

Introduction

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This collection of articles and essays is meant to serve as a report of the results of the Nichibunken Overseas Symposium, entitled, “Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies” which was jointly hosted on November 5-6, 2006, by the Nichibunken and the Cairo University Faculty of Arts. Overseas symposia are one of the central pillars of Nichibunken’s research activities. Since the first Overseas Symposium jointly hosted with Peking University in 1995, we have continued every year to have jointly-hosted symposia that have come to include: Research Center For Islamic History, Art and Culture in Turkey (1996), Sheffield University in England (1997), Leuven Catholic University in Belgium (1998), Leiden University in Holland (1999), University of Hawai‘i at Manoa (2000), University of California Santa Barbara and the University of California Los Angeles (2001), Princeton University (2002), Calgary University in Canada (2002), University of Sydney in Australia (2003), Singapore National University (2004), and the Chinese University of Hong Kong (2005).

The Overseas Symposium held in Cairo, Egypt in 2006 was planned with a unique purpose in mind. As can be seen from the location and the hosting institutions, former joint conferences were centered in North America and East Asia, with many others that included the various Pacific Rim countries with which Japan has cultural, political, and economic ties. Concurrently, the Nichibunken also held conferences with institutions in Western Europe that had strong traditions of Japanese Studies. What was missing from a geographically standpoint was representation from Latin America, Russia and the former Soviet Republics, and the various countries of the Middle East and Africa that comprise the Arab World. The first attempt to address this deficiency was the planning of the 2006 conference in Egypt. Until that time, the various venues of the symposia were equipped with very adequate institutional foundations. In the Arab world, however, it is difficult to say that Japanese studies is accorded a favorable position in each country’s educational and research agenda. Within this environment, however, the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University has established a Japanese Language department in 1974 and is fostering the growth of Egyptian faculty members. In order to spur the continued development of future research as well as ascertain the highest level of Japanese studies in Arab countries, there is no question that the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University was the felicitous

choice.

Established with the purpose of illuminating the results of the current stage of Japanese studies of the co-hosting schools in the region, the conference was not strictly limited to a common theme, but was established within the flexible framework seen in the title “Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies.” The conference was intended to function as a place for the airing of current research from scholars gathered from Egypt and other Arab countries. Another aim of the conference was to invite researchers of varying interests and fields from the Nichibunken and other institutions in Japan to report on the state of Japanese studies to the researchers at Cairo University and in Egypt at large. The result of the conference, based on its intended purpose and theme, can be considered a success. First of all and most importantly, it is very significant that many scholars from the Department of Japanese Studies in the Faculty of Arts of Cairo University, who have been the leaders of Japanese studies in Egypt and the larger Arab world, all gathered together to share their talents and research results. Also, even during the preparation stage as well as the day of the conference, the support that was received from Cairo University and the Faculty of Arts bodes well for the future of Japanese studies in both Egypt and the Arab world. Dr. Ali Abd al-Rahman, president of Cairo University and host of the conference, acquiesced to organizing it together with Nichibunken, and under his leadership we received a strong push in our organizing efforts. And within his busy schedule, he was kind enough to attend the opening ceremonies of the conference and make a speech. Dr. Ahmed Abdallah Zayed, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Cairo University, in preparation for the event made a trip to Japan and visited the Nichibunken. During the conference, he not only made greetings at the opening ceremony, he also actively participated in the discussion sessions. The enthusiastic support that Cairo University and all members of the Faculty of Arts displayed concerning Japanese studies, has great relevance not only to the Japanese department in the Cairo University Faculty of Arts, but to all of Japanese studies in Egypt. I hope to build upon this momentum in Cairo and Japan for the future development of Japanese studies in the Arab World.

This report has been published as a collection of presentations that were revised after the input from the panel discussions at the Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies. Although not all of the papers are presented in this volume, it can still be called “the fruits of the conference” in the true sense of the word since it is composed of the results attained through participation and discussion in the conference, and

also contains the knowledge and experience gained through the process of planning and ensuring the success of the event. On one hand, it is to demonstrate the level and results of the state of Japanese studies in Egypt, and on the other hand, through the mutual cooperation and influence of Japan and Egypt, it highlights an attempt to promote and develop Japanese studies in the Arab world.

