

DIALOGUE



Cultural Diversity and Globalization
The Arab-Japanese Experience

Proceedings
of the International Symposium

Cultural Diversity and Globalization
The Arab-Japanese Experience
a Cross-Regional Dialogue

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Preface

The symposium on “*Cultural Diversity and Globalization: the Arab-Japanese Experience, a Cross-Regional Dialogue*”, organized on 6 - 7 May 2004 at UNESCO in Paris with the purpose of promoting dialogue and cooperation between the Arab world and Japan, gave its participants an opportunity to lay the groundwork for thinking about the key concepts enshrined in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by the General Conference at its 31st session, on 2 November 2001.

This innovative, unfamiliar view of the world demands an initial tour of the boundaries of its field of investigation. Sharing experiences, exploring the notion of cultural diversity in the face of globalization, and defining an epistemology of intercultural dialogue: these were the avenues that it was hoped would lead to discussions from which a Theory of Dialogue might result, a theory whose application would make the idea of intercultural dialogue a reality.

The first object was to show that experiences could be shared between two regions apparently worlds apart in culture and geography but whose histories can in fact readily be compared. Both in Japan and in the Arab world, the encounter with the West was a violent affair; but the two worlds reacted in different ways. Moving quickly into the modernity of the third millennium, Japan exemplifies success. The Arab world, despite spectacular progress, is still searching for its role in the world.

Within a single country, different aspects of culture may be more or less open to other cultures according to circumstances: in the case of women’s role in society, and the wearing of the veil, the situation in Arab countries is not as uniform as it appears. The adoption of Western science and technology did not occur in the same way: it was an *alien* knowledge and technology that began to be transferred to the Arab world at the start of the nineteenth century, whereas in the last quarter of that century Japan set about mastering the knowledge and technology of *aliens*. A century later, however – since the events of 11 September 2001 – the image of the Arab world has darkened, and a hostile prejudice has become widespread in the West, not least thanks to its media, and fosters a conflation of the Arab world with fundamentalism and terrorism.

Japan’s success is truly astonishing; but for the causes of this “miracle” we need to look beyond Japanese culture, which resembles many others in being dynamic and open to the contingent processes of borrowing and consolidating what it has acquired, and in moulding the spirit of the men and women who make up a social human capital on which the country can rely in all circumstances. The causes of this unprecedented process of development are to be found in the political, military and institutional reforms, the industrialization and railway-building which began right from the start of Japan’s transformation in the Meiji era, on 8 November 1867. Culture, traditions and religions clearly cannot explain a region’s or a country’s successes or setbacks in terms of social progress, economic power, development, or modernization. At times they can slow the pace of change, or quicken it: ways of living and thinking, or religions, vary in their ability to withstand the shock of encountering another civilization. There could be forms of modernization not involving “modernity”, as Descartes understood it in the seventeenth century: the taming and ownership of nature. “Modernity” recalls notions of innovation, the ordered accumulation of

knowledge, technological mastery, the creation of a new social and intellectual order. Modernity is a way of living in the world as autonomous beings; and Japan is a living example of such a modernity with its own cultural core, unlike the various other, peripheral instances of modernization which remain under the tutelage of the Western world.

The sharing of experiences in relation to these two regions has brought out a difficulty which it would be as well to avoid when applying the idea of cultural diversity. Though culture and development are inseparable, culture alone cannot wholly explain the flowering or stunting of a process of modernization. And that is why cultural diversity, understood as the common heritage of humanity, must be accompanied by the notion of sustainability in its various aspects, including political, ecological, aesthetic, economic, and jurisprudential sustainability.

Giving cultural diversity its due must be conducive to peace within countries, between regions, and throughout the world. In the history of humanity, globalization had already appeared in many forms before the one recognized today.

This symposium was not, therefore, just one more debate seeking to analyse the current process of globalization, its marginalizing of certain cultures, its hallmark internationalization of the economy, the standardization of lifestyles to which it leads or the inward-turning reaction provoked by its inhuman face. The symposium's subtitle indicated the scope of the discussion: sharing experiences, setting up a dialogue between two regions of the world whose parallels with each other have often been ignored. Given that each region has its geographical, historical and cultural identity, how are found the links, the common heritage to be shared between two worlds, each of which has its own characteristic value system and so rich a past? The idea of seclusion, of which the closing of frontiers can be one form, is certainly a path that needs exploring. For the West, one form of globalization has been travelling to discover distant worlds, trying to bring "civilization" to every land set foot upon by seafarers, explorers or missionaries; but the Arab world and Japan had each of them, in the course of their history, encountered these navigators criss-crossing the world's oceans, well before the nineteenth century: as early as the sixteenth, traders from Portugal, Holland, England and Spain, and missionaries too, had disembarked on the shores of Japan. But from the start of the Edo period (1603) and the rise of the Tokugawa Shoguns (1603-1867), Japan closed its doors for over two centuries, and it was not until the treaty of Kanagawa was signed on 31 March 1854 by the last Shogun of the Edo period, under the threatening guns of the United States navy, that the borders were opened once more; other Western powers won the right to land in Japan shortly afterwards.

As for the Arab world, it had already encountered globalization, as in Egypt under foreign domination, where real power was held by the Mamluks while the Ottomans were the central authority. The British were at the gates, however, watching for their opportunity, as well as the French who established themselves for the last three years of the eighteenth century – but soon afterwards Muhammad `Alī made the most of a troubled time, and in alliance with some local clans seized power and kept it until the middle of the nineteenth century.

