

General Discussion

Ikuya Tokoro: Now, we would like to start the final part of today's symposium. Well, so far we have discussed basically according to the each nation states/countries; the session one is for Indonesia and Malaysia, the session two is for the Philippines, and the session three is for Thailand. However, in this session, we would like to have more general discussion on entire Southeast Asian region as a whole from transnational and/or comparative perspectives. I think in the previous sessions, we have already had some of the transnational context or comparative dimension. As in the morning session, there is an interesting presentation—Dr. Hisyam's presentation which touches on the issue of the transnational connection—for example, the provincial government of South Sulawesi has conducted a research in Malaysia about the implementation of Shari'a and so on.

And just last session also the Professor Omar has raised the issue of the transnational connection between Patani and neighboring countries like Myanmar, and/or even the Indonesian students went to Patani for the study of Islam and so on. For example, in the case of the session for the Philippines, we also have program on the implementation of the Shari'a or legal aspect and so on.

Well, in this session, we would like to have much more time for inviting the questions and comments from the floor. But before that, please allow me to invite two commentators, namely Professor Masato Iizuka and Professor Ko Nakata. Firstly, I would like to introduce briefly about Professor Masato Iizuka. Actually, he is my colleagues in this ILCAA, this institute. And Professor Masato Iizuka is a specialist on Islam, especially in the Middle East, Arab World. But at the same time, he has been to several countries in Southeast Asia. Therefore, I think his comment would be good starting point for our general discussion. Now, may I now invite Dr. Iizuka-san to start the comments please?

Masato Iizuka: Thank you, Professor Tokoro. Unfortunately I catch a bad cold

and must apologize for my terrible voice, but I will do my best. First of all I would like to express my deep gratitude to all presenters and commentators. Six of leading Southeast Asian researchers argued their cases with varying combinations of evidence and analysis, and presented us with some of new arguments. And each comments including Professor Omar Farouk's one raised a number of important and interesting questions.

As Professor Tokoro introduced me, I am a researcher on the relationship between Islam and politics in the contemporary Middle Eastern countries and have written some articles on the implementation of Shari'a there. Therefore, Dr. Hisyam's paper on the implementation of Shari'a is very interesting especially for me because of the common situation between Indonesia and most of Arab Muslim countries. If borrowing his expression, in both cases, while the governing power has been unwilling to let their countries turn into Islamic states, the push from the religiosity seems to have prevented them from turning their countries into a completely secular state. We may say that when it comes to the implementation of Shari'a, the argument becomes most controversial among Egyptian nationals, and the situation is mostly the same in other Middle Eastern countries.

Thus the comparative studies would be very useful both for us, although Arab governments are extremely centralized. Frankly speaking, there is no room for local autonomy in Arab countries. I am very surprised that local government of South Sulawesi can introduce Shari'a regulation independently. No local power can pursue such a policy in most Arab countries. However we can find a parallel phenomenon in Arab federal country like United Arab Emirates. There local power can introduce much stricter Shari'a regulation in Sharjah, one of the Emirate of UAE.

But the difference between Southeast Asia and the Middle East attracts more of our attention. As Professor Tokoro introduced, I am very much interested in the contemporary situation surrounding Muslims in general, such as "the global war on terrorism" and what is called "Islamophobia" phenomenon.

Therefore, I've been to Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, India, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and even to Australia, North American, European countries since September 2001 to make interviews with Muslim people. Based on those interviews, I believe that most of papers in this symposium could contribute not only to the academic society but also all Muslims living today, since in these days Muslims are obliged to live as minority. Although their religious population is the third biggest in the world, Muslims are minority in terms of power politics now, while the United States, EU countries, China and Russia formulate the major powers of global politics. Therefore their relationship with non-Muslim majority becomes more and more important now.

But quite unfortunately Middle Eastern Muslims are not used to live as minorities. With no doubt they have a long tradition to live with non-Muslims, because there are significant numbers of non-Muslims in their own countries. However with the exception of Lebanese case, Muslims are always majority in the Middle East both in number and political power.

