

International Workshop

**Producing Traditions, Knowledge and Identities:
Muslim Intellectuals in the Contemporary World
Abstracts of Papers**

Part 1: Politics, Power, and Philosophy

Kenichiro TAKAO

(PD research fellow of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science/ The Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

“An Attempt to Portray Sharif in Wahhabi Society: Muhammad Alawi al-Malik”

My presentation aims to examine how “sharif,” descendants of Hasan ibn Ali, are characterized in Saudi Arabia, Wahhabi-based society. The presentation especially focuses on these three points:

1. Did “sharif” play some part in the building of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after its rising in mid-18th century, how are they positioned in the national history?
2. How Wahhabism, Saudi national ideology of Islam, evaluate “sharif”? What is “sharif” in the view of Wahhabism considering itself “true Islam”?
3. Under the official religious establishment, what kind of influence “sharif” could have? Does their lineage have any significance in Saudi society?

With these three in mind, the presentation tries to how “sharif” appeared in the national history, how Wahhabi scholars viewed “sharif,” and does “sharif” play any role in the society today?

Mohammed MOUSSA

(Assistant Professor, Political Science and International Relations Department, Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University, Turkey)

“Shaykh Jawdat Said’s Radical Islamic Pacifism: Critiquing Violence and Power”

Political violence is often taken for granted to be a hallmark of the Muslim world. However, there have appeared some Muslim thinkers and scholars who have insisted on questioning both the theory and practice of such violence. One recent example can be seen in the writings of Shaykh Jawdat Said from the 1960s until the present. Said has produced a thorough critique of violence and power based upon a direct reading of the Islamic sacred texts, namely the Qur’an, and what he calls ‘history’ or the common experience of humanity. His first book *Madhab ibn Adam al-Awwal* has been followed by *Kun ka-ibn Adam* and other books which propose a vision of pacifism rooted in the story of Habil’s refusal to fight back against his brother and the Qur’anic verse that ‘There is no compulsion in religion’. The way that Said has robustly reinterpreted the idea of political violence in Islam will be examined in this presentation.

Yoko UNO

(Project Researcher, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo, and a Research Fellow, Institute of International & Cultural Studies at Tsuda University, Tokyo, Japan)

“An Exiled Nationalist Riza Nur: Searching for Modernity, Secularism and ‘Turkishness’ in Modern Turkey”

My presentation investigates some important aspects of Riza Nur’s thought as a modern Turkish intellectual. Riza Nur was a Turkish nationalist intellectual, or Turkologist, and an obstinate politician. He experienced exile in European countries twice in his life and defected once. In general, he is introduced solely as a politician opposed to the Unionists in the late Ottoman Empire and the early period of republican Turkey. Because his memoirs were quite emotional and full of complaint against various famous politicians and journalists, he has seemed to be eccentric. His thoughts and works, however, are interesting in that they serve to understand how a Turkish nationalist politician/intellectual tackled Orientalism, immorality, and dictatorship, which all engulfed Turkey at the time. In my presentation, I will introduce Nur’s struggles as a politician against monopolized politics, as a nationalist diplomat against Western orientalist diplomacy, and as a Muslim against the immoral behavior of politicians. In addition, his own antimony-like affinity for racism and anti-Semitism should be pointed out as a tendency of Turkish nationalism in the 1920-30s.

Part 2: Education, Technology, and Gender

Aya KOKAKI

(Research Fellow, Center for Relational Studies on Global Crises, Chiba University, Japan)

“Education as a Tool for What? : A Comparison of a Secular Intellectual with a Religious Intellectual in Turkey”

Considering the political and social context and transformation in Turkey, this presentation discusses a secular intellectual and a religious intellectual who both established respectively civil society organizations to provide youth with educational opportunities. One is Turkan Saylan (1935-2009), who was a prominent medical doctor and staunch secularist, received secular education and put her efforts toward adherence to the principles of Atatürk and dissemination of education, especially for women. The other one is M. Fethullah Gulen (b.1941), who is a Muslim intellectual and former preacher appointed by Presidency of Religious Affairs, has encouraged his followers to build schools and foster pious generations whose modern science and technologies are acquired. By comparing with them, this study examines their differences and similarities of what they fought for and what they strived to achieve through the educational activities. It also argues gender issues are undercurrent of both cases.

Makoto SAWAI

(Post-Doctoral Fellow of Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS) and currently affiliated with Kyoto University)

“Islamic and Arab Spirit with Western Learning: How were Sufis treated in Modernity?”

Islamic modernity brought into Arab countries is regarded as progress in order to reform and Islamic knowledge and to adopt the sophisticated knowledge to new period. Political leaders and intellectuals attempt to learn new technology from the West, whereas they are careful of thought that seems to contradict Islamic doctrine. Only through filtering

knowledge and technology from the West, they make an attempt to keep Islamic and Arab spirit. In a sense, this framework is as same as “Japanese spirit with Western learning” (和魂洋才) that is phrase to explain modernization of Japan.

In reframing Islam, at the same time, Muslim intellectuals criticize Sufism, also known as Islamic mysticism, since they regard Sufism as idea that is against Islamic doctrine. Rashid Rida (1865-1935) expresses in al-Manar (Beacon), a periodical that he edits, that Sufism is not an appropriate idea in Islam. His idea is influenced by the thought of Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) and his work, Tafsir al-Manar (The Qur'anic Commentary of the Beacon). In this presentation, I would like to analyze how Sufis were discussed in their works and why they were regarded as heretics.

Emi GOTO

(Associate Professor, Network for Education and Research on Asia / Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, The University of Tokyo, Japan)

“How Far Rereading of the Sacred Text May Go? Gender Questions in the Modern Period”

Since the end of 19th century, gender has always been an issue among the Muslim intellectuals. One of the questions that was being asked in relations to the subject, implicitly and explicitly, was “how far rereading of the sacred text may go?” This presentation will introduce two critical points: the first major debate at the turn of the century, with the publication of a book titled Liberation of Women by Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and another moment, around hundred years later, with the activities by women scholar, Amina Wadud (1952-). By looking at lives and works of these two intellectuals, as well as the reactions of their contemporaries, this presentation tackles on the above question which may have no concrete answer.