Close or open their frontiers as they might under their various rulers, these two worlds really had no choice: for them, at times, globalization meant loss of sovereignty and colonization, though also modernization and a meeting with the West.

But have they lost their distinctive cultural characteristics because of this?

It may be that cultural identity is, from one point of view, much more of an identification on the part of subjects than something whose content is fixed for all time. In this sense one ought not to be unduly alarmed at relationships with other, dominant cultures or ways of thinking; for a subordinate culture will still be capable of influencing and even undermining the dominant one.

These two worlds (which really do constitute two civilizations, with their own centuries-old knowledge and manners, their traditions and forms of social organization), have in the past had some contacts with each other which have left their trace in travellers' tales.

Perhaps the imagination is where one should look first for the traces of meetings and exchanges, which barely reach the light of day. Could Japan be the "country beyond imagining", the land of silk, or gold, "a country where no stranger has ever set foot", as Ibn Battuta has it? At any rate, there are plenty of Japanese tales of wonder retold in Arab lands from the ninth century onward; and need we mention that utterly characteristic form, the haiku, borrowed from time to time by Arabic poets from Iraq, Syria or Morocco?

Since the nineteenth century, contacts between these two regions have been more prolific because of many travellers, merchants, sailors and envoys; but does that amount to a dialogue between Japan and the Arab world?

Yet here we had already before us, prior to all discussion and under the banner of that art which marries writing to the sense of beauty, the calligraphy of the word "dialogue" itself elegantly inscribed in Japanese and in Arabic, to show a path that could be explored. Calligraphy, indeed, has an important position in both regions: it is a means of self-expression which immediately presents to our eyes some points of mental convergence between the Japanese and Arabic civilizations. So it is that forms of art, scholarship, science and know-how can reveal subjects for dialogue, which could never have been suspected originally.

It has been a challenge to gather around one table experts of every discipline from many different cultural, geographical and linguistic areas, to discuss the points where Japan and the Arab world can meet. The three parts of the symposium: *Sharing the Experience: Modernization in Japan and the Arab World*; *Exploring the Common Goal: Sustaining Cultural Diversity* and *New Avenues to Promote Intercultural Dialogue* are sufficient proof of this.

Indeed, the word "dialogue" is in theory most appropriate to describe the nature of this brief meeting of minds; a discussion, which transcends all particularities and all frontiers to touch upon what is essential. Dialogue, as Plato shows, is a perilous enterprise: it gets speakers into difficulties, forcing them all back on to their ultimate resources in the search for self-knowledge and mutual understanding. Intercultural dialogue, the foundation of that cultural diversity commended by UNESCO, preserves this idea of a "perilous enterprise"; for that is the only way to demonstrate that in this world, where some prophesy a *clash of civilizations*, dialogue may take different forms and have different applications, but the essential aim is still to reach out, to go beyond respect and tolerance for others and seek to get to know them.

The recommendations from this symposium show that there are possible paths of dialogue between worlds where there are no conflicts. These paths can be used as examples for other regions where tensions of all kinds remain, and wars. For dialogue in action, as recommended by UNESCO, aims at peace in human

hearts and minds, at cohesion within societies and at peace everywhere it is needed. Understood in this way, intercultural dialogue is a high road to forestalling conflicts or defusing them by negotiation. What is more, new forms of *cooperation* can be imagined and applied, outside the conventional patterns of Western aid to the least-developed countries; Japan now provides an example of a new form of *cooperation*, a dialogue in action with the Arab countries and other countries around the world. The aims are not those of the imperialist or colonialist, nor the mission a “civilizing” one: the object is to understand other countries’ needs and to give due weight to what each can bring to the establishment of a sustainable relationship. The issue is the recognition of other countries as partners for exchange in many fields.

Welcoming Address

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura

Director-General of the United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO)

Minister,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you this morning to UNESCO, on the occasion of the international symposium entitled *Cultural Diversity and Globalization: the Arab-Japanese Experience, a Cross-Regional dialogue*. It may seem paradoxical, or at least a little curious, to place side by side the Arab world and Japan, when it would seem that everything divides them, whether it be language, culture or religion. UNESCO has emphasized ever since its foundation the importance of developing dialogue as a means of bringing about understanding between cultures and civilizations. That is why I welcomed the proposal by the Arab Group in UNESCO and by the Ambassador of Japan to organize a symposium – conceived from a totally new and original angle – on the dialogue between the Arab world and Japan, which gives an opportunity to depart from the beaten tracks of dialogue (North-South or East-West) by directing our attention towards cultural entities generally regarded as having little in common. This symposium, which comes within the scope of the Arabia Plan, is the product of assiduous collaboration between the Arab States, Japan and scientists of the two regions who have agreed to lend their support to UNESCO. May I take this opportunity here and now to express my appreciation to you all.

UNESCO wishes, as part of its international mission, to act as a major forum for encounters. Its founders included in its Constitution a fundamental mission for the Organization, i.e. "to develop and to increase the means of communication between [the] peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives". Our Organization has fulfilled this task in various ways. I am thinking, for example, of the UNESCO Collection of Representative Works which was launched as far back as 1948, and which seeks through translation to transpose from their original cultural sphere masterpieces of literature which have not, on account of their language of origin, been accessible to a wide public. It is on this basis that the works of Arab geographers and travellers have been translated into several languages, works such as the *Picture of the Earth* by Ibn Hawqal, or the *Travels* of Ibn Battuta, who is wellknown to all orientalists. We shall be celebrating the seven-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Ibn Battuta in June 2004, an event with which UNESCO will have the pleasure of being associated. This collection also includes a considerable number of the great classics of Japanese literature, such as the *Gengi Monogatari*, an anthology of Japanese poetry and texts on Japanese Buddhism.

