

## Paper II

## Early Korea-Arabic Maritime Relations

## Based on Muslim Sources

By Lee Hee-soo

It has not yet been determined when Muslims first had direct contact with the Korean peninsula. Though sources from the medieval Orient record Arab Muslims called 'Ta-shi' traveling to and from the Korean peninsula in the early part of the 11th century, Muslims apparently attempted to make contact with the Korean peninsula from the latter part of the Unified Silla period (AD 661-935).

From Muslim manuals of navigation that have come down to us, it is clear that Muslim navigators were quite at home in eastern seas, where their own colonies called Fan-Fang were established as early as the 8th century. In Fan-Fang, men of virtue called Qadi and Sheikh were chosen and appointed by the Chinese government to administrate the colonies in accordance with Islamic law and customs. Through marriage with Chinese girls, they gradually settled down in China. According to some Arab travellers who visited China in the middle of the 9th century such as Sulaiman al-Tajir and Abu Zayid, there were more than 100,000 Muslims in the south-eastern coast of China even though the report is believed to be a little exaggerated.

At the same time Korea also had very close relations with T'ang China because the Silla Dynasty could realize long-cherished unification of Korea with the cooperative assistance of the T'ang. A wide range of political, economic and cultural relations were at height of prosperity. Moreover it was only a few days' voyage from the western part of Korea to the southern and eastern ports of China where large Muslim communities were found.

It is very likely that Silla traders came into contact with their Muslim counterparts in China for mutual trade. Of course, Muslim merchants could have extended their trade routes to the Korean peninsula by themselves or with the guidance of Koreans in China. While trade was the purpose for contact, it seems that many elements of Islamic culture were also introduced to the Korean peninsula.

This is well supported by accounts on Silla found in Islamic books of geography, history and travel authored by seventeen Muslim scholars ranging from Ibn Khurdadbih of the mid-9th century to Abul Fazl of the early 16th century. We will now present an in depth survey of early Muslim contact with the Korean peninsula, drawing on more than bibliographical sources on Silla compiled in the Arabic and Persian languages.

This paper is designed to reveal some illuminating facts about early Islamic geographical knowledge of the Korean peninsula, Arab-Korean maritime relations and the early Muslim settlement in Korea through a detailed analysis of Muslim sources.

### 1) GEOGRAPHICAL KNOWLEDGE OF SILLA

Accommodating and incorporating the geographical knowledge of India and Persia, Islamic geography was the best in the world medieval times. It progressed all the more rapidly because of its need to establish an effective network to rule and communicate in pace with the expansion of its new territories, to streamline traffic and trade routes by land and by sea and to determine the 'qibila,' precise direction of Mecca toward which to pray. Geographical information and descriptions of North Africa, Central Asia and India in their sphere of influence show striking precision even in the eyes of modern geographer. At the same time, the geographical study of China, competing spheres of influence with the Islamic world, was also active and accounts of the Korean peninsula were associated with it.

In geographical descriptions and general accounts of locations on the Korean peninsula (Silla), the majority of Islamic scholars employed the word, "East of China." Silla was described as an island state located above the parallel to the east of cities on the southeastern coast of China such as Kuang-chou, Ch'uan-chou, Hang-chou and Yang-chou where a number of Arab Muslims were living. Silla was at the east end of the world. Other scholars such as Ibn Khurdadbih, Ibn Rustah, Ibn al-Nadim, Abul Fida, Ibn al-Bakuwi did not specify Silla as an island country but used a vague expression, merely saying that Silla was a country located to the east of China. For instance:

Ibn Khurdadbih (d. 886) in "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms" (Kitab al-masalik wa'l-mamalik)- "Silla is located across from 'Qansu' to the extreme end of China ....."

Ibn Rustah (d. 913) in "Catalogue of Precious Things" (Kitab al-a'laq al-nafisah)- "There is a country called Silla to the extreme end of China, abounding in gold ... " Ibn al-Nadim (d. 995) in "Index" (Al-fihrist)- "There is Silla in China ... "

Abul Fida (1273-1331) in "Summation of Information on Human Society" (Kitab al-muhtasar fi akhbar al-bashar) - "Down under China, there is a place called 'China of China,' a city on the final leg to the east. The Pacific starts from behind in and the biggest city is called Silla."

