

## MUSLIM DESCENDANTS OF CLAN DING IN CHENDAI

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Chendai lies in the southeast of Fujian Province, to the southern bank of Quanzhou Bay. It used to be a beach in the ancient times. During the Five Dynasty and the Ten Kingdoms, the observer of the Nantang Dynasty (923- 936 A.D.) Chen Hongjin ordered the soldiers and the local people to build up an earth dam around the bay, then it's named "Dai" meant by an earth dam in Chinese character. In the Song Dynasty, there lived many families named Chen, Ni, Zhou, Zhang and Xie.

According to the records in the family tree of Ding we know. The ancestor of the first generation Ding Jin (1251-1298 A.D.), moved from Suzhou to Quanzhou on business, which was known as a big port at that time and it's on the north of Chendai. The ancestor of the second generation Ding Si died early (1273-1300 A.D.). The ancestor of the third one Ding Kui-kui (1298-1379 A.D) went to Chendai with his son Ding Shan (1343- 1420 A.D.) at the end of the Yuan Dynasty. Since then, the family of Ding has settled down there, developed and gradually became a bigger family in Chendai. The official statistics of 1992 showed that the population of Ding's family is more than 18 thousand, most of them live in Andou, Pingtou, Jiangtou, Xitou, Xiban, Sijing and Hua ting-kou villages, with the whole area of 12 square kilometers, and there are 654 village-and-town enterprises, which are worth about 334 million 54 thousand RMB Yuan. This holds over 93 percent of the total output value in agriculture and industry. And the net income per person is 2884 Yuan annually.

### 1. The Secret of the Ancestor of the Ding's Family

Whether Sai-dian-chi Shan-si-ding (Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din) is the ancestor of the Ding's family or not, is the problem that the historians and the people of the Ding's family have always been probing.

Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din (1211-1279 A.D.) was a famous Muslim politician in the Yuan Dynasty, whose descendants now scatter over some provinces in China.

Ding Yan-xia (1516-1597 A.D), the ancestor of the tenth generation presented in his writing "Gan-ji jiu-wen" (Recollecting of the Past): At the age of twenty, when he tried to write his family tree, his uncle gave him a calligraphy of Ding Min (the ancestor of the sixth generation 1407-1456 A.D.), in which it was recorded that the family of Ding was from Sayyid-alajall Shams-al-din. But Ding Yan-xia thought Sayyid-al-Ajall Shames-al-din was a name of a foreigner, and found it difficult to verify it in historical documents, so he gave up. But after reading "Quanzhou Fuzhi" (Records of Quanzhou History) and "Yin-guo-lu" (Cause and Effect), he found that Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din was a famous politician in Yunnan Province.

He supposed that the surname "Ding" might have been taken from the end of "Shames-al-din". Moreover, his family believed in Islam as Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din did, which confirmed him in his supposition. But it was only a supposition, not a conclusion. Because Ding Yan-xia could not explain the relationship between Ding Jin and Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din.<sup>1</sup>

In the family tree of Ding, it's recorded that Ding Jin was also called Ding Shen-si<sup>2</sup>, which seems to be a transliteration of Shames-al-din in written by Ding Min is on basis.

In the end, I want to say something about the gravestone of Amir Sayyid-ajala Toghan-shah. Prof. Ma Jian translated it first and supposed Toghan-shah was a descendant of Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din.<sup>3</sup> Later a Quanzhou research group wrote an article<sup>4</sup>, in which they considered Ding Jin as Toghan-shah. But Mr. Lu Junling and Mr. Chen Dasheng translated the inscription again and they thought the four ancestors' names in the inscription could neither prove the relationship between Toghan-shah and Sayyid-al-ajall Shams-al-din, nor the relationship between Toghan-shah and the family of Ding in Chendai.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore it still keeps a secret where the first ancestor of the Ding's family came from.

