based Islamic Education In Guangzhou China

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Article history

Received: 2018-04-02 Received in revised form: 2018-08-13 Accepted: 2018-09-23 Published online: 2018-10-30

Abstract

This writing constitutes a research outcome regarding the Mosque based Islamic education in Guangzhou, China that aims at finding out the form of the mosque based Islamic education in relation to the implementation, student, teacher, material, means and facilities and financing. This research adopts an explorative qualitative approach with data collection through interview, site observation and documentation study. Through an observation against four mosques in Guangzhou, it is found a mosque role in the Islamic religion education. The Islamic religion education is conducted by its management and congregation of the mosque. The learning place is conducted in a building separated from the mosque although some of them conducts the learning process at their mosque. A material is regarding the Islamic basic teaching and Arabic language. The teacher comes from the management of the mosque itself who is Leader (Ahong). The students come from youth, teenagers and adult ore even elderly.

Keywords : Islamic education, Mosque, Guangzhou

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The emergence and growth of Islam cannot be separated from the instrument, namely the mosque. Besides for prayer, the mosque is also used as a place to discuss and review Islamic da'wah problems. In addition, it is categorized as one of Islamic educational institutes beside home (*al-bait*), *suffah*, *al-kuttub*, *madrasah*, *al-zawiyah*, *al-ribath*, *al-maristan*, *al-qushur*, *hawanit al-waraqin*, *al-shalumat al-adabiyah*, *al-badiyah*, and *al-maktabah* (Abuddin Nata, 2012, p.190-213).

Islam entered China since the early development of this religion, which is on 7th AD. The growth of Islam in China experiences fluctuation either during the Chinese imperial or modern era. The end of the Cultural Revolution that took place in 1966-1976, where all forms of religion expression were banned and hundreds of religion leaders were imprisoned, made Muslim communities in all over China slowly begin to reaffirm their religion and identities. To do so, they did some things such as building and renovating mosques, spreading information of Islam in the world, translating religious texts, and also educating (Jacqueline Armijo-Hussein, 1999).

The first priority in their attempt in reaffirming their religion and identities was to build and renovate the mosques so it would make people to be able to have places for prayer in congregational and as the center for Islamic education. The mosques were organized for a learning place not only for children, teenagers, adults but also for elderly people who had no chance to learn Islam religion (Jacqueline Armijo, 1917).

The mosque generally organized an Islamic teaching which was called *Jingtang Jiaoyu*. The second Islamic education was in the form of Islamic school which was emerged in the 1920s and 1930s when China was in an attempt to make a dramatic change in a social and educational system. Traditional educations were stopped and modern western schools were built. Some modern muslim intellectuals established a modern Islamic education system in China. Besides Quran, Arabic and Persian language, science and art, all the rest were taught in the form of modern school (<http://www.islamichina.com/Islamic-Education-in-China.html>. downloaded on November 20, 2017).

The mosque as one of Islamic religion educational places spread in almost all of the Chinese area, including Guangzhou city. The form of the mosque-based Islamic education today still exists and develops along with the dynamics of Islam itself in China. In other words, the mosque-based Islamic education can be regarded as an effective means in transmitting and also instilling the teaching of Islam in China. Moreover, what is not less interesting is that the mosque-based Islamic education was used as a form of “defense mechanisms” of Muslims in living by the religion. It is perhaps one of many arguments as to why the mosque-based religious education is raised in the study.

The selection of Guangzhou city as the research location is based on the nickname of the place which is often referred to as the cradle of Chinese or “*buaian Islam China*”. From this place, Islam expanded to all Chinese areas. In this area, there is the tomb of one of the companions of Prophet Muhammad, namely Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas and the oldest mosque in China. Furthermore, in Guangzhou, there is a muslim community that has had a long history so-called *Fan Fang* (residential areas of foreigners). Even, perhaps a little bit exaggerating, Cai Jincheng and Jian Yon Xing call Guangzhou as “*the holy land of Islam in the far east* (Cai Jincheng and Jian Yon Xing, 2007).” That is how important Guangzhou in the birth and development of Islam in China.

Muslim in Guangzhou currently faces the condition of the city, as the writer witnesses, in which its economy and politics develop at a very high pace. Guangzhou has become the third largest city in China. The infrastructures of this city are very modern, starting from the road, the subways, and Baiyun International Airport. What is not less great is the growth of International higher education institutions in the city, which is one of the implications of the synergy between the committee and university in the implementation of Guangzhou Asian Games 2010.

The attitude of the Muslims towards the condition of Guangzhou is characterized by the accommodation of the country's political policy. The muslim society of Guangzhou survives in political and economic modernization. One of the things that the Muslim community does is to survive, and "mosque space" becomes a tool and also a method to defend itself as the religious identity of Islam of Guangzhou people.

The description of the mosque-based education in Guangzhou raises the question that will be used in this research. How is the mosque-based Islamic education implemented? The question can be expanded into the following: Who implements it? Who learns the religion? What material is taught? Who does the teaching? What kind of infrastructures is used? What is the source of the fund?