On the other hand, Muslims living in some of the Southeast Asian countries have long history of living as minorities. And now the situation surrounding Muslims all over the world becomes very similar to the Southeast Asian case. Therefore today all Muslims could learn a lot of lessons from Southeast Asian experience, I think. For example, Datu Mastura's suggestion that the traditional Islamic concepts of "Dar al-mu'ahada", "Dar al-sulh", "Maslaha mursala" and "darura" can be applied to reach some compromise in peace negotiation might give some inspiration to the Palestinian resistance movements, especially Hamas's reinterpretation of its jihad theory, although Palestinians lack the third party like Malaysia. For Palestinians the third party would be only the United States but it did not work well as a third party, as in the case of Malaysia.

Another important lesson from the presented papers is directly related to how to deal with "the global war on terrorism" and "Islamophobia" phenomenon. Dr. Abubakar's paper says "the state of war for centuries was, and still is, the source of the underdevelopment of Sulu society as well as the alienation and

antagonism between the Sulus and other segments of what is now the Philippine national community". It reminds me of an impressed placard of 2005 carried by Indonesian demonstrators protesting against the Danish cartoon which insulted Prophet Muhammad. We read on the placard: "freedom of speech and the global war on terrorism = the global war on Islam". They criticized both "the global war on terrorism" and "freedom of speech," since the so-called "freedom of speech" can easily attack the "Islamic" target worldwide.

We can imagine that the war on terrorism, hand in hand with the so-called "freedom of speech," may well cause the disastrous results of the spread of hatred and antagonism among non-Muslims against any type of "Islamic" identification, and one day any group with "Islamic" stigma might find themselves in a condition of daily disputes, alienation, and underdevelopment like Sulu Muslims.

To prevent all Muslims from bearing more antagonisms under the circumstance of the ongoing "war on terrorism" we should learn a lot from Southeast Asian brothers and sisters who have long lived with non-Muslim majority. Thank you for your attention.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much Iizuka-san. As you noticed, his voice is not so clear but his comments are very clear. Thank you very much. Now, I would like to invite Professor Nakata or Dr. Hassan Nakata from the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR) in Doshisya University. As a professional researcher and as a converted Muslim himself, he has a distinguished knowledge of both Islam and Muslim society, especially on its political and legal issues.

Ko Nakata: Thank you very much for introducing me. My individual field for Islamic political thought, I wrote my topic on political philosophy of Ibn Taimiyah in Cairo University and I extend my research field on contemporary Islamic movement and also on Islamic Area studies also.

My first comment and question is about Darul Islam movement. We cannot find any dissident group who could continue their rules based on Islamic principles in Muslim world—all over the Muslim world except the Darul Islam movement. In Middle East, we have never seen such a dissident group. It's continued around 10 years. We cannot find even—even one year we cannot find. Although there are so many places or regions in which there is no centralized governance in Middle East, but we cannot find even in such place a dissident group can continue to resist central government based on Islamic principle. So Darul Islam movement is very important, not only in Southeast region but also in Islamic area study also. But unfortunately, as far as I know, there is no studies about Darul Islam movement in Islamic area.

As for Dr. Azizah, I want to ask about the inter-religious marriage. As you know, Southeast Asia known as tolerant Islam but in terms of fixed Islamic jurisprudence the dominant school of Southeast Asia is Shafi school and Shafi is very peculiar in this respect

But I want to ask if there are any attempts to criticize this Shafi school's opinion about excluding contemporary Christian from the ahl dhimma.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Well, since our time is very limited, I would like to put it in this way; I think the comments or question by Professor Nakata is more specific about towards Dr. Hisyam and Dr. Azizah. So I would like to invite a short answer first from Dr. Hisyam and Azizah Kassim first. And after that, I would like to invite anyone from the panelist to respond to the comments by Iizuka-san's much more general comments. Is that okay? So may I invite short responses to the questions Professor Nakata?