Also in the context of intercultural and, in particular, inter-religious dialogue, a Buddhist-Muslim Dialogue was organized at UNESCO Headquarters in May 2003

on the theme *Global Ethics and Good Governance, a Dialogue between Islam and Buddhism*, which provided an opportunity to compare and contrast different cultural systems and civilizations and the contacts and interactions that they have inspired.

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I shall not go into detail on the relations extending over centuries between the Arab world and Japan. The experts who are here will develop that aspect much better than I could. Those relations reveal the changing nature of the cultural links forged in response to political circumstances and reinforced by the interest they aroused, establishing a lasting dialogue. This symposium thus has a double purpose since it covers both the dialogue of cultures and civilizations and the defence of cultural diversity, as defined in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted in 2001.

Your work looks to be full of promise. It will examine fresh ways and means of conducting a dialogue between cultures, founded upon modern experience. The first session will involve a comparison of the processes of modernization in Japan and the Arab world, in particular during the Edo period in Japan and the Ottoman and Mameluk period for the Arab world. The second session will examine how cultural diversity is received and perceived in the Arab world and Japan. How are globalization and the intensification of exchanges which it brings viewed in both areas? What can Japan bring to the Arab world, and vice versa, in this context? Finally, the third session will involve a discussion on the capacity of our societies to open up new paths of dialogue, meeting the double challenge of cultural identity and openness. This challenge is not new. What is new, however, is our capacity to examine all of its implications and to define both the collective and the individual methods that will help to stimulate a form of cultural understanding that has shared loyalties and is open to change in our world. Finally, two great calligraphers, one Japanese and the other Arab, will help us the better to seize this opportunity through demonstrations of their art, a heritage of both cultures. This will show that intercultural communication may develop into the sharing of a common language, through the expression and emotion that such a language induces. I have already received many enthusiastic reactions to the graphic representation of the word "dialogue" in Arabic and in Japanese by the two masters, Shinghai Tanaka and Hassan Massoudy, on the logo of your symposium and the various places where it is reproduced.

I hope that this symposium will provide an opportunity to encourage new forms of exchange, to gain a better understanding of the processes of modernization, to examine more deeply the concept of cultural diversity, to formulate recommendations to promote interregional dialogue and to devise a methodology which could serve as the basis for the development of dialogue between other geographical areas. It has become a matter of urgency for us today to advance our knowledge of other cultures through a recognition of cultural diversity as an essential part of being human. The promotion of intercultural dialogue, the sole guarantee of genuine development and lasting peace, is an opportunity that we must seize. Thank you for doing so today.

Thank you for your attention.

Opening Address

Mrs Atsuko Toyama

Former Minister of Education, Culture, Sports,
Science and Technology and

Advisor to the Minister of Education, Culture,
Sports, Science and Technology, Japan

Mr Koichiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO

Mr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO, and Representative of the Arab Group

Mr Abdulrazzak Al-Nafisi, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Kuwait to UNESCO, and President to the Consultative Committee for the "Arabia Plan"

Mr Teiichi Sato, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO

Distinguished Members of the Audience,

Today, we are gathered here to participate in a very valuable dialogue, and I am most honored to have the opportunity to address you on behalf of the Government of Japan. Before proceeding, I would like to express my deepest respect and appreciation to all the members of the UNESCO Secretariat, the Arab Group, and the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO for the efforts they have made in preparing and organizing this dialogue meeting.

First of all, I would like to emphasize the significance of this direct dialogue between Japan and the Arab world that brings Japan, with its background of Oriental culture and philosophy, together with the Arab world, with its background of Islamic culture and philosophy. In the world today, there are those who argue that the achievement of mutual understanding among civilizations is difficult to realize, but I highly acclaim the intent of this dialogue, which is to elevate the interaction between different cultures to the level of meaningful dialogue.

At one point in my career, I served as the Japanese Ambassador to Turkey. The experiences that I gained in this post have convinced me that efforts made toward promoting inter-cultural understanding and mutual respect for cultures are vital to building new bridges of harmony and co-existence.

As I stand before you today, it is clear to me that the holding of this dialogue is so timely, and therefore I would like to comment briefly on its significance.

Over the past few years, the Government of Japan and the Governments of Arab countries have been striving to bolster inter-regional dialogue in order to strengthen mutual understanding and partnership. To begin with, the *Seminar on the Dialogue among Civilizations: The Islamic World and Japan* was held in Bahrain in March 2002. In the following year, the *Japan-Arab Dialogue Forum* was established and its first meeting was held in Japan in September 2003. During the same month, the Government of Japan dispatched a mission of persons of culture, scholars and researchers, and members of the business community to the countries of the Middle East to promote dialogue with related groups and individuals. Also, symposia were held on such topics as the co-existence of tradition and modernization, and the impact of globalization.

Meanwhile, UNESCO has also been organizing inter-cultural dialogues since last year. In addition to these initiatives, I understand that UNESCO has long been involved in various efforts to promote dialogue between Europe and the Arab region.