This research aims at exploring the scope of research. The benefit of this research is to find out data and information of the mosque-based Islamic education in Guangzhou which is actually practiced in the Islamic world including in Indonesia in the form of Islamic Educational Park and *Majlis Ta'lim* (educational place).

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses qualitative-explorative methods. The data collecting is done before, during, and after conducting the research. The writer had the chance to visit Guangzhou city for nine days from 10th to 18th of August 2017. In Guangzhou, the writer conducted interviews with the Head of Chinese Muslim Association of Guangdong Province, the Mosque's Islamic Priest, organizer, teacher, Hui Muslim individual, Indonesian Muslim community in Guangzhou. The writer also applied an observation to a few locations: four mosques, the tomb of the Prophet's companion, namely *Abi Waqas*, the gathering place for the muslim community. Moreover, the writer also conducted a documentation study concerning Islam and Islamic education in Guangzhou. The found data was collected and grouped in accordance with the research scope, then, later, the qualitative analysis was implemented by the educational and historical approach.

3.0 FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The next description begins with the discussion of Guangzhou as the research location. The discussion of the target location includes its geography, demography, government, and social. Then, the development of Islam and Muslim in Guangzhou is explained. Afterward, the government's policy towards religious concerns is discussed. The next part is about the explanation of Islamic education in Guangzhou which generally contains two forms. This chapter also focuses on the discussion of the mosque-based Islamic education starting from the number of the mosque, implementer, educator or teacher, students, teaching material, infrastructures, and funding source.

3.1 Slight View of Guangzhou

Guangzhou or as the westerners call it by the name Canton is located on the north bank of the Pearl River. Guangzhou is a subtropical beach city, the weather is cool and the wetness level is not extreme. The temperature reaches 21.7° at average with rainfall 1.982 mm, and the humidity level reaches 77%. Flowers bloom throughout the year; in which the reason why it is called "Flower City" with the beauty of the Pearl River and Baiyun Mountain. Guangzhou is also called "International Park City." Guangzhou is famously known by the name "North Chinese Gate." The total area of Guangzhou reaches 7.434,4 km² and its population is around 15 million people (<https://www.kemenlu.go.id>).

Guangzhou is the center area of the land, sea, and air transportation, which directly connects with many large cities in the world. Guangzhou is also located close to Hong Kong and Macau. For example, to visit Hong Kong, it only takes two hours by trains.

The Chinese government has three levels of government stages that represent all stages from the center to the city; it is the Communist Party that undertakes one comprehensive policy, and the heads of a region in the government implement the legislation activities at regional level. A senior leader usually has ability to the highest level after passing at least two stages (<https://www.kemenlu.go.id>).

Guangzhou is one of 21 prefecture areas (the same level as the city) in Guangdong Province. Guangzhou is the capital city of Guangdong Province and is the third largest city in China after Beijing and Shanghai. There are 11 districts (the same level as sub-district) in Guangzhou, namely: Yuexiu, Liwan, Haizhu, Tianhe, Baiyun, Huangpu, Panyu, Huadu, Zengcheng, Conghua, and Nansha (Quoted from the official website of Guangzhou Government, english.gz.gov.cn). As part of China, Guangzhou follows the government political system of communism. The country and government are led by the head of the Chinese communist party while Guangzhou city itself is led by a mayor.

Besides being the capital city of the Province, Guangzhou is also the center of economy and trading of China. The city is the very first area that holds reformation and openness in China. The city life is quite dense, but has modernization and revitalization program with substantial funds used for the construction of commercial projects.

Guangzhou is a silk road for China which has widely been known since 2,000 years ago, and until now, the development is further strengthened by the modernization of its port facility, which is the Guangzhou and Huangpu port and also the Nansha port which is a river port. Furthermore, Guangzhou is also a convenient place for foreign investment as this city provides mutual support in various sectors with Hong Kong and Macao, especially in communication, trade, finance, information, and human resources, which makes the access of this city to the outside world easier. Among the foreign investments that have entered the city and have a big name and global network are IBM, Compaq, Lucent, Dupont, Intel, Xerox, Hitachi, Samsung, and Alcatel.

Businesses in Guangzhou are highly advanced that “Import and Export Goods Fair of China” (Canton Fair) that is called as the main Chinese fair is held twice a year in Guangzhou. The fair attracts the attention of entrepreneurs from around the globe to come and order products that they want. Either local or foreign college students get the chance to practice their business in this famously known fair.

The roads to Guangzhou are incomplete without visiting the landmark of this city, which is the Canton Tower. This tower was built in Chigang Pagoda area, Haizhu district, Guangzhou. The tower reached the topped-out in 2009 and opened on September 29, 2010 for the 2010 Asian Games. The tower has the height of 610 meters high with 37 floors. This tower was, at one time, the highest tower in the world. It is the highest building in China today.

3.2 Development of Islam and Muslims in Guangzhou

Guangzhou, as mentioned previously, is the cradle of Chinese Islam or “*buaiian Islam China*.” Back to the Tang Dynasty (618-960), there was a mission led by Saad bin Abu Waqqas tasked by Caliph Usman bin Affan; the mission itself was to explore the maritime silk routes from the Arabian peninsular to Guangzhou for the purpose of trading and spreading Islam religion. He also managed to build the first mosque in China, which is the mosque with the famous Guangta tower. After he passed away, his body was buried at the Guangzhou cemetery (Brochures Brief Introduction of Islam in Guangzhou Issued by China Islamic Association, 2016).