Ibn al-Bakuwi (d. early 15th) in "Summary of Accomplishment and Awe of Great Kings" (Talkhis al-athar wa aja'ib al-malik al-qahhar) - "Silla is the last country of China..." Silla was thus described by its geographical location and form, not as an island country.

It is apparent that the Arabic terms employed here, al-silla, al sila and the like are the transliteration of Silla. While some Muslim scholars, beginning with Ibn Khurdadbih described Silla vaguely as a

country located to the east of China, some other scholars such as Sulaiman al-Tajir' Mas'udi, Idrisi, Qazwini, Ibn Said, Dimashiqi and Al-Nuwairi presented Silla as an island, an archipelago or an island state.

A traveler of the 9th century, Sulaiman al-Tajir in "Guidebook of China and India" (Akhbar al-Sin wa'l-Hind) said, "In the continent beyond China, there are Dokuz Oguz of the Turkic-race and Tibet. Further on along the coast of China, there are islands called Silla ....."

Mas'udi (d. 957) in "Golden Steppe and Gem Mines" (Muruj al-Zahab wa ma'adin al-jauhar) - "Not much has been known about China further along its coast except that there is Silla and its accompanying islands ..."

Al-Idrisi (1018-1165) in "Trekking Adventure Across Remote Regions" (Kitab Nuzhat al-mushtaq fi ikhtiraq al-afaq) – "We move from Sanji to Silla island. Silla consists of many islands each closely adjacent ....."

Qaziwini (1203-1283) in "Awe of Creation and Strangeness of Beings" (Aja'ib al-makhluqat wa ghara'ib al-mawjudat)- "Silla consists of many islands ... "

Ibn Said (1214-1286) in "Geography Book on Seven Climate Zones (Kitab al-jughrafiya fi aqalim al-sab'a) - "There are islands called Silla (al-Sili) to the far east of the ocean. There is an island called Sanji to its east ... "

Dimashiqi (d. 1317) in "Spirit of the Time on Awe of Continents and Ocean" (Nukhbat al-dahr fi aja'ib al-barr wal-bahr) - "Inclusive of the Silla archipelago and the Ustikun State, the eastern region of China rolls on along the parallel of the Sea of China ... According to Ptolemy and other geographers, the Silla archipelago consisting of six islands lie to the east of the Sea of China ... "

Al Nuwairi (d.1332) in "The Ultimate of Literature and Art" (Nihayat al-'arab fi funun al-adab) - "Yonder China, there is a place called Silla (al-Shili) consisting of six islands ... "

Ibn Khaldun (1332- 1406) in "Book of Admonitions" (Kitab al-Ibar )-"To the south of the first 'iqlim' there is Waq Waq archipelago ... To its east there is an archipelago called 'Silan' ....."

Al-Maqrizi (1365-1442) - "Explanations and Reference About the Relics and Settlements" (Al-mawa'iz wa'l-i'tibar fi zikr al-khitat wa ' l-athar) – "There is a country called Silla composing six islands ....."

Al-Najdi(of the 15th century) in "Book on Voyage Technique and Rule" (Kitab al-fawa'id fi usul al-bahr wal-Kawa'id )- "There is the Silla island to the east end of the equator ..."

As surveyed so far, scholars such as Sulaiman, Mas'udi, Idrisi, Ibn Said, Ibn Khaldun and Al-Najdi saw Silla as a country of many islands as was clearly marked in the world map of Idrisi.

In particular Dimashiqi, Nuwairi and Al-Maqrizi described Silla as consisting of six islands, without referring to a definite source.

Geographical accounts of the location of the Korean peninsula by Muslim geographers tended to become more definite later in the course of time. Ibn Said marked the Sanji (or Sahnkhai) to the east of Silla at east longitude 180 degrees while Abul Fida placed Silla on north latitude 5 degrees and east longitude 170 degrees in the first climate zone. Abul Fazl (1551-1602) of the latest period saw the location of Silla at east longitude 180 degrees and north latitude 8.5 degrees.

Muslim geographers were under the influence of the Ptolemaic geography of ancient Greece and following the 12th century, they employed the theory of Biruni (d. 1051), an outstanding geographer of the Islamic world. As a result, they placed Silla in the first 'iqlim' (climate zone) above the equator, among the seven climate zones. Furthermore, Muslim merchants taking part in trade in the east saw Silla at the distance of a few days' sailing to the east from their maritime trade outposts, Ch'uan-chou or Hang-chou. Their geographical location of Silla such as east longitude 180 or 170 degrees in the category of the Far East; north latitude 5 or 8.5 degrees above the equator; or 'iqlim' of the first climate zone suggest that they perceived Silla not as a peninsula connected to the northeast of China but as an island country lying further along the east coast from Ch'uan-chou or Hang-chou.