Muhamad Hisyam: I think I learned very much from this symposium. I am impressed that all people in the symposium talk about the same subject, that there so many problems raised when Islam encounter with the state. There are problems on law, on leadership, on sovereignty such as those Professor Matstura dis-

cussed in the Philippines, on society, on politics and so forth. These happened in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand I thing. And then, what we can do with these? As the scholars and as the researchers I think we have so many “home works”. We should conduct more researches on these subjects. For questions by Professor Nakata on Darul Islam, to what extend this movement existed? Darul Islam in my sense is a military movement, or a rebellion to the state of Indonesia. The goal of this rebellion is to sift the Republic of Indonesia to be Islamic state, in which the shari’a of Islam can be totally implemented. This movement has been subjugated in 1962. As a movement however, Darul Islam sometimes reemerged, but configured a moral rather than political. In fact, although Indonesia is not the Islamic state, some significant aspects of Islam are implemented by the state. There is Islamic court of justice, of which the quarrels of marriage, family, descent, wakaf and inheritance of Muslims to be judged. Islamic schools for all levels established by government, including training schools for Islamic teachers. Concerning with terrorist movement, I suppose that there is no relation with Darul Islam but with radical movement in the Middle East rather, or transnational movement that based in the Middle East. In Southeast Asia, I think, this movement is organized by Jamaah Islamiyah that operates in Indonesia, Singapore, South Thailand and South Philippines. Mostly of the bombers in Indonesia are formerly members of jihadis in Afganistan. They were recruited by transnational jihadis movement. And I think as of my smile, thankful to all of the commentators. Thank you very much.

Ikuya Tokoro: Okay, now I would like to invite Professor Azizah to respond to the questions by Nakata-san.

Azizah Kassim: Well you are right. In Malaysia, we Muslims are not allowed to marry other ahliil-kitab... the Christians and Jews. But if I understand correctly, that is the prerogative of the men only. Men can marry these women (Jews and Christians)—I mean traditionally. But somehow it is not so now in Malaysia. And

I am made to understand that the other ahlil-kitab refers to the original Christians but the people (Christians) that we have now are no longer original. They cannot trace their descent. So therefore it is not allowed here. You are very right.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Well, may I invite Datu Mastura first, and then Professor Abubakar to respond to the comments by Professor Iizuka? His comments touch on Southeast Asia and also on your presentation, so Datu Mastura, please.

Datu Michael Mastura: Thank you Mr. Chairman. On the question of theory of jihad, the late Salamat Hashim was an Al-Azhar graduate and founder of the MILF. He looks at jihad more of a principle of movement rather than theory. That's why we are as lawyers also involved in Shari'a. I have drafted the family court less hudud (criminal law). That's the reason why we moved into political theory through agreement like the Madina contract where there were Jews and Christians. In short, you are correct about Southeast Asian being more creative than the Middle East.

Also Saudi Arabia is actually a combination of the Hanbali school of thought that Abd al-Wahab infused into the Wahabi movement, which is of course understandable if you are studying the development of fiqhi or jurisprudence. But there is, I think, a contextual lesson from this trend even if you don't take it as a puritan movement but rather as a reaction to the coming of the Western powers. And therefore the late Salamat and our lawyers, the Ulema within the Central Committee, we've taken from the structure of all these from that which is not prohibited, but which is allowed. That way the frameworks will be wider and broader than Wahabbis thinking and reaction to the west. I am sorry to quote some of the specific principles in jurisprudence. To put it in five simple sentences is very difficult.

So our statement is that's why we are not aspiring for puritanical state structure in Islam because that's very difficult to set up. May be we will need another

law, a more practical regulation. What we are aspiring for is that principle will be worked out through these associative arrangements because the Philippine state, as a declared principle, is a secular entity. Although it's secular, you know that the Church in the Philippines is very very powerful, very strong, and the State precisely as Professor Abubakar has traced the genealogy is a colonial state based on the Catholic theory, which Spain held. That's why we can have a continuity and disconnectedness.

The second is from the question of global trend related to the presentation. There is what is called a theory of third generation war where you cannot identify who is doing it or perpetrators or with whom, in the absence of a party claiming to represent the insurgent leaders, the state can negotiate. That has happened to Thailand of because of the theory of counter-insurgency in the beginning. "That if you make the Thais rich, they will be happy, there will be no inhibition, there will be no resentment." Now there is the economic approach to the struggle of the minorities [which] can be done through economic amelioration or upliftment. That is proven wrong. That's what we thought of the Malaysian facilitator's visit at first. "You become rich and you will happy, you will not fight for a separate state." So we said, "No that's all wrong, because struggle does not depend on our being rich. We are very rich in terms of our soil, our resources, but we are very poor in terms of drawing of political power in Darul Islam. Thank you.