The first mosque or Huaisheng mosque that the writer visited is the archeological proof of the presence of Islam in Guangzhou. The other proof that Islam is present in Guangzhou is the existence of Abu Waqas’ tomb, a friend of the Prophet. The writer witnessed the tomb where there is a mosque named Abu Waqas not far from it.

The settlement of the Arabian, Persian, and Morocco people has been present since the Tang Dynasty in the early of 7th century. At that time, the emperor provided the area called Fan Fang specifically for foreign traders (including the Arabian people). This era marked the first encounter of China with the Islamic community. In the next era, Fan Fang area is resided by “foreigners” (including muslim people from the Middle East). Fan Fang area still has its marks until today.

Fan Fang area and Huaisheng mosque have somehow affected the current picture of Guangzhou muslim, either for the number or the life of muslim in the city. The number of Muslims in Guangzhou cannot be ascertained. The information the writer acquired from the head of China Islamic Association states that the number of Muslims in Guangzhou is around 7,000 to 8,000 people from the total of 15 million people of Guangzhou.

It needs to be acknowledged that the people population in China is 1.3 billion which consists of 56 ethnicities. The majority is the Han ethnicity, 91%. 55 other ethnical groups which are 9% are the minority. 10 from 55 ethnical groups are identified to be having many Muslims. The 10 ethnical groups mentioned are: Hui, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kirgiz, Dongxian, Salar, Tajik, Uzbek, Tartar, and Bonan. The Muslims number is around 25 million people or around 2% of the total of the Chinese population. Only Tajik ethnicity has syiah *mazhab*. The other ones are Sunni *mazhab* (Yvonne Monen and Annette O’Riordan, without year and publisher).

Indonesian citizens in Guangzhou are around 800 people. That number is recorded at the KJRI in Guangzhou. However, there are some Indonesian Citizens who are not recorded as they did not file a report. They are student and college student, expatriate, and KJRI employee. From the number, around 300 people are Muslim, the rest are Christian, Catholic, and Buddhist.

The life and practice of Islam religion in Guangzhou are characterized by their awareness as muslim. Because of that, they do not consume pork. According to Muhamad Yusuf, a Hui muslim and the owner of a restaurant around Huaisheng mosque, stated that not all Hui people are muslim but they do not consume pork, and as for the women, they wear hijab (Muhammad Yusuf, 2017).

Uighur ethnicity is also present in Guangzhou. They usually are food seller which every Friday sell their food around Abi Waqas mosque. Almost all sellers, as the writer witnessed, sell various food and drink such as briyani rice, kebuli rice, lamb satay, special coffee of Uighur, and many more. The muslim women of Uighur ethnicity also wear hijab, just like the women of Hui ethnicity.

If some Muslims of Uighur in the area whose majority population are muslim such as Xinjiang practice *sufi* ways, Hui muslims in Guangzhou generally do not practice the same ways. Guangzhou muslim community generally practices *Fikih Hanafi*. From the theological aspect, the kalam of Asy’ariyah Maturidiyah is practiced by the Middle Asian muslim community (Shaikh Abdullah Mohammad Wang Wenjie Imam, 2017).

Islamic Pillars consists of five basic pillars. In practice, Muslims in China, including Guangzhou, generally know *syahadat* as the base of Islam. The practice of five times prayer is sometimes implemented at the mosques and sometimes at home. However, Friday is a very special day, as on this day, almost all Muslims in Guangzhou implement Jumu’ah (Friday prayer) centered at four mosques spread around Guangzhou city. For example, when the writer performed Jumu’ah, the Abu Waqas mosque was crowded even in its yard. They were not only Chinese Muslims, but also seem to be muslim immigrants from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia who crowded the mosque.

It is interesting to be observed, when the time for Jumu’ah came, rain was pouring suddenly. One of the caretakers of the mosque announced that because of the rain, the mosque’s yard would be exposed to rain, thus timplimentation of the Jumu’ah would be accelerated. After the prayer was done, the writer witnessed a group of the congregation was doing something such as reading *manaqib*. The writer saw the activity as the form of Sufism or Tarekat rituals.

For sure the writer cannot generalize the Muslims in China, the same as the writer cannot generalize many special groups of people in various areas. The equation can be said about the teaching of Islam religion itself, where Islam develops in various forms, depending on the social and geographical context differences. For that reason, the *short impression*, borrowing the term from Yvonne Monen, of the specific issue and development perhaps influences the muslim life in China.

The first is that some Chinese muslims feel that they are different from Han ethnicity. Chinese muslims have differences with the Han ethnicity in rituals, foods, and custom of dressing; sometimes, they are also different in language and culture, depending on what ethnical minority they are and where they live. Sometimes, they do not send their children to school as the available school does not provide halal (lawful) foods. Based on where they live and how they implement assimilation, they feel discriminated in working practices. They have different forms of identity that come together in one individual; they are both muslim and Chinese and have both communities. Muslims should be flexible and ready to be able to compromise as they are a community living in the middle of Han majority inhabitants. One main aspect that perhaps is applied for many Muslims is the pressure from Chinese people to adapt and assimilate. For example, there are many Muslims using their muslim name when they are with the muslim communities, however, when they are in public, they use their Chinese name.