## **2. The Han-assimilation of the Muslim descendants in the Ding's family**

In the Song and Yuan Dynasties, all the Muslim descendants in Quanzhou went through the process of Han-assimilation, most of the Muslims made marriage with Han nationality at that time, so many of their traditions and customs changed to follow the Han system. At the end of the Yuan Dynasty, the Ispah rebellion (1357-1366 A.D.) broke out, the Muslims in Quanzhou were massacred and driven out. When time rolled into the Ming Dynasty, the government carried out a close-door policy, which includes closing all harbours, prohibiting Chinese people from sailing abroad and foreigners entering. This policy led to end the relationship between Muslims in Quanzhou and Muslims all over the world. Moreover the government of the Ming Dynasty adopted a discriminatory policy towards The Muslims in

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<sup>1</sup> Ding Yan-xia, "Cheng-jiang Yan-gou-li Ding-shi zu-pu" (Family Tree of Ding's family of Yan-gou-li in Chen-jiang) manuscript, Quan-zhou. 1594: "Gan-jijiu- wen" (Recollecting of the past) enlarged edition by Ding He-nian, 1885. Chen Da-sheng "Quan-zhou Du-an-sha-bei yu Sai-dian-chi Shan-si-ding hou-yi guan-xi kao" (The research of the relation between the gravestone of Amir Sayyid-ajala Toghan-shah and the descendants of Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din in Gan-su Minzu yan-jiu (Journal of the studies on the Minorities of Gan-su), Lan-zhou. 1986. No. 1, Pp 51-52.

<sup>2</sup> Ding Yan-xia, "Cheng-jiang Yan-gou-li Ding-shi zu-pu" (Family Tree of Ding's family of Yan-gou-li in Chen-jiang).manuscript, Quan-zhou, 1594 : enlarged edition by Ding He-nian, 1885.

<sup>3</sup> Wu Wen-liang, "Quan-zhou zong-jiao shi-ke" (Religious inscription in Quan-zhou), Bei-jing, 1957, Pp 7, fig 4-1.2.

<sup>4</sup> A Research Group of Quan-zhou Museum for Overseas Communication History, "Quan-zhou Chendai Ding-xing yan-jiu" (A study of the Ding's family in Chendai) in Quan-zhou Hai-wai jiao-tong-shi hui-bian (Recollecting of the historical documents in Quan-zhou Overseas Communication History). Quan-zhou, 1959, No. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Lu Jun-ling, He Gao-ji "Quan-zhou Du-an-sha bei", The gravestone of Amir Sayyid-ajala Toghan-shah) in "Kao-gu" (Archaeological studies). Bei-jing, 1980, No.5, Pp 472-477: Chen Da-sheng, Quan-zhou Du-an-sha bei yu Sai-dian-chi Shan-si-ding hou-yi guan-xi kao" (The research of the relation between the gravestone of Amir Sayyid-ajala Toghan-shah and the descendants of Amir Sayyid-al-ajall Shames-al-din) in Gan-su Min-zu yan-jiu (Journal of the studies on the Minorities of Gan-su). Lan-zhou, 1986, No.1, Pp 47-50.

Quanzhou, which forced the Muslims to strand hold back their belief; cancel their identities and so on for subsistence. So their descendants gradually apostatized from Islam and were submerged in the Han's majority, culture and traditions.

The Muslim families in Quanzhou all have different experiences so that their rate of progress of Han-assimilation is quite different. There are some historical events which have ever played an important role in accelerating the apostasy from Islam to Ding's family in Chendai.

