

**REPORT OF THE 3RD SESSION
“CO-EXISTENCE AND INTERACTION
BETWEEN ISLAMIC AND ARABIC
COUNTRIES AND JAPAN”**

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In this session, most of the scholars from both side, Islamic countries and Japan, expressed their strong intellectual concern about the opposite civilization as an alternative type of experience of encountering with Western civilization. Islamic countries and Japan have lots of things in common such as religious tradition of ancient origin other than Christianity, long-lasting prosperity and high culture in ancient and medieval ages, and the threat of colonization by Western powers in the modern era. Japan was often referred to as a successful counterpart of non-Western type of modernization by Islamic scholars.

Then, differences between Islamic and Japanese civilizations were discussed. There is a contrast between them as to the achievement in industrialization, building a nation-wide education system, coordination of traditional and modern cultures, developing a democratic political system, and so forth. Some of the Islamic scholars said they had eager desire to know the secrets of Japanese success. Others agreed that they had only Japan. Everybody acknowledged that there is an information gap between both sides, and that is why this dialogue is worth continuing.

As to the foundations of Japanese modernization, its background was introduced by Japanese scholars such as, the role of Confucian schools which developed an Emperor-centered theory of political authority, the prevailing elementary educational system before and after the Meiji Restoration including calculation and reading training, the establishing of work ethics among ordinary people which owes to the reformation of Buddhism started in Kamakura period, and so on.

The significance of coexistence of Islamic and Japanese civilization was also discussed in this session. It was traced back to the repeated encounters among civilizations upon the Eurasian continent, and its contemporary reestablishment was also proposed. It was agreed that the closer tie between Islamic and Japanese civilizations based on the mutual understanding of both people will contribute to the building of a more harmonious world.

In order to promote a further dialogue, some preliminary steps such as publication of the translation of major classics of both sides, organizing a research groups focusing some specific topics, writing articles before the conference and exchanging them among the participants, and so on are pointed out to be necessary.

Finally, a direct and continuous dialogue between Islamic countries future. Such dialogue was regrettably rare in the past while the economic relationship was evaluated with the first priority. Dialogue between Islamic and Japanese civilization would counterbalance the current over-Western-centered international community.