The second one is the development of Islam itself. During the old Chinese period, Islam was affected by Sufism, Confucianism, Taoism, and the dominant Han society. Therefore, since China opened itself in the 1980s, Revivalism of Islam started to appear. As there was no religion allowed in 1966 to 1978, Islam Revivalism was the first in twenty years where people were able to practice their religion again. As a part of the Chinese policies which was more pragmatic, China loosened the ban on people who went abroad and Chinese media that reported events happened in the Islamic world. From this point, there was an influence of the appearance of some Muslims who were able to perform Hajj to Mecca. The Hajj came back to China with new ideas of how the purer Islam was understood. Movement such as Wahabi and Salafi from Saudi Arabia and Middle Asian country also gave an influence, especially for the life of Uighur people. As a result, China attempted to understand the Arabian and Islamic world for the political and economic reason. They welcomed bachelors from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and other Middle East countries. One of the influences of this phenomenon was the conflict of Islam typical, for instance, the conflict of Sunni versus Syiah entered China and influenced the local muslim community.

The third factor influenced the Chinese muslims is the high degree of secularization and the life of the people which is perceived as immoral. This development can display two ways: Muslims who become secular as can be seen in major cities; or, they try to hold onto their traditions which can commonly be seen in villages. Another reaction is the desire to come back to the Arabian tradition and culture which can be seen in the construction of the mosques with Arabian architectures.

The fourth aspect is the new influence of the war against the 9/11 terrorism including its effect and the concern towards Islam in the world. After the occurrence of the 9/11, Islam was accused of promoting terrorism and violence. It implicates to the Muslims who feel discriminated and as the reaction to come back to Islam in the searching their identity.

3.3 Government Policy towards Religion

The relation between politics and religion always becomes a complex matter in China. To legitimate their power, Emperors usually attempt to merge religious rituals and at the same time control the religions itself. Since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949, a reformation of religion was set aside. The communist party was more strict towards religion leaders and the land and residence belonged to the religious community were nationalized. Between 1966 and 1978, religion was firstly restricted, then, afterward, it was banned entirely.

Since the 1980s, the regime chose the policy that was more pragmatic. This policy saw religion as private matters, and officially there was a free will for living by religion. However, at the same time, religion was still controlled by the country. This emphasized on the rights for not having religion belief but believing in atheism and materialism. The main purpose of the country leader was that the people should obey the party leader to keep the social stability and the national unity of the country.

Religion can be a threat to this policy. The control of religion was manifesting itself in several ways. Firstly, places for worshipping had to be registered and inspected annually. Worshipping place could not be utilized as the place for gathering that might endanger the social stability or the national unity, or resist the educational system. Secondly, religious institutes had to implement the party policy and had to have the curriculum approved by the government. The recruitment of people with religion in elementary and junior high students' circles is prohibited.

Next, it has to be said that China is a country that constantly changes. It has many varieties in term of social and politics. There is a variety of communism which is very orthodox to pro-western culture groups; there is also capitalism extremists towards the very authoritarian leadership. There is a wide gap between rich and poor; villages and cities, country's officials and commoners, and faithfully religious people and immoral people.

It is said that Chinese people encountered a spiritual crisis during this era, as there were changes in the society. All of it was about the materialism and economic growth. People had to encounter unhealthy competition, usage of the line of descent, a circle of relation, and loyalty towards the Chinese communist party. It caused mutual suspicion, corruption and crime, and even the effect of imbalance. The context was applied to all people, including the life of the Chinese muslims.

When the relation between religion and China was complex, the relation between Islam and China was rather interesting. There were three main issues influenced the policy of China towards Muslims. The first is the Uighur issue, people who lived in Xinjiang area, who had fought for their liberty and had acquired international support for years because of the harsh ways implemented by China in treating Uighur. China attempted to convince the world that they encountered a serious international terrorism. The war against terrorism since the 9/11 helped them in this matter.

The second issue is about the import of oil. Bad treatment towards Muslims in China was not less respected by the oil exporter countries that are Islamic. China even promoted the relation between the Chinese muslims and the Middle East; one part of it was to create a strong partnership in trading and the other part was because China saw them as the third world leader.

The third aspect saw China's desire to take part in the international organization. For Chinese leadership, it is important to show that they hold onto their principles when foreign countries interfere the problems of Tibetan and Uighur people. Seeing the everyday life, there are issues of preferential policy towards the minority muslims. Muslims, on one side, feel controlled, not too free, and discriminated. On the other hand, they enjoy the policy of one child that is not less strict. They have fewer roadblocks in applying to Universities, and they obtain easier promotion in various degree of society. The last one is only applied to the Hui ethnicity, which is different from the Han ethnicity, and not often has been secularized.