1. In the disaster of the Ispah rebellion, the ancestor of the third generation Ding Kui-kui escaped to Chendai, with his son Ding Shan. During the early period after their settlement in Chendai, the family still kept the belief of Islam. For example, the tombs from the ancestor of the first generation to the sixth were in the Islamic style.<sup>6</sup>

2. In 1475, a litigation called Sa-shi shu-zu took place in Chendai. Zeng Xi-zang, a rapscaillon in the village failed in extorting money from Ding Sheng, so he argued that original surname of the Ding was Satuo. (Satou had settled at Zhangde of Henan Province as a guard). If the charge was tenable, the people of Ding couldn't live in Chendai any longer. The litigation lasted 18 years, which brought a big disaster to the Ding's family. Being scared at it, the ancestor of the seventh generation Ding Zhen deleted the records written by Ding Min (the sixth one) about Sayyid-al-ajall Shams al-din. He took Ding Du as his ancestor. (Ding Du was an official in the Song Dynasty and was from Han nationality).<sup>7</sup>

3. In 1560-1561, Japanese pirates occupied Chendai and destroyed the houses, which helped advance the process of Ding's Han-assimilation. Ding Yan-xia recorded clearly in his article "Zhu-jiao-shuo" (Exposition on the origin of the Ding's family) that at the beginning of the sixteenth century, his family kept the religious service such as praying to Allah, fasting in Ramadan, not eating pork, slaughtering animals and burying the bodies directly. But things changed later. At the end of the sixteenth century, the practices of praying to Allah were lessened and the fasting in Ramadan stopped. The bodies were buried in the habit of Han nationality and people also ate pork.<sup>8</sup>

4. A few people of the Ding's family began to be officials from the ancestor of the eighth generation Ding Yi. Later the ninth Ding Zishen. The tenth Ding Rijin and the eleventh Ding Kengwen ranked in succession among the officials. They carried out Han's traditions

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<sup>6</sup> Chen Da-sheng "Quan-zhou Yi-si-lan-jiao shi-ke (Islamic Inscription in Quan-zhou ), Fu-zhou. 198-t. Pp 61-62. Fig. 219

<sup>7</sup> Ding Yan-xia "Xue-shu-shuo" (Clearing the false charge of the guards)."Gan-ji-jiu-wen" (Recollecting of the past), 1594; Ding Zi-s hen "Ji-yueyin" (introduction of the rule for the sacrifice); Ding Yue,"Mu-xiu qian-xiang fenxi-gong bing dong tong shan-shi-zu ying duan-yuan yin-yan" (Introduction of making collections for the restoration of the wall of the tombs of Mr. Fen-xi . a provincial supervisor and the ancestor of the third generation of Dong-tong ). 1687 in Ding He-nian's enlarged edition of "Chen-jiang Yan-gou-li Ding-shi zu-pu" (Family tree of the Ding's family of Yan-gou-li in Chen-jiang), Manuscript, Quanzhou, 1885

<sup>8</sup> Ding Yan-xia "Chen-jiang Yan-gou-li Ding-shi zu-pu" (Family tree of the Ding's family of Yan-gou-li in Chen-jiang). Manuscript. Quan-zhou, 1594; "Zhu-jiao-shuo" (Exposition on the origin of the Ding's family) enlarged edition by Ding He-nian, 1885. Chen Da-sh eng "Ming-chao shi-qi Chendai Ding-xing Mu-silin de gai-zong ji qi Qing-zhen-si" (The role of the Mosque in the reacceptance of Islam by Muslim descendants in Quan-zhou during the Ming Dynasty) in Chendai Hui-zu-shi yan-jiu (Study of the history of the Hui Minority in Chendai ). Beijing, 1991, Pp191-192.

and rebuilt the Ancestral Hall, which sped up the process of the Han-assimilation in the Ding's family.<sup>9</sup>

### 3. The Ancestral Hall of Ding's family

The Ancestral Hall is situated at the southeast of An Dou village with the area of 800 square meters. It consists of a main entrance, vestibule, middle-chamber, back-chamber and corridor. The building looks like the Hui in Chinese character. From it we can find the special purpose of the designers concerned with the memory of the minority of Hui.

