Volume 12 | Issue 20 | Number 3 | Article ID 4118 | May 18, 2014

Changing Modes of Political Dialogue Across the Middle East and East Asia, 1880-2010 変遷する政治的対話　中東と東アジア　1880–2010

Cemil Aydin

East Asia's relationship with the Middle East today is based mainly on economics and is devoid of grand political projects of solidarity and intellectual dialogue. Countries such as China, Japan and Korea present the Middle East with a model of state-led capitalist neoliberal economic development. At the same time, the redemptive transformation of East Asia into a globally powerful region offers a trajectory of development diverging from the Middle East, struggling with political turbulence, regime crises and regional wars both cold and hot.

One hundred years ago, in 1914, both East and West Asia were dealing with a similar reality of European hegemony and colonialism. It was a time of great convergence in identity as subaltern Easterners, giving birth to several projects of cooperation between pan-Islamic and pan-Asian currents of thought. There was a Japan moment in Middle Eastern intellectual circles in the decades after the 1905 Russo-Japanese war. The interest in the secrets of Japanese progress continued, even as a vision of solidarity with Chinese nationalism also emerged, peaking with the Bandung conference of 1955.

Today, however, while East Asians exhibit clear self-confidence, Middle Easterners continue to talk about the "humiliation" of Arab and Muslim societies, particularly vis-à-vis the West. There is an imbalance between East and West Asia that has created miscommunication in intellectual encounters, leading to an absence of political dialogue or civil society solidarity. Remembering the intertwined histories of the Middle East and East Asia in the last century and a half may help in better understanding the challenges of today and in finding ways to make the intellectual and political ties stronger in ways beneficial to both regions. While maintaining their dynamic economic ties, the Middle East and East Asia need a more sustained cultural, intellectual and political dialogue for constructive cooperation on issues of global governance.

Era of Humiliation

European empires came to Islamic areas before they expanded to East Asia, and their impact on Muslim societies was more destructive compared to the East Asian zone, which had strong state traditions enabling resistance. Even after the Opium Wars, China, Japan and Korea were not colonized by Western powers. Between the 1870s and 1910, Okinawa, Hokkaido, Taiwan and Korea were incorporated by Japan, the two former as prefectures, the two latter as colonies. During the 1880s and afterward, however, East Asians and Muslims in South and West Asia began to realize the parallels between their experiences of subjugation at the hands of European imperial powers. The peak of European global hegemony from the 1880s to the 1920s was not absolute and was always contested. Multiple visions of anti-white racial and intra-regional solidarities emerged across Asia and Africa, fostering connections, solidarities and exchanges. It was ironic, indeed, that the peak of European hegemony in Asia corresponded

with the zenith of intra-Asian political conversations. Pan-Asianists of Japan and China began to see Muslims as members of Asia, while pan-Islamists began to look at China and Japan as allies and fellow Orientals. It was not simply that they were sharing a revised Eurocentric geographic notion about Asia versus Europe, East and West, or white race and colored races, they also had more chances of mobility, travel and journalistic information exchange thanks to globalization of transportation and communication technologies.

Shiba Shiro (Sanshin Tokai) with Fez hat, 1886, Istanbul (Source)

The first modern Japanese political novel, *Kajin no Kigu* (Strange Encounters of Elegant Females), presents the characteristics of the new pan-Asian thinking sympathetic to Egyptians and Arabs. Written by Shiba Shiro (1852-1922) under the pen name Sanshin Tokai, this novel reflects the universalism and global consciousness of the 1880s seen through the eyes of a world traveler. The author did indeed travel to British-ruled Egypt and Ottoman Istanbul, where he spoke with leading personalities. The protagonist, a Japanese student, weaves together multiple stories of an oppressive West versus subaltern Asians to present a picture of universal struggle for justice and equity in the face of imperialism. The novel includes a conversation with the Egyptian nationalist Col. Ahmad 'Urabi about British imperialism and the double standards of European powers, urging Japanese readers to learn lessons from how the British subordinated the Egyptian khedive by extending loans he could not repay. The British and Japanese steamships carrying passengers between the ports of Asia and Europe often stopped to refuel in Ceylon, where 'Urabi was in exile from 1882 following his unsuccessful revolt against the khedive. *Kajin no Kigu* became the most popular novel during the mid-Meiji period, selling so many copies that it earned the reputation of "raising the price of paper" in Japan.making egy