The policy of Guangzhou Government towards religion follows the policy of the center government. The Chinese constitution allows the people to have or not have the religious belief. People who believe in religion are allowed to express their belief and religion. Because of the policy, there is no religious education at schools. For those people who want to believe in religion, they are not prohibited from establishing worshipping places. Religious people of Islam are given the freedom to perform the worshipping at the mosque.

There are two main principles of the Chinese Government policy towards religion, which is respect towards the freedom of living with religious belief and hold onto their freedom and

their government's freedom. The current Constitution determines (<http://www.muslim2china.com>):

"Citizens of the People's Republic of China have freedom of religious belief; no government department, social organization, or individual may force citizens to believe or not to believe in religion, or discriminate against citizens on the basis of their belief or lack of belief in religion; the state protects normal religious activities; no one may use religion to conduct activities that destroy social order, harm citizens' health, or hinder the nation's educational system; and religious organizations and religious affairs may not be controlled by foreign powers".

Other than that, all constitutional regulations such as Laws, Election, Organization, Autonomy, Village Community Organization, Election of People's Congress, Education, Labor, and other constitutions determine the rights equality towards people with different religious beliefs. Because of the long history and large population of China, there are many religions in this country. Among them are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, and Christian. Five official organizations approved by China are the China Buddhist Association, China Tao Association, China Islamic Association, Three-Self Patriotic Movement, and China Patriotic Catholic Association.

Buddhism was introduced by India during the Han Dynasty era. The newest survey shows that the total of Buddhist in China reaches 300 million, on the growth level of 18% to 20% from the total of population. The Guanyin statue as high as 108 meters in Hainan was built on April 24, 2005 with the participation of 108 reputable monks from various Buddhist communities in Hong Kong, Macau, and Mainland China, and thousands of pilgrims. In 2010, the remaining of Buddha Gautama was inaugurated and built as a relic (*sarira*) at Qixia Temple in Nanjing.

Taoism was born in China. Besides religion, Taoism is also considered as a system of thought or philosophy. It developed gradually with the support of many rulers in various ages. Today, both Beijing and Shanghai Tao Association report their members that have reached more than 100 million people. Christianity in China consists of people of Protestant, Catholic, and some of Orthodox Christian. The latest official census states that there are 4 million people of Rome Catholic and 10 million of Protestant. Churches can easily be found in every part of China. Muslims are found in every Province in China. Religious concessions given to muslim people consist of: permitted to have their own cemetery, muslims couple permitted to be married with Islamic ways led by an Islamic Priest, muslims workers permitted to have a holiday during big religious ceremonial days; and so on.

While insisting on the principle of independence and self-government, religions in China actively communicate with foreign religious institutions and individuals to contribute to world peace and strong friendship between China and peers from other countries. For example, in April 2006, China held World Buddhist Forum. Chinese muslims are also allowed to perform Hajj to Mecca, and more than 45,000 Chinese muslims have done it in the last few years.

3.4 Mosque-Based Islamic Education: Survey of Four Mosques

There is around 40,000 mosques in all over China. One of the reasons for this large number of the mosques is that in Islamic tradition: If there are more than 40 men of muslim, the mosque is better to be built. Another reason is that there is a lot of funders from Arabian countries, and the fact is that China allows the construction of the mosques. It is related to the China's strategy to make Chinese Islam looks good because of their politics relation with the Middle East.

The Mosque functions as the center for muslim communities. The first of many functions of the mosque itself is that it is used as a place for praying and the center for community. The mosque is also utilized for important events in life such as welcoming birth, wedding, death ritual, and religious ceremonial. Most of the mosques have a restaurant facility,

which is used for guests and visitors, it is also used for having lunch together on Friday before the Jumu'ah. Some mosques provide a hotel or room facility for students and college students.

Based on the writer's survey, there are four mosques in Guangzhou. These four mosques are: Huasheng mosque, Abi Waqqas mosque, Haopan mosque, and Xiaodongying mosque. According to China Islamic Association, there is more than 14,000 local muslims and 120,000 muslim visitors pray every Friday at those four mosques.

The writer begins with the oldest mosque in Guangzhou which also one of the oldest mosques in China. Other three oldest mosques are: Crane mosque in Yangzhou, Kylin mosque in Quanzhou, and Phoenix mosque in Hangzhou. The oldest mosque in Guangzhou is Huasheng mosque. The mosque which was built in the early of the Tang Dynasty is located at Guangta Street Number 56. The mosque that is commonly known as Guangta mosque has the area of 3,800 m². This mosque has a tower with pagoda shape as high as 36.3 meters, and the base of the tower has a diameter of 7.5 meters. The mosque that uses the old Chinese architecture can accommodate around 2,000 Muslims during the Jumu'ah. Huasheng mosque publishes magazines such as Huaisheng and Taguang. In China, Huasheng mosque is the national mosque model and national cultural symbol. Furthermore, Guangzhou Islamic organization and the center of cultural, historical studies of Hui Guangzhou is located at this mosque.

At Huasheng mosque, there is a Guangta tower building that is able to see the rises of the sun and was built during the Ming Dynasty era. Guangta, with the shape similar to a block, is a building consisting of bricks, in which its exterior was coated with chalked, whose height is 36.3 meters high, its base tower diameter is 7.5 meters, and the higher the tower, the smaller it gets. There are south and north gate, also two stairs leading to the top of the tower, the south stairs consisting of 158 of steps, the north stairs consisting of 154 steps, on the wall of the tower there is a hole for acquiring light.