In surveying the difficult problems facing the Arab region, I am led to conclude that never has there been such a need as today for dialogue at a deeper level between Japan and the Arab countries, a dialogue to be undertaken with the participation of other regions. I sincerely hope that this dialogue, being held with the participation of Japan, the Arab countries and some European countries, will provide a timely confluence to the efforts and results of past dialogues.

I would also like to draw attention to the subjects of this dialogue, which have been chosen very carefully and appropriately.

The preservation of cultural diversity is one of the most important themes that UNESCO has focused on, while issues pertaining to the process of modernization have been pursued in bilateral dialogues between Japan and the Arab countries. Not only will this dialogue provide an opportunity to comprehensively review these subjects, but I am certain that many new insights into these issues will emerge from these discussions.

It is my understanding that some of the key phrases in this dialogue will be the "role of education in modernization" and "cultural diversity and globalization".

In this connection, there are a couple of specific points that I would like to very strongly emphasize. Firstly, it is very important to discuss the role of education in the process of modernization. Secondly, it is vitally important to discuss cultural diversity and directions for practical dialogue in order to promote the dialogue and the common goals of Japan and the Arab countries.

From the experiences that we have had in Japan, we can unequivocally state that education has an extremely important role to play in modernization. In particular, the realization of equal and universal opportunity in education can have an enormous impact on the modernization of a country by raising the standards of all people. Therefore, I believe it is very significant that, during this dialogue, Japan's historical experiences pertaining to the establishment and development of its education system will be discussed in the context of the conditions that prevailed at the time in Japan.

On the subject of cultural diversity, cultural uniformity is being perceived as a problem that is being exacerbated by the very rapid pace of globalization. But attempts to preserve cultural diversity merely through exclusion and other passive measures are highly problematic. What we really need to do today is to renew our awareness of the diversity of cultures and to understand and respect other cultures. For this purpose, mutual understanding must be promoted through cultural exchange, and steps must be taken for the co-existence and symbiosis of diverse cultures. What Japan and the Arab region must pursue in the future is to promote cultural exchange while identifying directions for preserving cultural diversity.

At the international conference for "Dialogue of Civilization" held at the United Nations University in Tokyo in July 2001, participants discussed the definition of "dialogue." One thing that this conference yielded was the understanding that we need not be threatened by "otherness" if we just discard prejudices and stereotypes

and go forward with dialogue. In such an environment, “otherness” is in fact the source of a richer world. I myself am one who believes in this.

I sincerely hope that this dialogue between Japan and the Arab region will mark a starting point in a new and higher stage of inter-regional cooperation and exchange between us. I eagerly look forward to the fruitful discussions of the participants and hope that such discussions will provide an opportunity for strengthening the bonds between the two regions.

Thank you.

Opening Address

H.E. Mr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan
Ambassador,
Permanent Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO
Chairperson of the Arab Group to UNESCO

Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO,
Mrs Atsuko Toyama, former Japanese Minister of Education,
Mr Ghassan Salamé, former Lebanese Minister of Culture,
Ambassador Teiichi Sato, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO,
Excellencies,
Dear guests, scholars, experts and artists,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to extend to you a very warm welcome on behalf of the Arab group, and I thank you for your participation in the Symposium on the Arab-Japanese Dialogue, which is being held by the Arab group within the framework of the Consultative Committee for the "Arabia Plan", in conjunction with the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO, and under the auspices and with the support of UNESCO, this venerable organization that was founded to deal with matters of the intellect and knowledge within the United Nations system, and to seek out in the sources of human intellect points of encounter, experiences, tolerance and peace. I say points of encounter rather than similarities, because the power of human thought lies in its diversity. In this diversity we find points of encounter between human beings from which all societies and nations may benefit.

We can only arrive at knowledge societies by opening up to the Other through love, and then opening up to the experience of the Other in order to benefit from it.

We cannot devote ourselves to knowledge if we fear it. Fear is the enemy of knowledge, and I am reminded of the injunction of the Prophet Muhammad (God bless him and grant him salvation) to seek knowledge wherever it may be found, even at the end of the earth, among the remotest people at that time: "Seek knowledge, even if it be in China."

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our discussion today is marked by a unique characteristic: it is taking place between two parties that have had no disagreements and no historical misunderstandings; two sides between which ancient and more recent history has witnessed no conflict; two sides separated by geography and joined by a single continent. I am bound to note that the Arab world straddles the continents of Asia and Africa, and is very close, from various directions, to Europe. Despite the fact that geography has separated us throughout history, dialogue has always been present, thanks to the nations and peoples that make up the Asian continent. Through the peoples and civilizations of the various continents, travellers, merchants, sailors moved back and forth, bringing