European orientalism created the initial epistemological foundation of the Asian-Arabian connection. If the same European center "othered" the Muslim world and "yellow" Asians as inferior and in need of the white man's civilizing mission, Muslim and non-Muslim Asian intellectuals could learn from each other about how to talk back. At this exact moment, the steamship and the telegraph, as well as the construction of the Suez Canal, strengthened the ties among various Asians. The Suez Canal, while making Egypt part of Europe as Khedive Isma'il proclaimed, in many ways strengthened Egypt's ties to Asia. Japanese and Chinese travelers to Europe often stopped in the Canal cities. Some made negative comments about the poverty of Arabs in Port Said in comparison to the European residents, but not necessarily to imply that these conditions were irreversible. New anti-colonial visions of solidarity would gradually induce the Chinese and Japanese travelers to

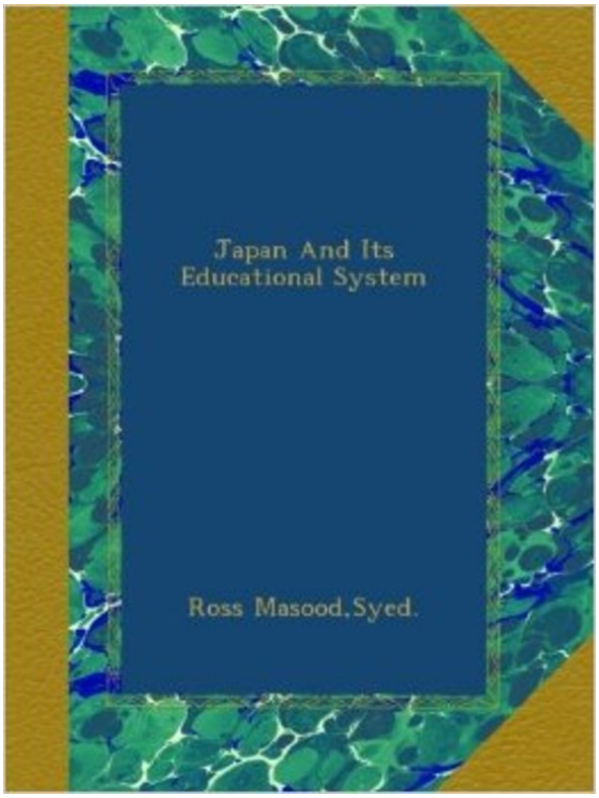
blame Europeans for the Arabs' low economic status. Similarly, Arab intellectuals developed an interest in the diminution of Chinese power and the extraordinary progress of Japan. Such figures as the nationalist Mustafa Kamil and the Islamic reformer Rashid Rida argued that the Arabs could be as successful as the Japanese. Middle Eastern intellectuals, along with their counterparts in the rest of Asia and Africa, celebrated the Japanese defeat of Russia as a victory of fellow Orientals against a common enemy, the white Christian West. Chinese nationalist leader Sun Yat-sen noted the congratulatory messages he received in 1905 from Arab residents of Port Said when his ship stopped in that city on the way back from Europe. Some Arab Muslims even hoped that the Japanese emperor, a Shinto deity, would convert to Islam and take the helm of the "Muslim world" in addition to spearheading a rising East Asia.

