Some Notes on the Secularization in/of the Islamic World

OHTSUKA Kazuo

The concept of "secularization" has been critically reconsidered, both empirically and theoretically, in the field of sociology of religion since the 1970s. One of the most crucial events to cast doubt on it was the Islamic revolution in Iran in 1979. However, few of the scholars who reexamine the secularization theory consider seriously the cases of Islam.

In this paper, I attempt to rethink the concept on the basis of materials collected from the Sunni Muslim world, mainly modern Egypt. The first part of this paper is devoted to an empirical analysis of the secularization of the Islamic world. I resolve several aspects of secularization derived mainly from historical experiences of Western Christianity, such as a separation of Church and State, a privatization of religion, a dominance of science over theology, and a triumph of the materialism of this world over the eternity of the hereafter. Then I examine whether these aspects of secularization could be found in the Islamic world. I conclude that we could observe not only some of the secularization process there, but also examples of Islamic resurgence against secularization, such as the re-veiling among urban educated women.

In the second part, secularization theories advocated by two scholars with Arab and Islamic backgrounds are considered. Elmessiri's idea of "comprehensive secularization" is useful for examining the modern secularization phenomena observed in Christian and Islamic worlds. Asad's paper on a transmutation of Sharī'a in modern Egypt and a reconfiguration in the discursive world of religion, law, and ethics is one of the significant starting points to empirically analyze the secularization process in the Islamic world.

Islamization in Africa as Civilization

A New Framework for Religious Comparison

SHIMADA Yoshihito

This paper reconsiders the framework for religious study which I call "fundamentalist." The meaning of Islamic studies in Sub-Sahara Africa appears to be lost between two kinds of "fundamentalist" frameworks: the African one excludes Islam and Christianity from African religions, and the other Islamic one which claims that true Islam is not found in Africa. "Fundamentalist" theory pre-supposes that the essence of a religion is unique and not changeable, and that religious contacts are accidental.

I propose, on the contrary, that the essential aspect of religions (especially world religions) consists in their dynamic movement in expansion, syncretism, reformation, and separation. This means also that religion is a movement in space and participates in forming "civilizations," which are also in movement. Four world civilizations formed essentially independently from each other, that is, European Christian, Islamic, Indian Buddhist-Hindu, and Chinese Buddhist-Confucian. Each one has his own movement. African Islamization was therefore a process of the expansion of Islamic civilization. If "progress" existed, it was in the interior of each civilization.

The new religious comparative framework proposed here consists therefore in comparing religions as movements connected with civilizations in formation with each other. In this framework many productive meanings can be found in the studies of African Islam manifesting essential aspects of Islam as movement. Thus comparing the process of Islamization in Africa to that of the expansion of Buddhism in Asia as well as to that of Christianity in Western Europe, we can study why world religions became as they are.

The Understanding of Christianity in 'Abd al-Jabbār

Religious Dialogue in Islamic Theology

SHIOJIRI Kazuko

It is very difficult to constitute effective dialogues, even though religious dialogue concerning Islam is an urgent subject. Among the documents of Islamic Theology from the 9th to 12th century, we can find traditional Muslim perceptions of other religions. In this paper I examine 'Abd al-Jabbār's understanding of Christianity in his *al-Mughnī fī abwāb al-tawḥīd wa-l-'adl* as the instrumental materials for the religious dialogue today. The Mu'tazilite developed their unique theories on the attributes of God, and their arguments look near to the logic of the Trinity. 'Abd al-Jabbār grasped the meaning of the Definition of Chalcedon and the positions of the Eastern Churches and criticized them, skillfully adopting the methods for his arguments on the attributes of God. Thus in the classical studies of the Islamic theology we can find many materials which would contribute much toward building an effective religious dialogue or peaceful co-existence between Islam and other religions.

Islam of the Saint Fighting against "America"

Challenging the Modern West

YAGI Kumiko

In the framework of the dichotomy of Islam and the modern West, modern Islam has obtained dual meanings for modern Muslims. One is to determine their group identity, and the other is to redress wrongs prevalent in the modern world dominated by the values of the modern West. Focusing on Arab Muslim writers, the present study investigates how they describe the otherness embodied in "America" in their works and how they envision their "Islam," which is believed to challenge "America." It transpires that they reject such an irreligious society as "America" and maintain the necessity of a public religion, of which they believe Islam to be the best model. However, the Islam they believe in is not the one dominated by Ulama, the men of religion, but the norms and ethics learned and accumulated by the ordinary people who live their life according to their simple faith and together with their fellow human beings. The point is that only this type of Islam can answer the questions of universal nature raised by modernity.