with them ideas among the goods and equipment they were carrying. Thanks to their awareness of the importance of cultural and civilizational communication between peoples, by virtue of which the Arabs were able to play their historic role in transmitting science and philosophy from Greece, along with the ancient skills and techniques from Asian, Indian, Chinese and Persian cultures, adding to and enriching them. They acted as a bridge over which these cultures reached Europe, and then the rest of the world. The Arabs were able to play this key role thanks only to their self-confidence, their open-minded devotion to science, and their brilliant humanitarian conscience. We are called upon today more than ever before to be open to the successful experiences of the rest of the world in order to deepen our own culture and make it more creative.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to tell you what I myself saw in Japan during a sea voyage undertaken by UNESCO in 1990-1991 as part of its Integral Study of the Silk Roads. My country was honoured that this cultural scientific trip was undertaken on board the Omani *Fulk as-Salama* "Ship of Peace", which set off from Venice, Italy, and ended its journey in the port of Osaka, Japan, after passing through various European, Arab, and Asian ports, revealing the communication between civilizations, cultures and peoples over time. In Japan, we discovered the close relationship between authenticity and modernity, a relationship which is not artificial, but rather spontaneous and underpinned by a profound conviction that it is important to enter the contemporary world on the basis of one's own roots, which must be preserved. In the Hakata Museum, we can see the civilizational communication between Japan and the rest of the world via culture and the arts, and the image of Japan carried by outsiders begins to fade, that is, the image of a materialistic industrial society generated by the spread of successful Japanese industrial products to world markets. In Kyoto and Nara, this image completely disappears, allowing this venerable nation to assume its full position in the world of thought, reflection and authenticity.

All of this has been achieved by means of faith in the importance of work linked to authenticity, for ideas and dreams can only be realized through faith in one's work.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Peace is the real objective of all human civilizations, and, to that end, we are bound to live, rejoice, innovate and provide abundant welfare to ourselves and others. UNESCO was founded with this goal in mind, given that peace built solely upon economic and political agreements between governments cannot ensure that nations are collectively, firmly and sincerely committed to peace. It was therefore inevitable that peace should be founded on the intellectual and moral solidarity of humankind. As a wise man once said, "Peace, justice and the word of God must be granted to people and not be sold".

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure on this occasion to extend my sincere thanks to Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, for his eagerness to participate in this first

symposium of its kind at UNESCO Headquarters, and for his concern and support for intercultural dialogue.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Teiichi Sato, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO, and his colleagues in the Permanent Delegation for their sincere, dedicated work to make this project a success, Mr Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mrs Katerina Stenou and her team in the Secretariat for their efforts in preparing for this symposium, for which we express our utmost gratitude and appreciation. Allow me also to convey my greetings and gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Mr Abdulrazzak Al-Nafisi, Permanent Delegate of Kuwait to UNESCO, President of the Consultative Committee for the "Arabia Plan", and members of the Committee who have helped to ensure its success.

Before closing, I should like to pause to consider a type of poetry which is well-known in Japan, indeed for which Japan is world-famous, the *haikai* or *haiku*, depending on the pronunciation. This type of poetry is distinguished by its brevity and succinctness. In a few words, it links together remote dimensions, images and purposes, and this is what Arab rhetoricians agreed on when they said: "The best speech is short and to the point."

I hope that this statement of mine will meet with your approval.

Thank you.

Opening Address

H.E. Mr Teiichi Sato,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO

Mr Director General,
Mr Bin-Hassan, Ambassador of Oman,
Mr Al-Nafisi, Ambassador of Kuwait,
Mrs Toyama, former Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
of Japan,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to take part in this dialogue together with renowned speakers from Japan, the Arab world, Europe, and fellow colleagues at UNESCO. This is indeed a very welcomed opportunity for a cross-cultural and interdisciplinary examination of topics, which have now become very dear to our hearts: cultural diversity and globalization. We owe this event in particular to the steadfast encouragement from past and present Chairpersons of the Arab Group at UNESCO, and to the expertise of Mrs Katerina Stenou and her staff from the Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to them and to all the others who have worked to put this event together.

I wish to take just a few moments to share with you some thoughts on how we might usefully approach this subject, keeping in mind our agenda, and putting things in perspective.

It seems to me that what is central to our understanding of cultural diversity, is the realization that has been and will continue to be preserved through a dynamic process. A static view of the situation surrounding us may tend to lead to a particular prescription for cultural diversity, which is that it should be protected. I submit that the dynamic view leads us to a better response, which is to promote rather than protect cultural diversity, and that the strongest driving force behind its promotion is the interaction of cultures. Cultures interact, they give and take, they merge and they develop. It is through this dynamic process, which is part and parcel of what we know as “globalization”, that new sources of diversity emerge.

History is the best testimony to this. In our first session we will compare the processes of modernization in Japan and the Arab world. In those processes it is clear that we have both preserved our unique cultures, while at the same time, through exchange and integration with the rest of the world, our cultures have also evolved into something new. In fact, this can also be said of Europe, and of any other region for that matter.

When we talk of cultures, we often have in mind what is indigenous to our nations. However, cultures can also be shared by several regions, over a continent, or even globally; they may more appropriately be called “civilizations” when they become widespread enough. The main question then for us to explore in the second

session is whether globalization favours more the individual cultures or whether it tends towards the integrative force of civilizations. The hypothesis that I would like to put forth is that it must be both, and they are in fact two sides of the same coin.

Another important question to ponder is whether culture is something that is best left to the realm of the individual or the community, or whether there is a place for the state or the international community to get involved. Clearly, culture has been a matter for state policy in many countries, and there are already a number of international conventions in this field. We are now being asked how we want to deal with cultural diversity.

In this symposium, and in particular the last session, we will build on the basis of regional studies and historical analysis, to explore innovative approaches to intercultural dialogue. I look forward to an enlightening and creative outcome from the discussion of this symposium, which will be particularly helpful for UNESCO, to advance its agenda for cultural diversity.

Thank you.