•See Shuang Wen's report on Muslim activists in Meiji Japan below•

From 1905 to the 1920s, there was a rich debate on Japanese progress in the Arabic-, Ottoman- and Persian-language press. The debate might be considered rather surprising, given that Muslim reformists were promoting European-style modernization to strengthen the Ottoman Empire and Persia and pointing out that the Japanese empire could not be said to be anti-imperialist. There were three main reasons for the Muslim interest in the Japanese model. First, the Japanese example showed that non-Western cultural and religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Islam and Confucianism, were not necessarily obstacles to progress. In Muslim writings on Japan's modernization, the prevailing consensus held that Japan had intelligently selected the essential aspects of Western civilization for adoption, without appropriating "superficial and harmful" Western habits or denying the Japanese cultural heritage. In truth, the heritage that was preserved was more an invented image of traditional Japan than a reflection of actual pre-Meiji Japanese culture. But the concept of "Japanese selectivity," a way to create an effective synthesis of Western and Eastern knowledge, was fascinating to Muslim reformists and nationalists, who had been preoccupied with the questions of East-West encounter and civilizational harmony for several decades. For example, the "good wife, wise mother" ideology that Japan adopted from Europe was depicted as a successful adaptation of Japanese tradition to modernity, since Japanese mothers and daughters could thereby serve the nation through Westernizing reforms without losing their traditional cultural role. Second, the rise of Japan engendered optimism that it was not too late for the Ottoman, Egyptian, Persian and Indian princely state reformers to usher their own societies into modernity and international equality. The Russo-Japanese war and the constitutional revolutions in Persia (1906), Ottoman Empire (1908) and China (1911) earned a collective representation as the "awakening of Asia" and were seen as a conclusive defeat of the notion of white racial superiority over colored races. In fact, slogans describing the "rise" or "awakening" of the East associated with the Russo-Japanese war preceded, by a substantial period of time, the image of the "decline" or the "retreat" of the West that gained currency in the post-World War I period.

Middle Eastern and Indian Muslim interest in China carried an anti-colonial and anti-racist charge, but the captivation with Japanese military success and state-centered modernization implied a search for a non-Eurocentric model of political reform and self-strengthening. The grandchild of pro-British imperial loyalist Syed Ahmad Khan, Syed Ross Masood (who, incidentally, inspired the character Aziz in E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India*), visited Japan and wrote about the

Japanese model especially for the Princely State of Hyderabad. Syed Ross Masood's interest in Japan illustrated his generation's disillusionment with racism and the violations of the promise of imperial citizenship in British India. There were many more Indian Muslims, such as Ghadar Party member Muhammad Barakatullah, who frequented Japan on the way to the United States (mostly in Japanese-owned steamships).



Cover of Syed Ross Masood's 1923 book on Japan's education system, written after a tour of Japan and published in the Princely state of Hyderabad.

The sympathy for Muslim West Asia, or India, in the name of Asian solidarity, was especially strong for early twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals, who made a connection between their experience of humiliation and similar struggles elsewhere. Japanese or Chinese Asianist organizations began to write about Muslim societies in their books and magazines. Two factors complicated the emerging anti-colonial Asian identity: First, identities did not necessarily turn into policies or political projects. Despite Japanese sympathy for Egyptians as fellow subalterns, Japan's imperial elites were allies of the British Empire and some looked to British rule in Egypt as a model for Japanese rule over Korea. There could be a tension between sympathies and political interests. Second, there was an intellectual desire to substantiate a pan-Asian vision with historical narratives. East Asia had cultural commonality—the Chinese writing systems and Confucianism, for instance—which they could extend a vision of united Asia to India and Southeast Asia via references to the shared Buddhist legacy. But thinking of Muslims as fellow Asians led to discussion on the relationship of Islam to Buddhism and Confucianism. By the 1920s, however, Asianists began to include Muslims in their vision by writing a narrative of world history that evolves around an eternal struggle between East and West. Thus, it was possible for Japanese and Chinese historians to write about Arab-Muslim armies in Spain or Ottoman forces in Eastern Europe as historic achievements of Asia against its Western enemy. At the same time, Muslim travelers to Japan, China and Korea began to depict Buddhism as a great philosophical and religious legacy, and there was an important Muslim-Buddhist dialogue within the pan-Asian solidarity framework.

Era of Redemption

During the long period of decolonization in Asia, mutual interest and sympathies between Middle East and East Asia peaked, yet with a clear difference between pro-Chinese and pro-Japanese discourses. Japanese elites, when they decided to mobilize Asian sympathies for their empire, emphasized race alliance against white Western hegemony and downplayed Japan's war with Chinese nationalism. Chinese nationalists and Japanese imperialists competed for the political support of Muslims