Ikuya Tokoro: Professor Abubakar, please.

Asiri Abubakar: I will make it very brief. I will take the issue of Muslims in South-east Asia as minorities, like the Muslims in the Philippines. Muslims constitute the majority of the population of maritime Southeast Asia. But Muslims in the Philippines have now become conscious of being minorities since the time they were included in the Philippine state system. But one thing interesting about the Muslims in the Philippines (or the Moros) is that they have successfully de-

fended Islam and their homeland, around one-third of the national territory of what is now the Philippines, against the onslaught of Spanish colonialism for more than 300 years. And the struggle to defend Moro homeland goes on today. It is also interesting to note that Moro territories today include parts of strategic sea lanes through which international trade and commerce passed and vital resources- like gas and oil. For centuries Islam and the sea lanes served as bridges for Muslim minorities in the Philippines to reach out to the largely Islamized maritime world of Southeast Asia and the rest of the Islamic world, especially the Arab world. Yet, it's also Islam, mainly pressure from the Arab world, that moderated the demand of the Moro separatists to settle for autonomy instead of independence from the Philippines. Thank you very much.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Now, I would like to open the discussion to the floor, to the general public. In the previous session, we didn't have enough time for discussion. So is there anyone who wants to raise questions or comments?

Omar Farouk: I have four points to make. I think we have to understand Islam in order to understand the Muslims, number 1. Number 2, Shari'a has to be understood beyond its legalistic definition. Number 3, Islam in Southeast Asia— I mean, if we want to understand Islam in Southeast Asia, we should also try to understand Islam in Cambodia, in Myanmar, in communities which may be not as controversial as the Philippines or Thailand. I think that's very important. And finally, I think recent discourses on contemporary Islam tend to overlook the role of Islam in Africa and I think that's a big mistake. I have had the chance of at least observing Islam in Nigeria and I think there are more similarities between Islam in Nigeria and Southeast Asia than the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Thank you very much.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Well, not all of the audiences here are

Southeast Asian specialist. So, we also welcome the very simple or very basic question. Please don't hesitate to make a very simple or easy questions relating to Islam in Southeast Asia. We also welcome any specific questions to each presenters to Dr. Hisyam or Dr. Kassim, Dr. Mastura, Professor Abubakar. Is there any question?

Hisao Tomizawa: My name is Professor Tomizawa from the University of Shizuoka. Today our attention has been focused more on the political stabilization and peace building in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, I would like to know whether there are any attempts to search for alternative way of pursuing a political stabilization, for example, in terms of economy, because I am presently interested in the halal industry phenomenon in this region. The halal industry is developing quite energetically in Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines and so on. Thailand presents especially an interesting case in this sense, since, for instance, some people in the Southern Thailand is pursuing a way of political stability by promoting an economic development through an experimental introduction of the halal industry into this area. So can I have some comments from the presenters on this kind of alternative way of searching for political stability in this region?

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Actually, Professor Tomizawa is one of our ISEA members. And his interest is much more economical aspects of Islam in Southeast Asia like halal industry or Islamic banking and so on. So anybody from the panel would like to respond?

Datu Michael Mastura: First, there is a question, what is private and what is public. That question is important because the very foundation is Islam in public life is facilitated by many states. The feeling that Islam will intrude into public life is a no-no in the context of secularism. What is the reason? Because Europe progressed that way by being turned off from Christianity. Their wars were based on

religious war.

When I drafted the law on Islamic banking we were ahead in fact than Malaysia. I went to research by observing the Faisal Islamic banks. And please note that Prince Faisal was not allowed to operate its bank in Saudi Arabia. He was asked as a brother to the King to set up banks on Islam-based principles—one in Sudan and the other in Cairo. Sheikh Kamel, who later on also had organized Albaraka group, was dealing with me at Al-Amanah Islamic Investment as they wanted him to invest in the Philippines. And again all they could do was money changing—higher level than the money changer in the airport.

