

# Muslim Ancestor, Chinese Hero or Tutelary God

*Changing Memories of Muslim Descent across the South China Sea*

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世界郭氏宗親總會 敬印

This paper examines the dynamic boundaries of Chinese identities and the role of family narratives in their formation. It examines the interplay between history and memory, focusing on traditions regarding ancestors of the Fujian Guo 郭 lineage of Muslim descent in China, Taiwan and the Philippines, over six centuries. Existing scholarship approaches these traditions in ethnic terms, corresponding to the ethnic discourse prevalent in the P.R.C., focusing solely on mainland groups, but overlooking other variations found overseas. Hence, scholars portray the changing narratives as reflecting a linear process: from past sinicisation, to today's more "historically authentic" Hui identity. The present analysis, based on field work and historical sources, offers a broader socio-cultural overview. It demonstrates how the pan-Asian Guo lineage re-imagines familial history across time and space by highlighting a narrative of forced assimilation, in which their early Ming ancestors falsely adopted Guo Ziyi (697-781), a Han-Chinese national hero, as their ancestor.

The paper follows the narrative's continuous transformations, analyzing different interpretations of assuming Chinese identity among Muslims' descendants within different contexts of contemporary Asia.



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