Session 1

Sharing the Experience:
Modernization in Japan and the
Arab World

Introduction

A comparison between modernization in Japan and the modernization observable in certain Arab countries in the nineteenth century (Egypt and Tunisia, for example) is highly appropriate. Here are two experiences begun a few decades apart and in many respects similar; but one achieved its aims while the other fell short. Both were heirs to a substantial legacy of classical culture. It was from Chinese culture that the Japanese experience took its material, whereas the Egyptian and Tunisian experiences were rooted in the common heritage of the Islamic countries. Both started with the introduction of a new regime whose declared objective was to modernize the state and society: the Meiji Restoration (1868) in Japan, Muhammad 'Alī (1805-1848) in Egypt, and Ahmed Bey (1837-1855) in Tunisia. In all three cases, the model was that of the imperial countries of Western Europe: first the Italians and then the French for Egypt; the Netherlands followed by Germany for Japan. The aim of the three new regimes was to modernize their countries as fast as possible in order to catch up with Western countries and be able to compete with them. The Meiji emperor in Japan, just like Muhammad 'Alī some years previously and then Ahmed Bey, established scientific schools of instruction principally intended to meet the needs of a modern army. To that end, modernization of the traditional education system was tackled with the help of new professionals trained in Western Europe. In both cases, higher education was directed more towards the applied sciences: engineering schools, medical schools, etc. In both Japan and Egypt, an effort was made to develop the national language for the purposes of modern education.

Examples could be multiplied of the similarity of the two experiences in their early stages, which is what makes the comparison so significant. But while the Arab experience was abruptly cut short, the Japanese experience was able to run its course. Why? How can these historical experiences allow to understand the disparate situations apparent today? How can such a comparison help to have an idea of the scientific and technical development of countries in the South? These are, broadly, the questions which the papers presented here attempt to answer. More precisely, a number of both exogenous and endogenous factors are examined here in order to fill out and structure this comparative study.

Firstly, it is necessary to go back to the historical situation in the early nineteenth century, i.e. the Edo period in Japan and the Mamluk-Ottoman period in Arab countries. A comparative study of education systems, the introduction of new scientific knowledge and new techniques, intellectual and scientific communities, the growth of urbanization and industry, and also the role and organization of the state, sheds light on the historical constraints and the challenges encountered in each case. It can be seen that, beyond real similarities in these matters, there are also important differences distinguishing the situation of Japan from that of the Arab countries.

Secondly – an often neglected point but one which, as most of the following papers emphasize, assumes decisive importance here – the geopolitical situation in the same period is considered, and in particular the proximity to or remoteness from the routes of colonial empire. In the nineteenth century, Japan, like some Arab countries (in particular Egypt and Tunisia), suffered military intervention by Western countries. But the consequences of this intervention were not the same in extent or effect. One of the basic reasons for this difference was the geographical position and

strategic importance of these countries in the new military and commercial system established by the colonial empires. It is from this point of view that reference is made to the following: the French expedition to Egypt (1798-1801), followed by a failed British expedition in 1807 prior to British military occupation in 1882; a similar situation in Tunisia, finally occupied by France in 1881; American intervention in Japan in 1853-1854, resulting in the end of Japan's isolation. But just as important as these military interventions were the unequal financial and commercial treaties imposed by the colonial powers and their impact on the economic systems in each case.

Thirdly, a more specific comparison must be drawn between education systems and how they were created and developed, higher education and its connection with research, the latter's relationship to the economy, etc. In the Arab countries and in Japan, modernizing meant basically opening up to Western Europe by adopting the latter's education system, new science and new technology, calling upon the services of European specialists to achieve these aims (the Saint-Simonians in Egypt, for example), and sending missions to Europe to train in European science and technology. In both cases, however, a point was made of developing a scientific language in Arabic or Japanese in order to naturalize the new knowledge more effectively.¹ To gauge the progress of this scientific modernization, it is thus necessary to answer a number of questions and compare Japan and the Arab countries on points such as:

- Interest in scientific research as such, research institutions and their links with universities and emerging industry;
- The formation of a scientific community with its own research topics;
- The scientific heritage and its enlistment in establishing national traditions of research;
- Development of the national language as a language of science.

Lastly, an account must be given of the structural obstacles to modernization, which are not only material but also cultural. Apart from the obstacles created by the economic and political situation, it is therefore also necessary in each case to compare the role of traditional ideological systems (religious, legal, etc.) in the acceptance or refusal of different models, as well as their capacity to change and adapt to new models that originated and developed elsewhere. Let us recall that, from this point of view, the historical situations of Japan and the Arab countries are very different inasmuch as the latter had shared a very long and highly charged history with Europe (a common culture and scientific heritage, permanent relations, endemic conflicts, crusades, Spain, colonization, etc.).

These are the main themes addressed by the various contributors to this session, in which each paper concentrates on its own approach. A comparative analysis of the Arab and Japanese experiences clearly enables us to perceive the importance, in their different ways, of the factors governing modernization processes. It thus provides us with a better understanding of yesterday's world while indicating ways in which to act on today's world: this is what is at stake in the papers presented here.

1. A comparative study on the development of a modern scientific language in Japan, China and the Middle East in the nineteenth century has in fact been recently published: *Traduire, transposer, naturaliser. La formation d'une langue scientifique moderne hors des frontières de l'Europe au XIX^e siècle*, Pascal Crozet & Annick Horiuchi (eds), L'Harmattan (Paris, 2004).