and Arabs by sponsoring pilgrimages to Mecca. Chinese nationalists asked Chinese Muslims to go to Mecca and tell other Muslims that China was in the right against imperialist Japan. The Japanese government, on the other hand, dispatched pan-Asianist Japanese who had become Muslims for propaganda purposes to visit Mecca. The fact that China and Japan focused their public diplomacy on Saudi state ruled Mecca illustrates the rising political importance of that city in the twentieth century, as well as the confusion about the leadership of the imagined "Muslim world" after the abolishment of the Ottoman caliphate in Istanbul in 1924. The Japanese empire was particularly invested in ties with Arab and Muslim societies during the 1933-1945 period. Japan developed a vibrant field of Islamic studies, with multiple magazines and research centers, publishing hundreds of books on issues related to Muslim societies. Textbooks for Japanese schoolchildren described Arabs and Muslims as fellow Asians with shared historical experiences of subjugation by the West. During World War II, there were Japanese intellectuals such as Ōkubo Kōji, director of the Institute for Islamic Studies, who presented Japanese wars against white European colonialism as "*jihad*/*seisen*," while praising Muslim resistance movements against imperialism. It was during this wartime period that one of the leading scholars of Islam of the twentieth century, Izutsu Toshihiko, gained his first training in Japan. Another important Japanese intellectual, Ōkawa Shūmei, who was indicted at the Tokyo war crimes tribunal as a leading ideologue of wartime Japan, also translated the Qur'an and compared Mao Zedong's military victories to Arab victories in Spain after the end of World War II.

Arabs and Indians may have been pro-Japanese during the 1905-1920 period, but once Japan colonized China, their political sympathies shifted toward China or remained ambivalent. After all, Germany and Italy also claimed to be friends, if not saviors, of colonized Muslims, so the Arab Middle East approached Japanese propaganda with skepticism. Meanwhile, economic ties between the regions suffered, since it was the British Empire that had facilitated them and Britain was soon at war with Japan.

Japan's anti-white racial solidarity propaganda during the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity War (1937-1945) was quite influential in damaging the credibility of European empires all over Asia, but especially in Southeast Asia, which Japan temporarily ruled over. Office of Strategic Studies reports emphasized the impact of this propaganda and recommended that the US never advocate a restoration of white Western empires in the region.

Zhou Enlai, Sukarno and Nasser at Bandung conference

East Asia's redemption from a century-long "humiliation" resulted in a communist China, a divided Korea and a non-imperial Japanese nation-state in alliance with the U.S. During the Cold War, communist China became a supporter of Arab independence in the name of Third World solidarity. The encounters between Zhou Enlai of China, Nehru of India, Nasser of Egypt and Sukarno of Indonesia at Bandung illustrate the Third Worldist conversation during the Cold War. Even though Bandung was called an "Afro-Asian conference," it was more like a pan-Islamic and pan-Asian solidarity conference with strong Arab representation. Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Syria,

Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq were all at Bandung; by comparison there were only Ethiopia, Liberia and the Gold Coast (now Ghana) from non-Arab Africa. The Bandung conference gave a boost to the Algerian war of independence, with the support of China being particularly important. During the 1950s, the Chinese model overshadowed the Japanese model in the Middle East. Though Japan also attended Bandung, it had to balance its rhetoric of Asian-African solidarity with the crimes of its past empire and its loyalty to the American camp in the Cold War.

At some point, divisions between the communist and capitalist blocs, and Japan's difficulty in locating itself within Asia, overshadowed the potential of Arab-East Asian cooperation in the post-colonial world, and the Arab-East Asian conversations at Bandung could not be sustained. Meanwhile, partly with the encouragement of US theorists, there was renewed Arab and Muslim interest in the Japanese economic miracle, and trade between Arab countries and Japan and South Korea picked up in the 1970s. During the oil crisis of 1973, Japan deviated from US guidelines on the question of Palestine and took itself off the embargo list. Between 1974 and 1979, many Japanese and Koreans learned Arabic in the belief that the Arab world would turn into a great power thanks to increased oil revenue. But there was no new project of pan-Asianism or anti-Western discourse of Eastern solidarity.

From early 1970s to late 1980s, fast-growing Japan had a second rebirth as an economic model for Middle Eastern countries, with Turkey's Turgut Özal showing particular interest. Hundreds of Middle Eastern bureaucrats and students were sent to Japan to study. At the same time, large numbers of socialist-inclined students were going to China to study the Chinese experience. The contrast between the Chinese and Japanese models was stark, as each had its proponents in the Middle East often in conflicting political camps.