Ahmad Bunhachirō Ariga

A Founder of Islamic Jurisprudence in Japan

SHINOHE Jun'ya

Japanese Muslim Ahmad Bunhachirō Ariga was born several months before the Meiji Restoration. He became a Christian after trying to find a new standard of education for Japanese people based on monotheism. When he traveled to Bombay, he was impressed by Indian Muslims. He studied monotheism by comparing Islam with other religions, which continued for more than 40 years. He finally concluded that the most appropriate religion for Japanese people is Islam. He retired from all his enterprises when he was 60 years old, and converted to Islam. About 70 Japanese people became muslims through him within six months after his first invitation to Islam. His books are of interest for comparing with other Japanese scholars, since his understanding, sayings and preaching were based on his interpretation of Islamic Law in adapting Islam in Japan. He adapted his Islamic jurisprudence in his introduction of Islam in Japan, so he is considered as a founder of Islamic jurisprudence in Japan.

Islamic Studies in the Early Showa Period

Kaikyōken-Kenkyūjo (Institute of Islamic Area) and Ōkubo Kōji

ŌSAWA Kōji

This paper aims to define Ōkubo Kōji (1887–1950) and the Kaikyōken-Kenkyūjo (Institute of Islamic Area) in the history of Islamic studies in the Early Showa Period. Ōkubo was a researcher in Turkish and Islamic studies, and he established the Kaikyōken-Kenkyūjo in 1938. It originated from his idea concerning the importance of systematic research in Islamic studies for the future of Japan. This organization had kept up its activity during the wartime, but was dissolved in 1945 because of the defeat of Japan in World War II.

Islamic studies in Japan were greatly developed in Japan before World War II. The research institute was organized to help the war effort; thus, Islam was studied. There was a need for Islamic knowledge for the government and its extra-governmental organizations; therefore, most Japanese researchers in Islamic studies were sent to East Asia and Southeast Asia, where Muslims live, during the time of Japan's imperialism.

After World War II, Islamic academism has neglected its own history because there was the background of being related to Japan's imperialism. As a result, Islamic studies in Japan faded after the war. Therefore Ōkubo and his Institute is not well known in the history of Japanese Islamic studies.

On the other hand, Ōkubo and his Institute should not be neglected for the sake of an intimate study of Islam. In fact, Ōkubo's work of academic research and his Institute was significant in the history of Japan's Islamic studies.

Reform of Egyptian Personal Status Law and Women

IWASAKI Maki

This paper deals with the reform of Egyptian personal status law. In Islam, Islamic law concerns the total life of Muslims. It deals with not only religious acts but also secular acts of Muslims. In Islamic countries like Egypt, Islamic law worked as a positive law before the modern era, but under imperialism, it was transplanted by modern Western laws in the late 19th century. However, personal status law is the only area in which Islamic law is still used.

Since traditional Islamic law gives men prerogatives such as the right to divorce his wife without her consent or existence, or to have more than one wife, Egyptian personal status law (which is greatly influenced by traditional Islamic law) became a subject for reform. In the modern era, reformers such as Qāsim Amīn or Hudā Sha'rāwī tried to change such prerogatives of men, but they did not succeed. Although one of the biggest reform law (no. 44 of 1979) limited the men's exclusive rights of divorce and polygamy, it created a big dispute in the country and finally, in deference to religious activism, the Constitutional Court ruled it was unlawful on procedural grounds. The government then replaced the 1979 ruling with law no. 100 of 1985. The latest reform was law no. 1 of 2000 which allows a woman to divorce her husband without his approval. This paper tries to show how the reform was made and how it has affected Egyptian society.

The Place of Saint Veneration in Islam

AKAHORI Masayuki

Among ordinary Muslims in pre-modern times, saint veneration, which includes making wishes to God through saints' mediation, visiting saint tombs, and celebrating saints' anniversaries, was very popular in their daily life. Some intellectuals, Muslims and non-Muslims alike, have considered that saint veneration is an imported element and therefore non-Islamic beliefs and practices. However, it is clearly an integral part of the reality of Islam, which compromises the diversity of daily life with the unity of the world ruled by God. While the concern of Muslim intellectuals tends to concentrate on the logical and literal form of understanding the world, saints, with their visibility working as symbols, mediate invisible blessings or power of God to the people and make it possible to feel His greatness as real. In modern times, which is very unique in the point that most of the members of the society are literate, such kind of veneration has less appeal than before. A contemporary anthropology then should pay attention to the new forms of popular Islam including the consumption of religious commodities, images created by new media, the industry of religious tourism, and so forth, in addition to saint veneration.