Modernization and National Traditions of Scientific Research

Abstract of presentation by Roshdi Rashed

Director Emeritus of Research at the National

Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), Paris, France

Moderator of the session 1

Today more than at any time in history, social and economic modernization is synonymous with creating a society built on scientific and technological knowledge. It is therefore at the outset a question of education, invention, innovation and research, and establishing specialist institutions to make all these tasks possible. Achievement of this transformation is undoubtedly contingent on economic capacity and available capital but also on a state's political vision. It further depends on the actual situation of the scientific community, the latter's structure and its capacity for action. This brief paper is confined to the last point, since the history of such a scientific community helps to understand the situation in which it finds itself today and the obstacles that it is facing. It will therefore begin by briefly recalling the history of this community in a country representative of the Arab world; and indicate when comparison with Japan is legitimate and when it ceases to be so. It will conclude with a quick snapshot of this community as it stands today and a few pointers to possible Arab-Japanese cooperation.

It will readily be conceded that a collection of scientists, however many and whatever the institutions where they work, does not necessarily constitute a corps of scientists, still less a scientific community – to quote Rousseau, “an aggregation, perhaps, but not an association”. This distinction is not a mere speculative assertion but is the first constant to be identified in a study of the history of science. Whether in ancient, classical, modern or contemporary science, we find that a collection of scientists has never constituted a community. The second constant in this reading of history is that the very existence of a scientific community is directly associated with an endogenous tradition of scientific research, i.e. a national tradition with its own institutions, own research topics, own style, etc. Without this national tradition, there is only a crowd of scientists, an accumulation of technicians, etc., whose training is as heterogeneous as it is disparate. As for this national tradition of research, it is easily identifiable in scientists' names, the titles of their publications, the subjects that they themselves have been able to develop, and the technical and theoretical innovations that they have promoted. Examples of this abound, both ancient and modern: Alexandria and its Museum in the fourth century BC, Baghdad and its House of Wisdom in the ninth century AD, the Royal Academies of the seventeenth century and today's large research organizations. The whole problem of scientific development lies in the power to create such a national research tradition, which is a factor in integrating groups of scientists and building a scientific community.

But these lessons from the history of science, these historical constants, are not the only ones; there are many others, a few of which are mentioned here as consonant, with the preoccupations of the symposium .

- 1•Whatever the type of science – ancient, classical, modern or contemporary – it could not become established or develop without first meeting three conditions: creation of its own institutions, professionalization of the occupation of scientist, and application of science. Although these terms – institutions, professionalization, application – might have different meanings at different stages, what they denote must have existed and was dependent on political and economic power – whether King Ptolemy, Caliph al-Ma'mūn, Emperor Frederick II, the Sun King, Stalin or Kennedy – as well as military and economic élites.
- 2•There have been some cultures and societies better prepared than others to receive and, *a fortiori*, assimilate modern science – in particular those societies with a long history of classical science (the Islamic countries, India and China, for example). But this potential will remain useless and unfulfilled if it is not firmly, resolutely and systematically reactivated.
- 3•Whether for ancient, classical, modern or contemporary science, in each case we observe centres and peripheries but never uniform development. Here again, the promise lies in a distant future.
- 4•It has never been possible to transfer science from one society to another – through translation, importing scientists, etc. – without the necessary infrastructure first being in place to receive it, primarily a scientific community. A society has never been able to assimilate science without possessing its own research traditions or being an active part of a regional tradition.

II•Let's turn to historical experiences of scientific modernization in nineteenth-century Arab countries, experiences that are quite comparable with those of Japan in the same period. Three experiences deserve to be examined in detail moreover: Egypt, Tunisia and Lebanon/Syria. This study confines itself to the experience of Egypt, which it describes very briefly. As it will, like the others, be considered in detail by the other speakers.

The first attempt to modernize Egypt occurred when it was emerging from what would be called the "Mamluk and Ottoman Middle Ages". This was in fact an attempt at economic, military and scientific modernization. It was at this time that the new state, like Japan a few decades later, decided for economic, military and strategic reasons to import modern science, i.e. nineteenth-century European science and technology. The history of this development is related by Pascal Crozet.

A comparison between Japan and Egypt can obviously be made for this period but for this period only. In both countries, modernization began with the introduction of a new regime whose declared objective was to modernize the state and society: the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) in Japan and Muhammad 'Ali (1805-1848, and, through his successors, until 1882) in Egypt. In both cases, the model was that of the imperial countries of Western Europe: first the Italians and then the French for Egypt; Holland followed by Germany for Japan. The aim of the two new regimes was to modernize their countries as fast as possible in order to catch up with Western countries and be able to compete with them. Muhammad 'Ali's attempt

was contained by force of arms (French and English). Japan, for its part, had the advantage of being remote from the strategic routes of the time. It was thus able to create a national tradition of research and integrate it with the production system by the end of the nineteenth century and especially in the early twentieth century; in other words, it succeeded in forming a scientific community aware of its own existence and separate identity (for example the mathematics at the University of Tokyo, or physics at the University of Kyoto). This is precisely what Shigeru Nakayama rightly calls "a miracle". Yet in Egypt this was not the case. Moreover, the British occupation there put a brake on education in general and scientific education in particular. This constitutes the limit of any possible comparison between the Arab experience and the Japanese experience.