Era of Divergence

One of the ironies of East Asian and West Asian historical development was the growing divergence after 1979, when communist China began market reforms, became richer and gradually retreated from Third World solidarity in foreign policy. Today, China, Japan and South Korea seem to offer a similar model of state-led capitalist neoliberal economics, and the earlier competition between China and Japan lost its meaning for students from the Middle East. From the 1990s onward, China achieved spectacular economic growth without democratization, placing priority on economic rights over political and social ones. Just 35 years after the beginning of market reforms in China, East Asia is one of the most dynamic and prosperous regions of the world, with gross domestic products—and in the case of Japan and South Korea, per capital gross domestic products—comparable to Europe and North America. East Asia and Southeast Asia command one quarter of world GDP. Despite the continuing cold war in East Asia, the region has also been free from active military conflicts, in contrast to multiple wars in the Middle East region.

The rise of East Asian economies since 1979 was accompanied by the formation of a relatively peaceful order in Southeast Asia and the growth of India as a world power. Overall, intra-Asian trade is now three times larger than trade between Asia and the rest of the world. The countries of China-centered East Asia, despite their economic dynamism, do not articulate an alternative to the existing international system. The Third World vision of solidarity associated with Bandung in the 1950s has been almost completely abandoned in favor of a pragmatic, trade-oriented foreign policy. China is content with its UN Security Council veto, which it has never used in support of a Third Worldist or pro-Arab agenda. In the 1960s, Japanese foreign policy was criticized as being that of a corporation rather than a

regional power. Perhaps the same criticism applies to China and Korea in the last three decades.

Chinese intellectuals occasionally make reference to Confucian values of *tianxia*, or harmony under heaven, claiming they are alternatives to the conflictual international relations of the post-Westphalian order in the West. There are many Chinese intellectuals who are proud that China has fought no wars in the last 30 years despite its great power status. Yet this economic growth and stability is a sign of a commerce-based, pragmatic foreign policy rather than Confucianism. East Asia as a region perhaps has reverted to the mode of the mid-eighteenth century: a highly militarized but stable regional order, this time in the name of maximizing global trade. In fact, Asia's future economic power prospect is even brighter as China and Japan rank among the top three countries in terms of GDP, with India and Korea in the top ten. This neoliberal economic development may mean great environmental challenges, coupled with a real estate bubble, and crisis such as the Fukushima Daichi nuclear disaster in Japan. The threats of China's big dam projects in India and Southeast Asia are all examples of potential international conflicts that may arise out of China's rapid growth.

In contrast to East Asia's transformation into a prosperous region, Middle Eastern countries have been wracked with instability for about four decades. The 1973 oil shock was the last time when the Arab Middle East felt a spirit of unity. The persistent question of Palestine, the 1979 Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq war, the 1990-1991 Gulf war, the regional fallout of the Afghan jihad, the 2003 US invasion of Iraq—all these events cracked open fault lines in the region, costing immense human loss and shattering the normalcy of life in addition to wasting trillions of dollars. The West Asian region is witnessing regional rivalries among medium-sized powers, a hopeless situation in Palestine, sharp Sunni-Shi'i tensions and unsettled soul searching about good governance and Islam's role therein.

Over the last three decades, East Asian powers, including China, took a neutral outsider position toward conflicts in the Middle East, keeping a low profile and focusing on economic ties. In the Asian powers' thinking, Europe and the US were the key imperial and neo-imperial powers in the region—those powers are thus complicit in the Middle East's problems. It would be unfair, furthermore, to expect Japan, Korea and China to get too involved in the Middle East to risk their ties with Europe and the US. But this detached pragmatism gives the impression that East Asia cares about little but access to oil and Arab markets. In some ways, a much weaker Russia takes a more active role in the Middle East than the East Asian powers. China, Japan and Korea—with economic power on a par with the West—could surely do more.

East Asian apathy toward the Middle East may partly reflect the belief of Chinese, Japanese and Korean leaders that Arab and Muslim affairs only get more complicated with each passing year. There is no strong popular pressure on any of these governments to adopt a particular policy toward the Middle East, allowing leaders to pursue pragmatic economic policies without any systematic approach, ideology or discourse of identity. As a result, East Asia has much lower political and intellectual significance in the Middle Eastern region compared to the large volume of its economic ties.