## 2) THE PEOPLE AND THINGS OF SILLA

Muslim scholars' knowledge about the Korean peninsula in medieval times was generally scanty. Worse, some was fantastic or fictional based on hearsay or folklore. Accounts from later times frequently quoted or recapitulated earlier writings without supportive documentation or footnotes. Nevertheless, a few historians and geographers made some worthwhile observations in their accounts of the state of the peninsula. Their knowledge of the Korean peninsula was far from actual reality because of Silla's geographical location at the extreme end of Asia. Nevertheless, the fact that records related to Silla from the early Muslim viewpoint are still extant today is worth attention,

Ibn Khurdadbih briefly remarked that, "Silla is mountainous and is governed by rulers (kings) ... "

The depiction of Silla as mountainous is accurate and the passage 'many kings' appears to describe the ruling system of the time. Unified Silla divided the old territories of Paekche and Koguryo into nine provinces each ruled by governors called either 'chong-gwan' or 'dodok' following the reign of King Wonsong.

Mas'udi gave an account of Silla in his geography book "Learnings and General Survey" (Kitab al-tanbih wa'l-ishraf) combining a heroic episode of Macedonian king Alexander and passages from the

Koran, "Among cultural spheres of the world, one that lies to the end of the east is China and Silla. This ends at the Great Wall built by King Alexander against the onslaught from Gog and Magog races ... "

This passage mixes up the Koran with historical facts. 'Gog' and 'Magog' races, referred to in the Koran, are a sort of Qafir (infidel). According to the Koran, they are descendants of Japhet, the son of the prophet Noah, living outside the Great Fortification in the northeast of Asia, attacking and destroying people and civilization within the Great Fortification. The faithful who were harassed by them asked Zul-Qarnain to build a fortification (iron gate) and eliminate them. Many Muslim scholars identify Zul-Qarnain in the Koran as the King of Macedonia, Alexander (B.C. 336-326). Muslims of mediaeval times seem to have known about the existence of the Great Wall but they credit it to King Alexander, not the Emperor Chin shihuang (B.C. 221-209). This may be attributable to an expanded interpretation of the passage in the Koran concerning the Great Fortification. Some other bibliographical records from the Middle East even state that the capital of T'ang, Chang-an, was built by King Alexander. On this point, Mas'udi included Silla, along with China, in one of the world's cultural spheres and set them apart from infidel-marauders of the 'Gog' and 'Magog' races.

Al-Idrisi tersely observed that "There is a city called Kaiwa in Silla ..... "We cannot positively identify the location and the meaning of 'Kaiwa' but the name may refer to 'Kyerim' which was used in India to indicate Silla. Kyerim was also called Kyekwi. Muslim merchants were also actively seeking contact and initiating trade transactions with India and southeast China. In this sense, 'Kaiwa' may have been close to the Chinese pronunciations of Kyerim or Kyekwi.

Accounts concerning the origin of the Korean race, are found in the "Guidebook to China and India" completed by Sulaiman Al-Tajir in 851 and the "Learnings and General Survey" by Masu'di.

While Sulaiman described Silla people merely as a white race, Masu'di gave a more detailed account.

"Silla people, along with those from China and from around China, belong to the 7th community. They are descendants of Noah's son Japhet and Japhet's son Amur. They all serve one king and use one tongue."

Sulaiman defined Silla people as a white race possibly because in those days the races must have been classified into only white or black, with no intermediary concept of yellow. Mas'udi's classification of the Korean nation as descendants of Amur seemed to have been influenced by earlier scholars. Amur is the same as Gomer and according to Genesis in the Old Testament, Gomer was the eldest child of Japhet, a son of Noah. Mas'udi divided the races of the world into seven groups and assigned Silla people to the 7th group along with the Chinese.