The plaque of "*Jiao Chong Xi Yu*" shows that this building was built by Emperor Guangxu from the Qing Dynasty (1901). A mark was given to this plaque by the emperor. Those four letters mean that Islam comes from Mecca. An old heritage from Yuan Dynasty is located at the southeast corner of the praying room. There is also Guangta Stone located at the west corridor of the mosque.

The next one is Abi Waqas mosque. This mosque was firstly named Dabeimen, which was firstly built during the Tang Dynasty era. The area of this mosque is more than 2,500 m². This mosque is without a doubt the biggest mosque in Guangdong Province. There is around 10,000 Muslims perform the Jumu'ah at this mosque. When there is a ceremonial event, around 30,000 Muslims attend the mosque. The area of this mosque was renovated in September 2010.

Haopan mosque in the area of 1,491 m² was firstly built by Daganjun (muslim army) in Guangzhou during the Chenghua Ming period. This mosque is 500 years old. Every Friday, there are 400 muslims perform the Jumu'ah at this mosque.

Xiaodongying mosque has the area of 500 m². This mosque has operated for more than 500 years. It was built by Daganjun (muslim army) in Guangzhou during the Chenghua Ming period. There is around 1.300 Muslims who perform the Jumu'ah every Friday.

One of the activities seen at this mosque is the teaching of Islamic education. The islamic education is a hard material to be taught as it stands between what the Chinese muslims want and what the Chinese Government wants. Since the 1980s, Chinese muslims have been looking for a way to strengthen the identity of Islam and increasing the cohesion in the Islamic community. The Chinese Government declined this development, as the Government intended to keep the safety and security. The Government preferred Muslims to assimilate, not to maintain and keep the identity and uphold the islamic tradition.

The Islamic education begins with the knowledge of Quran. What is it said and what does it mean? The Islamic Scholars or bachelors are the ones responsible for the education of

Quran in China. They translate and interpret Quran and other Islamic sources from Arabic language to Chinese or Uighur. These books and articles are distributed limitedly and closely. Officially, those books and articles are not allowed to be distributed as there is too much information that might threaten the national cohesion. On the other side, because of the positive relation with the Islamic countries, a development currently concerns into this matter.

Religious education is arranged in several ways, depending on the minority ethnicity and the local Government. For Uighur and Xinjiang, the policy regarding the free will for religion is stricter. For example, it is forbidden for adolescent under 18 years old to learn Islam or even visit the mosque. Also, student and government employee are prohibited from practicing and learning Quran. There is another example in Shanghai; there is a mosque that wants to conduct Quran classes, but the local Government has not given any permit in the last 10 years. Only before the World Expo 2010 held in Shanghai, some basic Arabic languages were taught to welcome many visitors from the Middle East. After the World Expo event ended, the classes were stopped again. In some cases, men and women gather, separately, and discuss upcoming events, such as gathering in Ramadan month and all activities included in that month.

Generally, there are two kinds of Islamic education in China. The first one is the Islamic education called mosque education or *pendidikan masjid (Jingtang Jiaoyu)* and the second one is the Islamic school education. The Islamic education in China begins with the mosque, and this kind of education is the most common form of the Islamic education today in the country, which is commonly known as Mosque-Based Education or *Pendidikan Berbasis Masjid*.

The mosque usually organizes Islamic teachings and this kind of teaching is called *Jingtang Jiaoyu*. *Jingtang* means a hall for Quran and *Jiaoyu* means education. According to the data issued by the China Islamic Association (*Asosiasi Islam China*), there are more than 35,000 mosques in all over China. Some of the mosques organize the Quran teachings routinely or the practicing of Quran teaching which is implemented during the summer or the winter holiday (<http://www.islamichina.com/Islamic-Education-in-China.html>. Downloaded on November 20, 2017).

The Mosque-based education has a long history. Since Muslims live around the mosques, and there are tens of thousands of the mosques in all over China, the mosque education is the popular way for muslims circle to obtain Quran teaching and education in China. The student was taught Arabian and Persian language, Quran, knowledge of Islam religion, by a person called Ahong (Islamic Priest). The mosque education is opened to all muslim students. The mosque provides free accommodation and tuition for the student who comes to learn. Islamic Priest also teaches freely at Islamic schools conducted by the mosques.

The mosque education was initiated by a Muslim named Hu Dengzhou (1522-1579) during the Ming Dynasty era. As China is a very big country, some mosque teaching schools were formed in the history, including Shaaxi school which focused on "*Ilm al-kalam*" and "*Ilm al-Tafsir*", Shandong school which focused on 13 holy books in Arabian and Persian language, and the study about Sufism, Yunnan school which reformed the traditional mosque education and taught holy writings in Arabian and Chinese language-based school, Hezhou (older name of Linxia school in Gansu Province) which focused on the teaching of "*Mishkat al-Masabih* Holy Book" and "*Thya ulum al-Masabih*."