So, back to the question of what is private make sense because banks in private hands seem to be more tolerated. If you look at the Islamic bank as instituted by the OIC [it] is less of an investor role but more of rescuing operation. We don't talk of bargaining this time for profit-sharing or interest-free banking. This is securing risk-taking. The other area is that of bringing up risk investment in Malaysia because it became a state system of insurance. So the public-private debate was eliminated because the State of Malaysia itself decided to sponsor it as an institution building mechanism. Therefore, they are more successful in the sense [that] they have gone on to insurance or Takaful. And from Takaful also little businesses or small businesses survive alone converting pawnshops into Islam-based transactions. And then later they went into opening "windows" for Islamic banking in conventional banks.

You can see the success from that story is illustrated by the fact that they are not affected by these convoluted IMF's Bretton Woods problem across the United States of America itself. Finally, when it comes to halal transaction there are other practical considerations. My son is involved in trade talks on ethically prohibited contamination or "nagish" which he is emphasizing in the halal-haram prohibition on food. That brings up the question therefore of labels. In other words, like toothpaste contents, we have to do something; it has be looked out in terms of its ingredients. But I think Japanese would be very successful in this because you are very good in taking the appropriate measures when it comes

to contents and labels. I am sure what is difficult with the Japanese is according to Muslim preachers (da'i) the most difficult people to convert to Islam are the Japanese. And why is this so? I want to ask this question but you can say: "We are already very peaceful, Islam is not very peaceful, you know." But we are a group of one descent people. Thank you very much.

Ikuya Tokoro: What about Dr. Azizah or Omar Farouk, I think Malaysia is one of the center of the Islamic financial system and also the halal industry. Would you want to add something to the statement?

Azizah Kassim: Oh, just a small comment may be. I think there's also the Al-Rahnu (Muslim micro credit facility). But that is only implemented in Kelantan.

Datu Michael Mastura: This is very strict.

Azizah Kassim: No, it's a very quick way of taking a loan without interest for very small businesses, you know. Women (traders) for examplethey need about 200 (Ringgit) for the day. They go and give their jewelry, and take the 200 (Ringgit as a loan) and at the end of the day they pay back.

With regards to Islamic banking in Malaysia, it is very very popular with non-Muslims already. In fact most banks now have an Islamic banking section. And they have all kinds of products now. There will be insurance and the housing loans. And (as for) the insurance, most of us also have turned to Takaful simply because Takaful is the only insurance that gives you money back because it's profit sharing. So I stop all the other insurance and moved to Takaful because it's the only insurance that gives you a cheque every year.

Of course apart from that, the halal / haram thing, you know. Of course this is very important and now we are trying to creat the halal hub. The reason is we believe that there is a very large market for it, especially in Saudi Arabia at the Haj and so on. But of course not to forget our Tabung Haji which is the most

successful Pilgrimage Board. I was telling Tomizawa-san I only knew how successful the Tabung Haji is when I went for the Haj. And it has been praised as one of the well regulated pilgrimage funding because it caters for every need of the pilgrims. And also there is an element of cross-subsidization where the rich (pilgrims) subsidize the Muassasah. So, in that sense, they try to do the social work dimension through religion ... just like the concept of Zakat.

Omar Farouk: I have two points relating to the halal industry not in Malaysia but Thailand. Chulalongkorn University actually established the Center for the Scientific Study of Halal Products and it has been running for about 10 years. So this is basically a Buddhist country taking the initiative. Two, in 2005, when I was covering the Thai elections in Ayutthaya, one of the candidates used this issue: If he were to win, he wanted to develop Ayutthaya, which is somewhere in central Thailand as the halal hub for the world. He lost.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much. Maybe I can invite just one more question or comment from the floor. Anybody? None?

If no more comments, please allow me to invite Professor Nakamura. We have Professor Nakamura here as a participant. We didn't prepare any person beforehand as a speaker of the concluding remarks for this Symposium, but I think he is the best person to make the concluding remarks. He is a founding father of the Study on Islam in Southeast Asia among the Japanese researcher. He is very well known internationally distinguished researcher. He has done an intensive research on Islam in Southeast Asia, especially on the Muhammadiyah movement in Indonesia. Well, Professor Nakamura, or rather I would like to call Nakamura-sansei, because he is one of my guru (teacher) in the study of Islam in Southeast Asia. So, Nakamura-sansei, please.