At this point it might be appropriate to briefly introduce the presenters and the presentations of each session (the program is included at the end of the report). The Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies, held on November 5-6, 2006, was comprised of five sessions. Sessions 1-3 were held on November 5, and sessions 4-5 were held on the following day. The first session was entitled “Japan and the Arab World: Comparative Studies in Civilizations” and looks at Japan and the Arab World from the perspective of “civilization.” Kawakatsu Heita (Nichibunken) started off the conference with his presentation, “Japanese Civilization: Japan’s Linkages with the Modern World System, 16th-20th Centuries” in which he attempted to isolate the marked characteristics in the history of Japanese social economics both before and after its meeting with the modern West. Egypt’s encounter with the West occurred at roughly the same time as Japan, and although they responded similarly, the results of contact with the West differed for each country. Japan and Egypt are characterized by very different economic, societal, political, military, and geopolitical conditions, and these differences are reflected in its institutional response to Western modernization. It was hinted at during the discussion session that there was a desire for a comparative approach based on Professor Kawakatsu’s research. Muhammad El-Sayed Selim, professor of Kuwait University, assessed the effort that the Japanese government has made in recent years in the “Dialogue of Civilizations with the Muslim World.” In his presentation “The Cultural Dimensions of Arab-Japanese Relations with Special Reference to the Japan-Muslim World Dialogue among Civilizations,” he pointed out that the effort by the Japanese government was limited to the cultural sphere, where various conflicts and troubles in political spheres are intentionally excluded. His presentation consisted of a critique, based on friendship and respect, of Japanese policy toward the Muslim world.

Ushimura Kei of Nichibunken, in his presentation “Discourses on and Against Civilization in Pre-war Japan,” made a precise analysis through a comparative literary approach, of the concept of “civilization” and its vicissitudes in Japan from the Meiji and Taisho periods up until the pre-war Showa era. He differentiated and examined the predominantly materialist concept of “civilization” and the idea of “culture” that

included a strong insistence on the inherent psychological aspect. In the discussion session it was debated whether this conceptual dichotomy between “civilization” and “culture” is seen in the Arab world. At the end of the first session, Hassan Hanafi (Cairo University), one of the representative philosophers in the Arab world, gave a thought-provoking lecture entitled “Comparative Value Systems and the Arab-Japanese Dialogue.” In his lecture Professor Hanafi argued that the superficial differences that are emphasized between Arab countries and Japan tend to conceal the many commonalities at a deeper level.

In the second session, entitled, “Comparative Studies in Modernizations between Japan and the Arab World,” Sonoda Hidehiro (Nichibunken) presented the paper “Modernity Through Westernization: The Japanese Case in a Comparative Perspective,” in which he proposed research possibilities concerning “modernization” in Japan and the Arab World from a comparative sociological perspective. Professor Sonoda focused on the idea of meritocracy while drawing on the thought of Merkmal, and what it means to modernization. In addition, he takes up several instances regarding the issue of meritocracy within Japan’s own modernization, and demonstrates that “modernization” and “Westernization” are not necessarily synonymous. Based on a comparative analysis between Japan and the U.K, Professor Sonoda argued that in the Meiji period, Japan very quickly adopted a meritocratic system as one of its “modernization principles.” He called upon the Egyptian participants to consider comparative research concerning meritocracies and the class system in the context of the modernization of the Arab world.

In Ala Ali Zein al-Abidin’s (Cairo University) presentation “Morality and Secularization in Modern Japan: on ‘Bushido Spirits,’” he focused on the transformation of the concept of the spirit of Bushido, and discussed the formation of the ethics and secularization of Japan in the 19th century. Yomna El-Kholy of the Cairo University Faculty of Arts, Department of Philosophy, presented her long and comprehensive paper “The Beginning of the Philosophy of Science in Japan: A Comparative Approach,” in which she presented the history of philosophy in modern Japan and its relation to modern scientific thought. She turned her attention to the schools that encouraged the introduction of Western scientific philosophy and that centered on Nishi Amane and Fukuzawa Yukichi. She then compared and contrasted this trend with what is generally termed the Kyoto School of Nishida Kitaro and Tanabe Hajime, which endeavored to introduce German philosophy while developing traditional philosophy rooted in Buddhist thought. While emphasizing the

dichotomy between modernity and tradition, she examined the differences between the two currents of Japan's modern history of science--the current which emphasized experiential science, and that which emphasized spiritual and religious philosophy. Professor El-Kholy compared the history of modern philosophy in Japan with that in the Arab world through a schematic of modernity and tradition.