Sporadic accounts are found on the main products and mineral resources of the Korean peninsula. Most important source here is Ibn Khurdadbih's "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms," which gives a catalogue of traded goods shipped abroad from Silla. Of eleven traded goods, silk, daggers, musk, aloe, saddles, marten skin, ceramics, sail cloth and cinnamon have been identified. Almost all Muslim scholars took special note of the abundant gold from Silla. Al-Makdisi (b. 946), introducing Silla as a country rich with silk and gold in his "Book of Genesis and History" (Kitab al-bad wa'l-tarkikh), said that Koreans use cloth embroidered with gold thread, wear silk dresses and use gold to make tableware. Damashiqi wrote that the Silla archipelago had a variety of mineral resources and rich terrains producing precious gems. In particular, Sulaiman and Qazwini said that a great number of outstanding hunting hawks, colored white and gray, inhabited in Silla. Since hawks were prized by Arabs and people from the Middle East as an indispensable hunting tool, information about a good source of good-quality hawks in Silla drew their attention.

Some scholars also referred to the relations of Korea and China. Sulaiman remarked on the exchange of gifts between T'ang and Silla. "Silla people send gifts to the emperor of China. They say that otherwise there will be no rains coming from heaven."

This seems to refer to the tributary trade between T'ang and Silla as a form of a public trade for the sake of political stability between the two. Again, referring to the implication that the emperor of China as the son of heaven and about the gifts from Silla, they seemed to have perceived though vaguely, how Silla people thought about the deity in heaven. Mas'udi also tells in "Golden Steppe and Gem Mines" that Silla people maintained good relations with Chinese people, with no interruption in a sustained, reciprocal trade of tributes. However, in another book, "Learnings and Book of Survey," he also says that Koreans and the Chinese used the same language under the same ruler. Qazwini left behind a few passages very similar to those of Sulaiman concerning the Korea-China relations.

Most writings by Muslim scholars fall short of original and accurate description of the Korean peninsula (Silla) because they viewed it as part of China. Their knowledge about the Korean peninsula, did not derive from personal experience but came from exaggerated and beautified descriptions made by the Chinese, the Silla people living in China or by Muslim colleagues who had visited Korea or through uncorroborated statements in older bibliographical sources. Therefore, we cannot expect to read objective descriptions or legitimate historical records of the time. Nevertheless, citations concerning Unified Silla by scholars from a distant cultural sphere may raise some important questions.

### 3) MUSLIM CONTACTS WITH THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Of the Twenty writings by eleven Muslim scholars of the medieval age concerning Silla, ten sources by nine scholars, Ibn Khurdadbih, Mas'udi and others, contain records of the advance of Muslims onto the Korean peninsula and their activities.

The oldest extant record, being not only the first remark on the Korean peninsula but also a mention of the settlement of Muslims on the Korean peninsula is Ibn Khurdadbih's "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms." The book, seemingly with its first edition in 846-847 and the second edition in 885 respectively, was something like an official guide book of geography, being the oldest bibliographical source in geography extant today. The book contains detailed information about major place of settlement, trading routes and trading goods in many parts of the world. It also contains comprehensive knowledge about East Asia (China, Korea, Japan) and the like.

Two passages about the advance made by Muslims to the Korean peninsula and their settlement are as follows though their contents are somewhat similar one another.

"Beyond China, across from Qansu, there is a country with many mountains called Silla. It abounds in gold. Muslims who happened to go there were fascinated by the good environment and tend to settle there for good. There is no way of knowing what lies beyond there ... "

"Beyond China there is a country abounding in gold, called Silla. Muslims who advanced there, captivated by its congenial surroundings, tend to settle there for good and do not think of leaving the place."

The second Muslim scholar who mentioned the settlement of Muslims in Korea after Ibn Khurdadbih, was Ibn Rustah (d. 913). In "Catalogue of Precious Goods," he wrote with little explanation that beyond China there is a country called Silla which abounds in gold and that Muslims, once settled there, do not think of leaving. His expression is similar to Ibn Khurdadbih's "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms" concerning Silla. Like Yaqubi, Ibn al-Fakih, Qudama, Jahiz, Jayhani and the like, Ibn Rustah seemed to have been very much influenced by the writings of Ibn Khurdadbih.

There are more detailed and factual accounts on Muslims living in Silla in two writings by Mas'udi, "Golden Steppe and Gem Mines" and "Learnings and General Survey," published one century later following "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms." Mas'udi identified the Muslims living in Silla, and according to him, some of them were Iraqis.