Mitsuo Nakamura: Thank you Tokoro-san. You are pouring an excessive praise.

Ikuya Tokoro: Well deserved, sir.

Mitsuo Nakamura: As the time is limited, I will make a very short comment on this conference. First of all, my wife Hisako and I have to apologize for our delay in attending this meeting. We couldn't participate in this symposium from the beginning. Hisako is still teaching actively at Bunkyo University and had two lectures this morning, and it took two hours for us to reach here by car. So we missed a lot of good papers and discussions. Now looking at your faces and glancing at your papers, I must congratulate you for a very significant progress you have made in the area of the study on Islam in Southeast Asia. I would like to say that you have come a long way. When I started my work on the Muhammadiyah movement in Indonesian in the early 70s, I was almost minority of one except Hisako.

Study on Islam in Southeast Asia was marginalized in many ways then. Islam or Islamic societies of Southeast Asia were looked down upon as a backward force in terms of modernization. Islam wasn't appreciated at all as a major factor in the region from the perspectives of areas studies of Southeast Asia. As a result, Islam was not given a proper attention in Southeast Asian studies. Also, Islam was marginalized in the social sciences as well. It was the time when a theory of modernization in terms of Walt Rostow or Daniel Lerner was rampant. Secularization or the denial of religion at all including Islam was regarded as a positive factor for modernization. Thus, Muslim societies and Islam in Southeast Asia were many ways marginalized in the academic world.

But since the mid-70's on, with the resurgence of Islam or the reactivation of Islamic societies all over the world, there started a slow change – I should say – reflecting those actual changes in terms of academic concerns. And I was fortunate to come to work with a group of Southeast Asian Muslim intellectuals including Michael Mastura, Omar Farouk, Sharon Siddique, Osman Bakar, and the late Nurcholish Madjid. With them, I organized a small seminar in 1999 – now it's almost 10 years ago.

The seminar was entitled “Islam and Civil Society: Messages from Southeast Asia”, sponsored by the Sasagawa Peace Foundation, a private foundation in Japan. So, the sponsorship was private and the meeting was privately funded. But now, look, this conference is held at a leading national university in Japan, financially supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of the Government of Japan. So I say, it’s a long way you have come. It is not only an academic advancement but also a social advancement as well. In that seminar in 1999, the organizers including Omar and myself wanted to invite a number of leading Muslim intellectuals from Southeast Asia. But in the actual meeting, we were missing two important persons. One was Anwar Ibrahim because he was in jail. Another was Abdurrahman Wahid. He was absent because he was elected president of the Republic of Indonesia. And now you are missing Chaiwat, too, in this conference, but you have succeeded to have a number of distinguished Islamic scholars here.

Southeast Asia is still in a volatile situation. But I hope the kind of progress you have made through this project and conference would contribute to bring this part of the world, Southeast Asia, as well as the entire world to a better place for the mankind. I remember the words of my guru, Wilfred Cantwell Smith, a great scholar of Islamic studies of Canada, who once said to the effect: The intellectual progress of the mankind is made by looking at ourselves, especially the Muslims as some of us believing in Islam. We are studying Islam and Muslims — we, in this case means non-Muslims, as some part of the mankind studying some other part of us. So, we are studying the otherness of ourselves but also the ourness of the others. Those were the words of Cantwell Smith. I believe that kind of intellectual mutual understanding would be very vital to bring this world to a more peaceful situation and a more prosperous situation. And I again congratulate you for the very noble endeavor you are engaged in.

Ikuya Tokoro: Thank you very much Nakamura-sansei for your remarks. Thank you very much. Well, this is the end of our official programs of today’s sympo-

sium. Anyway, we strongly hope that you have enjoyed today's symposium, and today's symposium was fruitful and relevant for all of you. And finally I would like to say thank you very much again for your participation, especially for the participant and guests from Southeast Asian countries. Thank you very much.