A New Era

There would be many benefits to strengthened intellectual and political ties between the eastern and western parts of Asia, to complement the economic exchanges. The respective peoples and leaders should have a more open and sustained dialogue on trans-regional cooperation. Because of the instability of the Arab world, Arab populations do not

benefit as much as they could from the great transformation of Asian economies. Meanwhile, the Middle East's relationship with Europe and the US will continue to be tense due to entrenched post-colonial alliances and the mutual trust gap. It would be better for regional peace and global governance if China, Japan and Korea were to take a more active interest in the political problems of the Middle East and, by the same token, if Middle Eastern leaders were to take a more active interest in East Asian affairs. Weakness of civil society dialogue between East Asia and West Asia can be remedied to the advance of both societies. For example, when the government of Turkey contracted the building of new nuclear power plants to Japanese firms, there was little awareness in Turkish public about the current Japanese civil society campaigns around the issue of Fukushima disaster. Middle Eastern and Chinese environmental NGOs would have a lot to share in terms of the problems and issues they face.

We no longer live in a Euro-American world. Perhaps we will soon be in "no one's world" with no hegemon that is above the multiple regional alliances and powers. By failing to engage in political and intellectual dialogue, however, and limiting their relationship to trade, East Asia and the Middle East may end up contributing to the persistence of a Euro-American world. It is time for Middle Eastern and East Asian countries to develop full-spectrum relations and build the institutions that can sustain them.

This is a revised and adapted version of an article that appeared in MERIP (Spring 2014). The original article appeared in Middle East Report 270 (Spring 2014, Special issue on China in the Middle East), published by the Middle East Research and Information Project in Washington, DC. For the contents of this special issue, see here.

Cemil Aydin is associate professor of history at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. He is the author of *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (Columbia).

Recommended citation: Cemil Aydin with a contribution by Shuang Wen, "Changing Modes of Political Dialogue Across the Middle East and East Asia, 1880-2010," The Asia-Pacific Journal*, Volume 12, Issue 20, No. 3, May 19, 2014.*

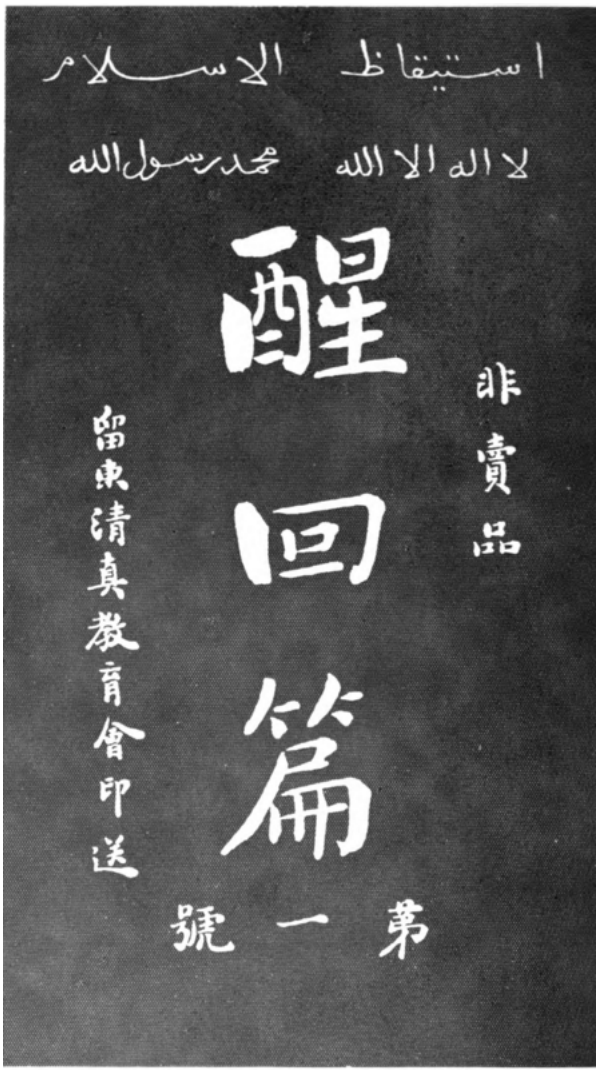
Muslim Activist Encounters in Meiji Japan by Shuang Wen

As one of the political, commercial and intellectual centers of Asia, Japan at the turn of the twentieth century was an important arena for the intersection of ideas about modernism, nationalism and anti-colonial politics. Though Cairo, Istanbul and Mecca had long been the capitals of scholarship and cross-cultural interaction in the Islamic world, Meiji-era Japan was a site of key encounters between Muslims from China, South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. Drawn together by a common interest in Islamic revival and nation building that transcended linguistic and cultural differences, these activists established various Muslim organizations in Japan and saw Islam as a way to unify Asian peoples.