"Across the coast of China, not much is known except for Silla and its accompanying islands. Iraqis and some other foreigners settled there, choosing the place as their homeland. They do not intend to leave the place because of its fresh air, clean water, fertile earth, prospect for the increase of profit and income, rich minerals and rich gems. Those who leave the place are quite few."

Being from Iraq himself, the writer must have collected reliable information either from Iraqi colleagues who had visited the Korean peninsula or from Chinese well versed in Korea while he was touring China and South Asia. Mas'udi is known as a scholar who, collected reliable information from well-versed and trustworthy people wherever he visited and recorded what he collected after analyzing it and cross checking it against verifiable sources.

Again in "Book of Genesis and History" completed in 966 by Al-Makdisi, there are certain passages though not referring directly to Silla, which seem to mention it, judging from the description.

"As has been recorded in 'General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms,' there is a country to the east of China. Those who ventured to this country did not want to leave it because of its fresh air, fertile land, clean water, excess of wealth and the hospitable accommodativeness of its inhabitants."

As the writer himself indicated, this passage is quoted from "General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms." A number of scholars in later periods left behind writings with the same title, 'General Survey of Roads and Kingdoms' and the first extant today was written, no doubt, by Ibn Khurdadbih.

Al-Idrisi(1058-1154),the most outstanding Muslim geographer of the medieval age, completed a geography book entitled. "Trekking of an Adventurer Across Remote Land" in 1154 under the sponsorship of the Norman king, Roger II (1101-1154). In this book he left a brief record that travelers to Silla do not think about leaving under the charm of the pleasant climate. Although it was the middle Koryo Dynasty when Idrisi's book was completed, Idrisi himself and subsequent Muslim scholars continued to describe the Korean peninsula as Silla. This indicates that later scholars did not rely on the collection of new information but merely quoted older sources indiscriminately.

An historian of the Mongolian period, Qazwini wrote "Awe of Creation and Strangeness of Being" and also referred to Silla in a similar fashion.

"Once having set foot on the island of Silla, no Muslim left the country because of pleasant living conditions."

The writings of Dimashiqi, Al-Nuwairi and Al-Maqrizi are worth particular attention. To our surprise, they recorded that part of the Alawi race (clans or the followers of Ali) took refuge on the Korean peninsula, fleeing persecution from the Dynasty of Ummaiya (661-750).

Shamsudin Dimashiqi in "Spirit of the Age on the Awe of Continents and Oceans" – "In the sea above and to the east of the Ammonia archipelago and down under China, there is a country called Silla consisting of six big islands ... Alawis found shelter there fleeing from the persecution of the Dynasty of Ummaiya. Despite very difficult living conditions no one wanted to leave this country."

The 4th Caliph, Ali, who reigned from 656 to 661 during the Orthodox Caliphate Age (632-661), was killed and the power of Alawis, the followers of Ali, quickly weakened. His rival, Muawiya (Reign 661-680) destroyed the Orthodox Caliphate Age and set up the Ummaiya Dynasty in Damascus. In order to survive, Ali factions dispersed, seeking political asylum in many regions. The Alawi faction was known to have gone as far as the southeastern coast of China. According to the writing by Nureddin Muhammad al-Awfi, at the time of the inauguration of the Ummaiya Dynasty, a great number of Muslim Shiites, in allegiance to Ali, formed their own community and lived collectively on Hainan island, south of China. We have no way of knowing how accurate or how credulous the writing of Damashiqi may be.

The fact that Shiite tribes in allegiance to Ali were living en-masse on Hainan island and in the southeastern part of China around the 7th century raises a possibility that some of Ali followers could have advanced as far as the Korean peninsula in search of utopia.

The account by Dimashiqi on life in exile and settlement on the Korean peninsula by the Alawis is also found in the writing of Al-Nuwairi in a similar context. There is a following passage in 'his book, "The Ultimate in Literature and Arts."

"Yonder to the east of China there are six islands. This is the Silla island. Its inhabitants consist of Alawis. They found shelter there escaping from the persecution by Ummaiyan people. According to what has been known, they dislike to leave this place, despite living difficulty, on account of fresh air and clean water."

Al-Maqrizi (1364-1442) also tells of the settlement of Alawis in Silla in his book, "Explanations and Reference on Settlements and the Relics."

"On the sea to the east of China, there is a country called Silla consisting of six islands. In the early period of Islam, Alawis fled there and settled down for good in order to escape from persecution."