When was the first time of building it up? Mr. Zhuang Jinghui and Mr. Zheng Huanzhang both think it is between 1402-1420 A.D.<sup>10</sup>. In 1560-1561, the Ancestral hall was burned down in the war. It was rebuilt and enlarged by Ding Yi, Ding Zishen and Ding Rijin. Afterwards it was repaired five times in the Qing Dynasty according to the records of the family tree and the inscriptions. In 1984, it was repaired again. There are some ancestors' cards on display, in which the ancestors' names are from the ancestor of the first generation to the fifth one and those of some officials.

"Zhu -jiao-shuo"(Exposition on the origin of the Ding's family) written by Ding Yan-xia says: There were no cards in memorial ceremony when Ding Yan-xia was young. After the middle of sixteenth century, some cards emerged. But according to the studies of Mr. Zhuang Jinghui<sup>11</sup>, the similar things had appeared long before. The ancestor of the sixth generation Ding Yi had ever written some names of ancestors on a piece of wood. (From the ancestor of the first generation to the third one) Maybe Ding Yan-xia thought there was difference between the wood and the cards. But in fact, they are just the same. I agree with Mr. Zhuang Jinghui in this point.

In addition, the article written by Ding Zishen (1521-)" Ren an-fujun zhuan" (Biography of Ding Shan, who is styled Ding Renan) says: Ding Shan met with a painter when he was in prison, the painter drew a portrait for him. After set free, Ding Shan took the portrait home. The portrait might have been worshipped since then. We can prove it on the record of Ding Zishen. He said many people worshipped the portrait in his time.

### 4. Today in Chendai

Up to now, the descendants of the Ding's family continue to keep their religious peculiarities and observe their traditional custom. They pay great attention to their history. In 1984, the Committee of the Hui Minority's Affairs was established in Chendai. Under the

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<sup>9</sup> Ding Qing "Ji-yi ji yan" (Introduction of the sacrificial rite), 1699, in Yan-jiang Huai-gu-shan-fang si-pu (The private genealogy of the branch of Huaigu- shan of Yan-jiang), quoted in Chendai Mu-si-lin (Muslims in Chendai), compiled by the group of the Islamic Association of Chendai, No. 2 June, 1987.

<sup>10</sup> Zhuang Jing-hui, "Chendai Ding-shi zong-ci de jian-li ji qi zhu-xian chong-bai" (On the building of the Ancestral Hall of the Ding's family of Chendai and their ancestry worship) in "Chendai Hui-zu-shi yan-jiu" (Study of the history of the Hui Minority in Chendai), Bei-jing, 1991, pp. 144-147. Zheng Huan-zhang "Chendai Ding-shi zong-ci chu-yi" (An elementary discussion on the Ancestral Hall of the Ding's family of Chendai) in "Chendai Hui-zu-shi yan-jiu" (Study of the history of the Hui Minority in Chendai), Bei-jing, 1991, Pp174-176.

<sup>11</sup> Zhuang Jing-hui, "Chendai Ding-shi zong-ci de jian-li ji qi zu-xian chong-bai" (On the building of the Ancestral Hall of the Ding's family of Chendai and their ancestry worship) in "Chendai Hui-zu-shi yan-jiu" (Study of the history of the Hui Minority in Chendai), Bei-jing, 1991, Pp. 153-154.

appeal of the Committee, the people of the Ding's family repaired the Ancestral Hall and set up the Historic Museum of the Hui Minority, for gathering pictures, photos and data, in order to introduce the formation and development of the Ding's family in Chendai. The Committee also takes vigorous action to expand to the outside. They invite some descendants scattering over the Philippines, Taiwan and Hong Kong to visit their hometown. Now the overseas Chinese have made some investment in the development of education, culture, especially in the village's enterprises, these accelerate the development of Chendai.

In 1993, the Association of Islam in Jinjiang County was set up by the effect of the Islamic group in Chendai. The Association and the Committee both raised money by themselves to build a Mosque beside the Ancestral Hall. They invited an imam to manage it. In order to train qualified Muslim, they select some students to study Islam in Guangyuan of Sichuan province and Huhhot in Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region. It seems that the descendants of the Ding's family are willing to convert to Islam.