Islamic School Education in China appeared in the 1920s and 1930s when China experienced a drastic change in the social and educational system. Traditional private house teaching was stopped and modern western school was established. Some muslim intellectuals formed a modern Islamic educational system by establishing Islamic schools consecutively in Beijing, Shanghai, Sichuan, Jinan, Yunnan, Ningxia, and other Provinces in China. Quran, Arabic and Persian language, Science and art, all were taught in those modern schools. After graduating from school, some muslim students were sent to the Middle East to learn more about Arabic Language and Islam in the 1930s.

3.5 Islamic Association: The Organizer of The Mosque-Based Education

In the early of 1952, Chinese Islamic leaders, which are: Burhan, Depusheng, Makien, and Pang Shiqian started to organize an Islamic organization in China. They were the representatives who were invited from all muslim communities in China to the first Islamic conference held in Beijing in May 1953. This conference marked the birth of China Islamic Association, the muslim national organization of China. The members and fixed committee members of this organization were chosen at the representative congress of all muslim communities in China. There were also other 270 local muslim organizations for the various degree were formed, one by one.

China Islamic Association is mainly involved in gathering and compiling books, notes, and the remains of Islamic culture; conducting research of the history and Islamic belief; and organizing pilgrimage to Mecca. This association publishes some kinds of magazines called “Muslim in China”, which was firstly established in 1957. This magazine is published in Chinese and Uighur language. The content consists of the research result of the history and Islamic doctrine, recommendation of classical Islam, and discussion of the implementation of the Government policy concerning the free will to living by religion. This magazine introduces the reader the experience of teaching in many Islamic institutions in various areas of the country, and the principles of organizing mosque. Then, the magazine reports the contribution of Chinese muslims towards the activity formed to protect the world peace and the friendship relation with other Muslims from around the globe.

Ten classical Islamic books, including Quran have been translated into Chinese and Uighur language, and published under the guidance of Chinese Islamic Association. These books are spread to all over China. The association has also published some Islamic dictionaries. It helps Islamic people to strengthen the national unity and actively involved in Chinese modernization.

In July 1955, the Chinese Islamic Association formed a National Chinese Islamic Institute in Beijing for the training of special Islamic personnel. In this institution, they conducted an advanced training class for *Abongs* and *Mullah* (Islamic scholars). The five-year study material includes classes concerning Quran, religion etiquette, belief, history of Islam, Arabic language, Chinese language, politics, and general Chinese and the world history. Around 70% of its curriculum are Islamic materials, and other 30% are the materials for increasing the general educational level of the students.

There are also eight other Islamic institutes in China. There are located in Shenyang, Zhengzhou, Lanzhou, Yinchuan, Qinghai, Urumqi, Junming, and one more in Beijing. The student can register for this school right after graduating from the High School. The training course aims at producing Islamic priests for many mosques in China. This kind of training is considered to be very important by the Association as there are still some senior Islamic priests in villages and meadows in China who still cannot even read and write.

The Chinese Islamic Association has established a friendly relationship with Islamic organization in more than 40 countries, sent delegations to visit those countries for numerous times, and taken part in the Asia-Africa Islamic Conference and International Islamic Thought Seminar.

The organization of the Chinese Islamic Association in Guangzhou is led by Wenji the Islamic Priest. He is also the head of the Chinese Islamic Association in Guangdong Province. This organization has conducted the Mosque-Based Islamic Education at four mosques in Guangzhou.

3.6 Teacher: Ahong or Islamic Priest

The Islamic Priests in China are commonly called by the name *Abong*. The name *Abong*

comes from a Persian word for calling teacher. It shows the Persian heritage in Chinese Islam. An *Abong* is a person who possesses wide knowledge of Islamic laws. He was educated in courses of typical Islam such as Islamic Theology, interpreting, Islamic laws, and Arabic language.

Abong stands at the center of the local community. He is responsible for the people's religious matter and protects the people from the outside. *Abong* has to ensure the peace to the local Government. He has to find a way to accommodate the central Government's demands on one side, and has to withstand it on the other side. He also has to handle a social matter, such as the one-child policy and welcome police officer to a mosque to teach the traffic laws. If he implements this well, he perhaps will attract foreign fund, as funders are attracted to support community's mosques. Usually, he also leads prayers and performs the Jumu'ah's preaching at the mosque. The preaching is applied in the Chinese language.

Most of them speak about peace and tolerance, stay themselves away from alcohol, follow Chinese laws, and practice a harmony relation with everybody. To be appointed to this position, he has to be invited to specific mosques. That is why he has to have a good reputation and morality. He has to be the lead example for his community. The appointment of *Abong* is applied through consensus by the majority of the mosque selection committee, but it also has to be approved by the local Government. Usually, Islamic Priests are appointed for the period of 3 to 6 years to one mosque. After that, they perform rotation to other communities. China has more than 50,000 *Abong*.

These *Abong* are the people who teach the Mosque-Based Islamic Education at institutions in Guangzhou. At Huasheng mosque, there are two *Abong*, namely: an *Abong* who teaches Quran and basic Islamic teaching and another one who teaches the Arabic language. Musa Shodiq is one of *Abong* at Huasheng mosque.