The third session, "New Trends in Japanese Studies: Dissemination of Japanese Popular Culture and Representation of Japan in Arab Media," was planned with the intention to present the participating Egyptian researchers with the dominant new trends in recent Japanese studies. Formerly, research on Japanese culture in countries outside Japan focused on classical arts such as Ukiyo-e, Bushido, The Tea Ceremony, and Kabuki; however, in recent years, interest has gravitated to anime, manga, and popular culture in general. At the top of the session, the foremost researcher of Japanese popular culture, Inoue Shoichi (Nichibunken) led discussion on "Anime and Manga in the World." Professor Inoue, with his characteristic humor, while including important and perspicacious suggestions, led a critical debate on the recent scholarly attention given to popular culture. Professor Inoue reflected upon his experiences and conversations with his friends spread throughout the world, and related how good it was to hear that these friends said how they enjoyed anime and manga during their youth and it still continues to be a source of fond memories. He also vocally argued how taking manga and anime as one of Japan's virtues or sources of power creates an essential contradiction, and that there is a need for cooperative research with friends around the world that presents anime and manga as a common experience. Professor Inoue's talk, infused with introspective sincerity, not only reflects his character and learning, but also gathered the sympathy of the venue.

Following this, three cutting-edge case studies regarding Japanese popular culture were presented. In Yamada Shoji's (Nichibunken) presentation, entitled "Advertisement as a Resource for Japanese Studies," he systematically analyzed the commercials that received prizes in the annual competition among advertising specialists, and within his analysis illustrated how the perceptions of America have changed. The venue was occasionally filled with laughter at the humorous commercials Professor Yamada showed, and through his analysis of the commercials he demonstrated how they are a valuable resource for analyzing Japanese self-awareness and the perception of the West. Chavalin Svetanant, who taught at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, and is a visiting researcher at the Nichibunken, made a presentation entitled "Japanese Women in the Texts of Advertisement,"

which is closely linked to the research of Professor Yamada. Dr. Chavalin offered preliminary discussion on source material and methodology on research concerning the representation of women as seen in Japanese media advertisements. Chavalin's presentation added another dimension to the Cairo Conference in that it assured that the content of the Conference was not solely limited to academic exchange on Japanese studies in Japan and the Arab world. Whether this report is viewed from the perspective of its high methodology, or its superior linguistic research, it is a persuasive example of how far Japanese studies have progressed in Asia. Following this, Professor Hosaka Shuji of Kinki University made a presentation entitled "The Influence of Japanese Anime in Arab Media" and gathered the attention of the venue. Professor Hosaka is the premier scholar in Japan on the Arab media as well as on the representation of Japan on the internet. He provided a comprehensive report on the reception and use of Japanese anime and manga on the Arabic language internet. In a thorough investigation of popular culture in the Arab world, he revealed the influence of Japanese anime and manga, and provided several insightful examples. This attempt represents a foray into a largely untouched area of research by Arab scholars of Arab and Japanese culture, as well as Japanese scholars of Arab and Japanese culture.

The fourth session was entitled "Studies in Linguistics and Literature" in which case studies on each field of Japanese research were presented. The session started off with Majima Ayu's (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, Nichibunken) "Paradoxical Discourse on Body and 'Beauty' Among Male Intellectuals in Early 20th Century Japan." In her presentation, she took up the issue of imitation in the bodily culture of the Meiji elites in regards to Western style, focusing particularly on Western dress and facial hair. She demonstrated that this fashion was used to create a distinction between themselves and the Chinese immigrants and Japanese migrant workers. Finally, she considered the history of the rise and fall of the imitation of bodily culture within the "civilizing" process.