Theoretical Aspects of Visitation in Twelver Shī'ism

YOSHIDA Kyōko

Visiting tombs of saints has been and is pervasive and popular religious activity throughout the Islamic world. Although many anthropological researches regard visitation (ziyārah) of the holy dead an integral part of Muslim practice, little attention has been paid to its theoretical thought. They often associate visitation with tomb veneration and the saint worship among the masses as typical "popular Islamic" phenomena.

This paper is mainly concerned with the Twelver Shī'ite visitation in terms of theory and Islamic piety. While many believers visit shrines of their Imams merely to seek barakah attributed to the Imams, or ask intercession of God, theologians and jurists are eager to instruct the pilgrims in the proper attitude of visitation.

There are numerous works of early prominent jurists and religious scholars concerning visitation of the Imams. Those texts offer evidence for the legitimacy of ziyārah and its objectives together with specific instructions on how and what to greet the Imams and invoke His mercy at the tombs.

It is through these works that the common believers can perform their ziyārah correctly, fulfill their duty, reaffirm their faith and, finally avoid glorification of the Imams that would lead them to idol worship.

Anti-"Muslim" Prejudice in Contemporary India

From the Issues of Communalism
to the Theoretical Reconsideration of Religious Studies

KONDŌ Mitsuhiro

This paper deals with anti-"Muslim" prejudice as a regulating force of everyday life in contemporary India. Picking up two stereotypes of "Muslims" as "foreigners" or "invaders," and "fanatics" or "separatists," it shows the particular historical background against which the category of "Indian Muslim" has been sustained in force. It is argued that such a prejudice is not just a fantasy or a lie, but common impressions based on some historical actuality, and that Indian society is endowed with a cyclic process where prejudice (re)produces a plethora of words and deeds that aggravate the prejudice itself. Furthermore, this paper argues that the underlying reality of communalism as shown above is correlated with the theories of religious studies. It concludes that it is quite significant for the argument on communalism to reconsider religious taxonomy, the concept of syncretism, the Judeo-Christian-Islamic bias on the concept of religion, and the conceptual association of religion and community.

A Study on the Change among Indian Muslims to Fanatic Islamic Theology

HOSAKA Shunji

Indian Muslims have been trying to realize the ideal of live-and-let-live for more than 1000 years. According to Islamic orthodoxy, Hindus and so forth are regarded as the enemy or antagonist for Muslims. Muslims have contended with idolatry as kafil in history. However, based on traditional and fanatic Islamic theology, even Muslims can not live with those people peacefully. Therefore they need a new Islamic theology for making a peaceful world. For example, they need a new Islamic concept of philosophy, especially the concept of tolerance. We can find useful philosophical tradition in Indian Muslim philosophy. It could be said that the history of Indian Muslims is the history of living peacefully with Hindus. So in fact they have been groping for the principal of live-and-let-live. In this paper, I will introduce some great Indian Muslim philosophers. They tried to create an original philosophy and live peacefully with idolatry. I want to give some information which will contribute to making a peaceful world with Muslims by introducing theological developments among Indian Muslims.

Islamic Intellectualism and
the Philosophy of Unity of Being

MATSUMOTO Akirō

The philosophy of Unity of Being has its roots in the Islamic doctrine of the Unity of God. Throughout their history, Muslims have attempted to understand the true meaning of the declaration of faith, that "there is only one God, and Muhammad is the apostle of God." Many Muslim thinkers have left us the fruits of their intellectual activities, which were centered around the doctrine of the Unity of God. In the works of the philosophers of Unity of Being, the key-concept is usually understood as having three meanings, namely, ordinary meaning, spiritual meaning and ultimate meaning. The doctrine of the Unity of God is also regarded to have these three meanings. Wayfarers on spiritual journeys start from the ordinary meaning of the key-concept, and then go on to understand the spiritual meaning, and finally, the ultimate meaning. Other keywords such as "one," "being," and others, are also regarded to have these three meanings. This analytic method was united with the theory of Heart Purification in the philosophy of Unity of Being. Wayfarers are believed to attain the ultimate meaning of the key-concept in the state of a most purified heart. Therefore, the philosophy of Unity of Being can be regarded as a device to induce human intellect to attain the deepest insights into utmost reality. When the philosophy of Unity of Being was introduced into China, its analytic method exerted great influence on Sino-Muslim philosophers, and a Chinese version of the philosophy of Unity of Being blossomed in China. The philosophy of Unity of Being is a philosophical tradition in Islam which is able to grow in various cultures.