The Asian Congress (Ajia Gikai), founded in 1909, established Tokyo as an important hub of pan-Asian and Muslim activism. Founded by a group of Japanese intellectuals and a Russian Tatar Muslim, Abdurrashid Ibrahim (1853-1944), the Asian Congress promoted Muslim-Asian solidarity as part of a political program to liberate the East (from North Africa to East Asia) from European and American colonial power. Members of the Asian Congress sought funds from the Ottoman Empire to construct a mosque in Tokyo, as well as ulema to serve Muslims living in Japan. Other organizations like the Association in Tokyo for Islamic Call, founded by Muslim scholars from Egypt, India, Russia, Tunisia and China, also

worked to promote Islam in Japan.

At the same time that political activists were converging on Japan, the country also attracted thousands of foreign students seeking modern education. China began sponsoring students to study in Japan after its defeat in the Sino-Japanese war in 1895. The number of Chinese students increased dramatically after the Boxer Rebellion, when a portion of the war reparations owed to Japan were paid via university tuition. The abolition of the traditional civil service exam in China in 1905 also precipitated a major shift in the Chinese education system and pushed more students to pursue education abroad. By 1906, over 10,000 Chinese were studying in Japan.



The cover of *Xing Hui Pian* (Muslims Awake), published by Chinese Muslim Students in Tokyo in 1909

Among these students was a group of 36 Chinese Muslims, part of the first collective effort of Chinese Muslims to study abroad. Like other Chinese nationalists in Japan, the Muslim students sought a modern education for the purpose of political and social reform in China. Some of these students joined the United Allegiance Society, Sun Yat-sen's Tokyo-based underground revolutionary movement against the Qing government. For many Chinese Muslim nationalists, Islam was an essential element of their anti-colonial, pan-Asian politics, and the Chinese Muslim students

sought connections with other Muslims by founding the Education Association of Muslims Studying Abroad in Tokyo.

The popular press was key to mediating encounters—both real and imagined—among diverse Muslims for a global audience and for sustaining the intellectual sparks ignited in Japan. In 1909, the Education Association published the journal *Xing Hui Pian* (Muslims Awake), which promoted Islamic modernism and the role of Islam in Chinese nation building. *Muslims Awake* also belonged to the literary revival of Islam in China, especially in the cultural capitals of Beijing, Tianjin, Nanjing and Shanghai. Chinese Muslim newspapers like *Zhengzong Aiguo Bao* (A Newspaper of Authentic Patriotism) in Beijing and *Zhu Yuan Baihua Bao* (A Vernacular Newspaper of Bamboo Garden) in Tianjin discussed new styles of civil education and political activism. Though they covered issues of interest to Chinese Muslims, these papers also aimed to reach a non-Muslim Chinese audience.

Even though *Muslims Awake* was published in Tokyo, it circulated widely among Muslims in China, sometimes through republication in Muslim newspapers. The prologue of *Muslims Awake* was published in *Zhengzong Aiguo Bao*, prefaced by an enthusiastic endorsement of the journal and the students behind it: "The journal aims at reform and revival of Islam in preparation for establishing the constitution in our country.... What a noble objective and a well-thought endeavor!"

Muslims Awake also documented some of the links forged between Chinese Muslims and other Muslims in Japan. Ahmad Fadali (1874-?) was an Egyptian military officer who moved to Japan in self-imposed exile after witnessing British treatment of Sudanese during the Anglo-Sudanese war. Fadali married a Japanese woman and became involved with other foreign Muslims to promote Islam in Japan. Fadali often lectured on Islam with Abdurrashid Ibrahim at Waseda University, where they met the Chinese students and learned of *Muslims Awake*. Fadali contributed an Arabic translation of the title for the journal cover—*Istiqaz al-Islam*. The journal included this account of the meeting with Fadali:

Although our association is small, the members have very similar goals and are enthusiastic about this cause. At the beginning we did not know each other, but once we met we felt quite close with each other. Muslims scattered in different parts of China, but spiritually we are bonded together with great solidarity. Without our religion, how could we achieve this?... An Egyptian military officer, Ahmad Fadali, is a Muslim from a foreign country. He was introduced to us. When he heard about our project during the meeting, he was very surprised. He therefore wrote in Arabic for the cover as an encouragement to us.