This description by Maqrizi seems to have been quoted from the earlier writings of Dimashiqi and Nuwairi in its account on Silla consisting of six islands and on the life in exile of the Alawis.

A number of scholars from the Islamic sphere in the medieval age, referring to the Korean peninsula (Silla), remarked on the migration and the lasting settlement of Muslims on the Korean peninsula. Only Sulaiman was clear that none of his race had ever reached Silla, and thus, none of them had any direct knowledge about Silla. Sulaiman was known to have travelled many times to India and China. And only Sulaiman said that none of his fellow Muslims had ever gone to Silla. This seems to indicate that he could not confirm the settlement of Muslims on the Korean peninsula from what he heard from the Chinese or Muslims while he was there. In fact, no scholars ever referred to the return of any Muslims from Silla.

What induced the migration to the Korean peninsula by Muslims who were assumed to be Arabs or from Iran?

An absolute majority of Muslim scholars indicated the climate of four seasons, fresh air, clean water, fertile land, rich resources, profit in trade, in other words, outstanding natural surroundings and pleasant living conditions found on the Korean peninsula. In particular, many scholars mentioned the rich resource of gold on the Korean peninsula as a reason for settling there. In an exaggerated remark about the abundant gold resources of Silla, Idrisi said that in Silla even dogs and monkeys wear gold necklaces and its people wear clothes woven with gold thread. Such fantastic living conditions in Silla must have seemed like a sort of utopia to the eyes of Middle Eastern people accustomed to the scorching desert and desolate prairies. Thus, some scholars even compared Silla to Atlantis, 'an island of eternity and fortune,' a utopia worshipped by Europeans and Arabs since old.

Ibn Said (1214-1286) in "Geography Book on Seven Climate Zones" - "To the east end of the ocean there is an island called Silla. This place compares to the Island of Happiness (Khalidat) lying at the west end of the ocean. While Khalidat is not inhabited by men, Silla is a fertile land inhabited by men."

Abul-Fida (1273-1331), who inherited the scholarly manner of Ibn Said, in "Guide Catalogue of Kingdoms" wrote- "Silla belongs to the first climate zone to the east of China, comparable to the island of happiness in the west. The place is more blessed, abounding in rich produce than the Island of Happiness of the west."

The utopian concoction of Silla held by Muslims in the Middle East instilled a yearning for Silla, a land where even incurable diseases could be healed. In this context, Qazwini(1203-1283)said in "Record of Relic Places in Other Countries" (Athar al-bilad).

“Silla- a very beautiful country- lying beyond China. Its inhabitants do not suffer from illness thanks to fresh air, clean water and fertile soil. Inhabitants look quite wholesome and healthy. Sick people are very rare. It is known that amber fragrance emanates when water is sprinkled there. There are hardly any epidemic or diseases. There are almost no flies or harmful insects. Anyone who fell sick in other countries can have their sickness cured immediately if they come to Silla”. Muhammad Zakariya al-Razi (865-925) said that .. “Those who went there do not want to come back because of fresh air, pleasant living conditions and abundant gold. Well, God only knows. “Bakuwi , a century later, left a similar record about Silla in his "Summary of Accomplishments and Awe of Kings" written in 1402 .

“The 30th - the last country of China. A very beautiful place. Thanks to fresh air, sweet water and perfect sanitary conditions, people do not get sick but remain healthy and amber fragrance flows out from every household.”

In short the early accounts tell us that Muslims began to venture to and to settle down on the Korean peninsula from the 9th century or before. Among them there were Iraqis or a section of the Alawi, the core followers of Ali. Most of them were assimilated into Korean society after settling there. They were captivated by the remarkable environmental and social conditions of the Korean peninsula.

Among the work written by early Muslims concerning the Korean peninsula of the Unified Silla and up to the 15th centuries, there are many passages whose credibility and historicity are doubtful because of fragmentary and indiscriminate quotation of earlier works. Nevertheless, some features of the geography location and living conditions of the Korean peninsula are depicted. There are definite accounts of the advent of Muslims made onto the Korean peninsula 150 years prior to Sino-Korean historical records. This offers a new impetus and perspective on this period. Elucidating the impact of Islam and its culture in Korea by Muslim settlers now emerges as a meaningful research objective. This will become clearer when reinforced by other records which are scattered in historical materials throughout the Orient of later periods.