Islam as an Alternative

YAMAMOTO Haruki

Western civilization, which has been dominant in the modern world, has been subjected to criticism from every quarter of the contemporary world. Among these criticisms, the most conspicuous is criticism from the Islamic world. The author supposes that, behind extremist elements which are striking in terms of their terrorist acts, the majority of Muslims are considering an idea for a new civilization based on Islam.

In this article the author attempts to shed some light on conceptions which have been brought up in the Muslim world as an alternative civilization. The subject of this article is, however, limited to introducing and examining ideas of Dr. Nurcholish Madjid, one of the most prominent scholars and most leading figures in the Muslim society of Indonesia, whose influence extends not only to intellectual circles but to the general public, so much so that once it was hoped that he would be a candidate for the presidential election in 2004. In his book, "Religious Society," he discusses various aspects of society, from a political system to medical ethics. Above all, the bulk of his book is devoted to the discussion of a democratic political system based on Islamic teachings, which may take the place of the Western democratic system.

Islam in a Tabloid Newspaper

TAKESHITA Masataka

Takvim is a Turkish newspaper which features sensational articles on crimes and gossip, and semi-nude pictures. However, unexpectedly, this paper also carries a daily column entitled "True Islam: Answers to Your Questions" by Zekeriya Beyaz, the former dean of the Divinity School at Marmara University. In this paper, I analyzed about 500 questions that appeared in this column between October 2000 and August 2001. The most frequently asked questions are on rituals, namely, ablution, prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and animal sacrifice. Also, many questions are asked as to whether certain acts are sins or permitted. Since rituals are religious duties, it is a sin if they are not performed properly. Therefore, it can be said that more than half the questions are concerned with sins. This obsessive preoccupation with sins stems from the firm belief in punishment after death. Many questions reveal the vivid imagination of the common people concerning life after death and punishment in the grave. Also, many questions quote what imams have said. As other popular religious figures such as Sufis and folk magicians gradually disappeared, it seems that imams, who lead public prayers in the mosque and administer marriages and funerals, became the only authority the common people can consult on religious matters.

Beauty and Mind of Islam in
Qur'ānic and Poetic Inscriptions on the Alhambra Palace

SUMI Motoyoshi Akiko

The Alhambra, built by the Naṣrid dynasty in Granada, south Spain, is known as one of the most beautiful and most fully preserved models of medieval Islamic architecture. This essay deals with highly stylized calligraphic inscriptions of the Qur'ān, of poetic verses by official court poets, and of pious invocations carved on the walls and building parts of the Alhambra palace. The purpose of this study is to reveal the beauty and mind of Islam, exploring the iconographic functions of particular inscriptions. The Hall of the Ambassadors signifies the seven heavens of the Qur'ānic quotation which are represented in the decoration of the ceiling, while the Court of the Lions constitutes a representational symbol of the Islamic Paradise mentioned in the Qur'ān. This implies that the Alhambra palace is a permanent abode, which signifies the perfect political realm of the Islamic kingdom. Thus, the inscribed verses may function as a commentary to the architecture. Moreover, the inscriptions under investigation show the Naṣrid's firm faith in Islam and their sincere attitude to the religion through the beautiful architectural art.

Religious Studies and Islamic Studies

Toward the Normative Approach

NAKATA Kō

Western religious studies originated from theology. On the other hand, "theology" did not exist in the Islamic world, but traditional Islamic scholarship was "religious studies" from the beginning. However, Western religious studies did not choose the way which carries out inclusion of the "religious studies" of Islam, but assigned another discipline as "Islamic studies" (Oriental studies, area studies) to Islam, and it has developed the concept of religion without due consideration of Islam. Thus, Western religious studies and Islamic studies are in fact based on the unconscious normative premise of refusal of the truth-demand of Islam, contrary to their self-image of value-free, neutral, objective, and descriptive research. This paper proves the necessity of the normative approach in Islamic studies, elucidating the essentially normative nature of language, and presents the new paradigm of Islamic studies which is concerned with distinguishing true Islam from false Islam, and thus able to be linked with traditional Islamic scholarship so that dialog with the Islamic world is possible.

Islamic Studies As Seen from Comparative Religion

NAKAMURA Kōjirō

Comparative religion, or the history of religions, has so far developed with little reference to Islam. As a result, it is often critically said that it is theoretically partial. On the other hand, it is mainly historians, especially those majoring in Oriental history, that have contributed to Islamic studies in Japan. Few historians of religions have participated in it. Accordingly, this gave rise to some problems from the viewpoint of the history of religions. After explaining the main principles of the history of religions, I will try, in this article, to clarify concretely the problems involved in Islamic studies in Japan, as represented by Dr. Y. Kosugi, a major researcher in this field in Japan.