Abi Waqas mosque has four *Abong*. Syaikh Abdullah Muhammad Wenji is the highest figure of *Abong* at this place. Besides being *Abong*, he is also the president of the Chinese Islamic Association in Guangzhou. He wrote a book called "*Al-Tafikir fi ats-tsaqofah al-Islamiyah*". Abu Bakar is another *Abong* who accompanies *Abong* Wenji.

As for Haopan mosque, there is only one *Abong*, named Yunus. The writer does not have enough information regarding this person. While, at Xiadongying mosque, there is a candidate for filling the position as *Abong*. He was the alumni of the Islamic High Education.

3.7 Student Who Learns

The writer does not have a certain number of the students who study in each Mosque-Based Islamic Education Institution. However, according to the statement of each *Abong*, the data is concluded as follows: At Huasheng mosque, there are around 20-30 students, at Abi Waqas mosque, the number of the students is uncertain as the students are in the form of *halaqah* (meeting). There are around 15 people who learn at Haopan mosque. They consist of children to adolescent. While at Xiaodongying mosque, most of the settler are traders, and there is no specific educational activity.

3.8 Teaching Material: From Learning Quran to Arabic Language

In fact, the material of the mosque-based education focuses on the behavior and morality. Another example of bigger Islamic religion education is a summer dormitory in the Northern Province. This summer dorm is prepared for the young student from the weaker Islamic area, such as Hui community in large cities.

They were affected by materialism, atheism, and degraded morality, so they migrated to the stronger areas of Chinese Islam, called "Little Mecca". Lingxia in Gansu Province and also Changzhi in Shanxi Province are good examples of this matter. For these students, there is no

travel limitation. It means that even the Government has no longer supported this training dorm, they let the students go to this place. At the dorm, basic knowledge is taught in three straight days. It has to be started by *Shabada*, the basic belief is Islam that says there is no other Gods and that Muhammad is His Prophet.

Students learn when and which Quran verses to apply, and when to apply the ritual. They learn the Arabic language and about Prophet Muhammad. On one side, they are taught a slogan such as “love your country and love your authoritarian.” Students are not allowed to consume alcohol and smoke. There are no pornography and no gambling, also no fighting for separatism. They learn about the actual meaning of *Jihad (crusader)*. It is about a fighting to fix people’s private life, to make people become a better man without using bad language, gossiping or making any accusation. It is also taught that Quran teaches people to find peace, not violence. In 2001, in Hebei Province, around 26,000 students participated in a summer camp activity implemented for three days or more.

Besides weekly Quran teaching in and at around the mosque and the summer dorm in “Little Mecca”, there is a new madrasa and new Islamic High Education. In China, there are 11 madrasa in total directed by the country, which can be found, for example, in Beijing or Lingxia, in Gansu Province. In the new kind of madrasa, the main material of Islam usually taught is: Quran with its translation, Islamic Theology, Arabic language. Then, in this classic program, English, computer science, physical education, Chinese language, culture and philosophy, as well as Marxism have been added. There is a proverb said by the Prophet Muhammad: Studying has no limitations and learning from cradle to grave, which supports this study program. Furthermore, students involved in a drama act with Arabic language, and in a calligraphy competition. These madrasas are sponsored by the local Islam community. Students do not have to pay for the tuition, they are facilitated by free accommodation.

The teaching material is generally to learn Quran and Arabic language as in Huasheng and Haopan. On the other hand, the material at Abi Waqas is quite general. At Xiadongying mosque, there can only be seen congregations who read Quran. The teaching method is dominated by lecturing and assignment. The teaching time is done in the afternoon. Sometimes, there can also be applied after prayers.

3.9 Facilities and Financing

Educational facility is a room separated from the mosque like at Huasheng and Haopan. Besides study room, there is also whiteboard, chair, study desk, and library. The room at Abi Waqas mosque itself is utilized for the studying process. While, Xiadongyin mosque has no specific room for studying the religion.

From the financing side, all organizers give free tuition to all students to study. The funding resource of the Mosque-Based Islamic Education is gathered from zakah, infaq, and alms of the muslims either from the local Chinese muslims or from the visitors. For the case at Haopan, for example, the funding’s source is from the rent of the hotel.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Guangzhou is the cradle of Islam where from this city, Islam spread to all areas of China. The proof of Islam comes to Guangzhou is that there is a muslim community which still can be seen today. The other proof is that there are four mosques and the tomb of the Prophet's companion Abi Waqas and the muslims cemetery. The historical and archeological data can still be seen today.

The mosque becomes a multi-functional place. Besides used for praying, the mosques in Guangzhou are functioned as the places to study Islam religion which later is known as the Mosque-Based Education. Moreover, there is also another kind of education called Islamic

school. This kind of education started to appear in the early 20th Century. The existence of the Mosque-based Islamic education in Guangzhou strengthens the assumption that Islamic education with base is the very first form of the Islamic education in China.

The organization of the Chinese Islamic Association, Ahong, and high educational Islamic institutions play a major role in the existence and development of the kind of the mosque-based Islamic education in Guangzhou. Through those three factors, the Islamic education with basis can be applied.

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