In the next session the most recent research from the Japanese Language Department of the Cairo University Faculty of Arts was presented. Ahmad Fathi of Cairo University, in his paper "The 'Post War Phenomena' and the 'Defeated Nation Syndrome' in Japanese Literature: Has It Really Come to an End?" explicated the discourse surrounding the term "Post War." Maher El-Sherbini (Cairo University) presented a paper entitled "Transitive and Intransitive Verbs in the Modern Japanese Language," in which he raised several questions that arise from the application of the concept of "transitive and intransitive" in Japanese grammar. In the next

presentation “Model of Language Reform in Japan: Its Significance to the Egyptian Language Condition,” Adel Amin Saleh of Cairo University considered the historical formation of the modern Japanese language, and discussed its impact as a model of language reform for Egypt. Karam Khalil of Cairo University, in his presentation “Suicide in Modern Japanese Literature,” related the many instances of Japanese literati or intellectuals who committed suicide and relates the problem with the current phenomena of rising suicide rates in Japan, and considers this in the context of a major societal problem. Professor Isam Hamza of Cairo University actively participated in making comments throughout this session and others, contributing to lively discussions.

The fifth session was entitled “Japanese Religiosity in Comparative Perspectives.” Muhammad Afifi, Professor of Cairo University, Department of History of the Faculty of Arts, presented a paper entitled “Observations on the Introduction of Catholicism to Egypt and Japan: A Comparative Approach,” in which he considered from a comparative angle the differing religious environments and systems that gave rise to the differences between the Japanese and Egyptian reception of Christianity. In the presentation entitled “Syncretism or Alternativization? Some Thoughts on the Reception of Christianity and Religious Trends in Modern Japan” Timothy D. Kern (Nichibunken) examined the appropriate conceptualization necessary to describe the particular Japanese reception of Christianity. Ikeuchi Satoshi presented a paper entitled “Sufism and Islamic Philosophy in the Work of Izutsu Toshihiko: A Japanese Way of Understanding Islam.” In his paper he points out how the works of Izutsu Toshihiko’s works overwhelmingly informed the understanding of Islam particularly among intellectuals. In addition, Professor Ikeuchi also argued how Izutsu’s particular understanding of Islam, which developed continually during his lifetime, was limited to Sufism and Islamic Philosophy.

Imatani Akira (Nichibunken) read the paper “The Five Temples (Gozan) and the Ruling Authority during the Muromachi Period: A Comparison with the Court of the Mamalik Sultan of Cairo” in which the relationship between the doctrine of the Zen school with the authority of the Muromachi Bakufu was examined. It was compared with the relationship between the medieval Egyptian Mamalik Sultan and Ulama. Kojima Yasunori (International Christian University) presented a paper entitled “Islamic Thought and Neo-Confucianism: Mapping Intellectual History: Chu Hsi, Wang Yangming, and the Sorai Schools as seen in the Mirror of Islamic Thought.” Professor Kojima responded to Professor Ikeuchi’s presentation, jokingly confessing

that as a “Japanese intellectual” he intended to understand Islamic culture by relying exclusively on the works of Izutsu. Following on Karam Khalil’s presentation, he joked again saying that he “wanted to commit suicide.” The classification of Islamic thought according to Izutsu, namely, the “internal way” and the “external way” was a great stimulus to the methodology for understanding the history of thought. He also sought to apply a similar division to East Asian Neo-Confucianism.

This report is a collection of the research and findings from the presentations of the Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies. The papers included were revised in accordance with the comments and insights gained through the panel discussion sessions.

In this report the various papers of the Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies have been divided into four parts. In the first part, “Comparative Studies in Civilizations and Modernities: Japan, the West and the Arab World” includes the papers from sessions one and two that have been revised after the input from the discussion sessions. Due to his premature and tragic death, Professor Sonoda Hidehiro could not complete the revision of his presentation. Therefore, we have included in this collection the pre-planned draft of his presentation entitled “Modernity through Westernization: The Case of Japan.”

The second part includes papers written by faculty in the Department of Japanese Language, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University. In the third part, “New Horizons in Studies of Popular Culture” are included papers that deal with the interest surrounding Japanese anime and manga throughout the world, as well as television commercials as a subject of academic research. The fourth part, “Intellectual History of Japan in the Light of Islam” includes papers that provide a new approach to understanding Japanese thought through a comparative study with Islamic thought, as well as the topic of how Japanese thought has changed through contact with the Arab world. This part was intended to highlight the character of the symposium.

This report does not include everything in the symposium, however it can be considered as the “fruits” of the knowledge gained through the presentations and discussion sessions of the Cairo Conference on Japanese Studies. On the one hand it highlights the level and state of Japanese studies in Egypt, and on the other hand, it provides an opportunity for the Japanese scholars to contribute to Japanese studies within the milieu of mutual cooperation and influence with Egypt.