

There is one thing, Islamic World and Japan have in common, that is both are out of paced by latecoming Western Civilization. Islamic Civilization was undoubtedly the world No.1 while the European peninsula was left in a barbarian stage about one thousand years ago. Japan was densely populated with highly educated people while the American continent was almost vacant some five hundred years ago.

Another thing both have in common is that they suffered a lot from western Civilization. Japan was lost at WWII and occupied by the United States for six years. (just remember, that Japan is the only country that dared to fight against the United State!). Islamic World has been colonized by Western powers for more than a century and became independent as a nation with arbitrary drawn border for the convenience of their interest.

But there is also a difference between Islamic World and Japan. Japan is accustomed to learn from the other culture because it is located at the periphery to the Chinese culture. Chinese characters, Buddhism, Chinese legal system and bureaucracy, almost every cultural component were transported from China. Then Japan felt little difficulties when it came into contact with another powerful culture Western Power. On the other hand, Islamic world used to be the center of the world. Islamic civilization itself is a universal one which includes a wide variety of ethnicity and covers a large area, therefore, it is not strange that it is hard to adopt itself to the western culture or globalization. Western countries were the first to achieve the industrialization. Japan followed and became the world second largest economy. As a result, western countries as well as Japan needed oil, therefore, realized the importance of the middle east. This is the reality,

DINNER SPEECH

FOR THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF DIALOGUE AMONG CIVILIZATION

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Ladies and gentlemen, His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Abdel Ghaffar Minister of state for Foreign Affairs-Kingdom of Bahrain. His Excellency Mr. Yasuaki Ono the Ambassador of Japan, distinguished guests, fellow professors and friends, I feel greatly honored to be here in Bahrain to attend this symposium on the Dialogue among Civilizations, the Islamic World and Japan, and to have a chance to deliver a small address to the whole audience.

I believe this is a precious and valuable occasion where the best lecturers of more than 12 Islamic countries from the middle east get together to meet and talk with Japanese scholars from the far east. And our official language is not Arabic, nor Japanese, but English! This fact symbolizes the current situation of the world. English became the global language, as the British Empire, lately the United States, became the global power. We cannot escape from the globalization.

Although this symposium is conducted under the title of the Dialogue between the Islamic World and Japan, there is the third one that is absent here but still so influential over the other two, that is, western Civilization. Islamic Civilization. Asian Civilization including Japan, and Western Civilization form a triangle which covers the main part of the earth.

found that is guide different from that of God such as Arrha or Jesus Christ though it is translated as gods. Kami or gods means the remarkable performance or achievement of people. So a good fisherman is called kami, a talented singer is also regarded as kami. Surely Japan should have a large number of kami or gods.

This is a small example. I regret that no one among the Japanese intellectuals protested in English against the criticism made by American media. Primer minister mori resigned after a while, and the criticism by the American media was probably use of the reasons for this resignation.

The United states is a valuable partner of Japan for its security. But the American media sometimes shows a biased view. For example, just after September 11th attack, a lot of American people said that this is another pearl Harvor. This remark is embarrassing to Japanese people. Pearl Harvor was an attack made by the military people to the military target. It is a part of war, not terrorism. But in the American context, it seems a little similar to Al Khaida's terrorist attack.. Why do the Americans react spontaneously like that? How could Japanese people understand those who are ready to commit a kamikaze suicide attack to the enemy like Al Khaida group did? Misunderstandings. And what makes the matter worse, Japanese people also started to see themselves just as the western people do instead of explaining themselves in their own terms.

When Yukio Mishima, a famous novelist, committed a Harakiri suicide in Tokyo 1971, and Aum the supreme truth, a "Buddhist" redicalist cult, made a salin gas attack in the Tokyo subway, western media again expressed their reaction of regarding Japanese people as an unimaginably heretic people.

and the foundation for the formation of the triangle above mentioned.

English is not a bad language as far as I know, however, it is designed according to the Christianity. It reflects the western point of view in a way. Sometimes, the use of English language itself will cause misunderstandings. We must be careful for that.

Nevertheless, the media, journalism, and the internet are almost occupied with English language, which means the people with non-English background have relatively less chances to express themselves to the international community.

Furthermore, following my observation, it happens guide often that the most fluent speakers of English in a country are not necessarily the most qualified people to talk about themselves, their own values, ideas, and culture.

More than a year ago, Japanese former prime minister Yoshiro Mori was criticized by the American media because he was reported to have said "Japan is the divine country". This phrase reminded the western people of the Japanese past minimalism, fanaticism and invasion in the pre-war a nightmare. The speaker of such phrase was judged as having no lesson from the past bitter experience. But the original phrase in Japanese was not "Japan is the divine country" instead "Japan is a country of gods" is literally translated. There is no blaming for the phrase "a country of gods" or kami no kuni because it is true. Japan has been dwelt with a large number of gods or kami, which are enshrined at many places. And I checked the definition of gods or kami given in an authentic text of Norinaga, the founder of Japanese classical study school, and