The story of meeting Fadali as recorded in *Muslims Awake* and in other publicity about the journal both inside and outside China suggests how novel it was for Chinese Muslims to encounter a learned person from the Islamic heartland. Few Muslims in China spoke or read Arabic, and Muslims in Japan often communicated in Japanese. Yet *Istiqaz al-Islam* captured the common aspiration of many Chinese and Egyptian Muslims to build an Islamic nationalist politics.

Two years after the publication of *Muslims Awake*, the Xinhai revolution overthrew the Qing empire and most of the students of the Education Association went back to China to participate in the politics of the new republic. Chinese Muslims were an important political constituency during the Republican period and the Japanese occupation. The Kuomintang government sponsored several groups of Chinese Muslims to study at al-Azhar University in Cairo, and Japan later promoted a plan to establish a separate country for Chinese Muslims, run by a puppet government. Chinese

graduates of al-Azhar became the first generation of Arabic language teachers in Chinese universities.

Shuang Wen is a PhD Candidate in History at Georgetown University. Her dissertation, entitled "Mediated Imaginations: Chinese-Arab Connections in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," uncovers the previously little-known intellectual, commercial, and inter-personal interactions between two major non-western societies during an era of large-scale western global expansion.

Related articles

•Cemil Aydin, **Japan's Pan-Asianism and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931–1945**

•Mark Selden, **Economic Nationalism and Regionalism in Contemporary East Asia**

• Janis Mimura, **Japan's New Order and Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere: Planning for Empire**

• Sven Saaler and Christopher W. A. Szpilman, **Pan-Asianism as an Ideal of Asian Identity and Solidarity, 1850–Present**

• Mark Selden, **Nation, Region and the Global in East Asia: Conflict and Cooperation**

• Mark Selden, **East Asian Regionalism and its Enemies in Three Epochs: Political Economy and Geopolitics, 16th to 21st Centuries**

• Cemil Aydin Interview by Michael Penn, **Imperial Japan's Islamic Policies and Anti-Westernism**

Selected Recent Works on East Asia and the Middle East

Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey, and the World of Islam: The Writings of Selcuk Esenbel,* (Leiden: Global Oriental Brill, 2011)

Selçuk Esenbel and Inaba Chiharu, Ed., *The Rising Sun and the Turkish Crescent: New Perspectives on the History of Japanese Turkish Relations* (Istanbul: Bogazici University Press, 2003).

Selçuk Esenbel, " Japan's Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power 1900-1945", *American Historical Review* October 2004**,** pp: 1140-1170.

Nile Green, "Shared Infrastructures, Informational Asymmetries: Persians and Indians in Japan, c. 1890-1930", *Journal of Global History* 8, 3 (2013).
Nile Green, "Forgotten Futures: Indian Muslims in the Trans-Islamic Turn to Japan", *Journal of Asian Studies* 72, 3 (2013).
Nile Green, "Anti-Colonial Japanophilia and the Constraints of an Islamic Japanology: Information and Affect in the Indian Encounter with Japan", *Journal of South Asian History and Culture* 4, 3 (2013).

Kunio Katakura. *Japan and the Middle East*. (Tokyo: Middle East Institute of Japan, 1991)

P. R. Kumaraswamy, *China and the Middle East: The Quest for Influence*. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1999).

Ben Simpfendorfer, *The New Silk Road: How a Rising Arab World Is Turning Away from the West and Rediscovering China*. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Kaoru Sugihara and J A. Allan. *Japan in the Contemporary Middle East*. (London: Routledge, 1993).

Renee Worringer, *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan,

Transnational History Series, 2014).

Renee Worringer, Ed., *The Islamic Middle East And Japan: Perceptions, Aspirations, And the Birth of Intra-asian Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2007).