The modernization project in Arab countries was to be resumed when the nationalist movement arose from its ashes. Thus Egypt had to wait for the end of the First World War. But a new period was beginning in which obstacles – both internal and external – multiplied in the face of all attempts to catch up. First, there was the gap that had built up between 1882 and 1930, if not longer. The colonial economic structure was still extant and industrialization was weak, as was, therefore, the demand for science. Last but not least, there was the new science of the twentieth century with its new spirit: in other words a science whose purposes were, to use Gaston Bachelard's term, "phenomeno-technical", with the human and financial requirements that this implied. The absence of a national research tradition and a genuine scientific community was also a handicap, to which was added the idea prevalent among politicians that science was identical with the technological products of science. This pragmatic notion often culminated in science policies that were doomed to failure in advance and led to a marginalization of science and scientists. Many scientists, sometimes of international stature, were thus condemned to isolation. The effect of this isolation may be described somewhat paradoxically as excessive originality stemming from the absence of a national tradition of research. Thus, once they had returned to their native countries, these European-trained scientists would either continue to work on the subject of their initial research or a related subject or else opt for subjects that were marginal in terms of advanced research priorities. This was isolation and marginalization. In a word, this research was marginal or dependent on that being carried out in the parent countries. The scientific structure paralleled, as it were, the economic and political structures.

III • Finally, let us return very briefly to the present situation of the scientific community in Arab countries and give a broad outline of it.

Examining a few figures taken from the statistics for 1995-1996 it can be seen that at that time there were more than 175 Arab universities, 1,000 institutions of varying size and importance concerned with scientific research, between 12 and 15 million adults (over 21 years of age) who were university graduates, some 700,000 engineers, etc. On the basis of the figures alone, between 8% and 10% of the adult population have graduated from university, including 30% to 40% in pure or applied sciences. This is a sizeable proportion if compared to that of the United States, which stands at 20%. It would be possible to cite many other figures showing that there exists considerable human capital capable of forming a scientific infrastructure or even a scientific organization.

Regarding the community of scientific researchers, the picture is not the same. In 1995, the number of researchers in all subjects came to approximately 50,000. The estimate for 2000 is 60,000. This figure includes university teachers who have obtained their doctorates. Together with this figure, another should be recalled: that of immigrant researchers in Europe and the United States, who were estimated to number 36,000 in 2000. Here is some statistical data to flesh out the picture. But let us concentrate on this figure of 50,000 researchers in 1995 and examine their distribution and publications.

Table 1: Estimate of the number of potential researchers and their productivity (1995)¹

Country	S & T PhD Academic year 1990-1991 (A1)	S & T PhD Academic year 1995-1996 (A2)	Economics and management Academic year 1995-1996 (B)	Publications in 1995 (C)	C/A2
Algeria	2 948	8 180	474	311	0.038
Bahrain	155	250	4	80	0.320
Egypt	17 352	18 222	1 112	2 242	0.123
Iraq	1 817	4 123	1 252	94	0.023
Jordan	789	445	102	312	0.701
Kuwait	355	1 419	386	360	0.254
Lebanon	733	1 180	362	108	0.092
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	481	102	18	53	0.520
Morocco	1 183	2 045	90	597	0.292
Oman	174	214	12	103	0.481
Palestine	197	299	52	16	0.054
Qatar	117	149	28	59	0.396
Saudi Arabia	2 414	2 676	348	1 575	0.589
Sudan	551	1 032	84	100	0.097
Syrian Arab Republic	1 395	2 230	176	88	0.039
Tunisia	1 056	1 480	160	342	0.231
United Arab Emirates	172	269	52	177	0.658
Yemen	255	286	63	22	0.077
Total	32 144	44 601	4 775	6 652	0.149

These figures, together with others, show that the Arab scientific community is already extensive and that there is a large population providing a suitable environment (the 12 to 15 million graduates).

This human capital is also mobile and responds promptly and effectively to incentives. Researchers often move from one university to another, whether within the same country or outside it. Linked to this mobility is an observable tendency to undertake joint research with other nationals or abroad.

1. Sources : Colonne A1: Tableau 61, Suhbi Qasem, *Higher Education Systems in the Arab States: Development of Science and Technology Indicators*, 1995, Bureau de l'UNESCO du Caire ; Colonne A2 et B : Tableau 61, Suhbi Qasem, *Higher Education Systems in the Arab States: Development of Science and Technology Indicators*, 1998, Bureau de l'UNESCO du Caire ; Colonne C: Index des Citations, Institute of Scientific Information, Philadelphie.

But the fact remains that different areas of research, especially the newest, are not evenly covered. 25% of the scientific publications in Egypt are in chemistry (a widely dominant subject), 26% in biology (including medical science), 14% in astronomy and physics, and 14% in engineering science, while mathematics accounts for only 5%.

The effectiveness of this community is now to be considered.

Science and Technology Cooperation Networks

The effectiveness of a scientific community can be gauged by a number of indicators, including the number and quality of publications, involvement in international research networks, and participation in social and economic development. Of course, to assess quality a special survey by experts in the various fields could be needed. The citation index is a poor indication, which we must be used for lack of such a survey. The following tables provide some approximate figures.

Table 2: Scientific and technical publications (1995)

Country	Total publications	Cited publications	Local publications	Publications jointes	[Local]/[Joint]
Algeria	361	328	101	227	0.4
Bahrain	114	106	77	29	2.7
Egypt	2 242	1 999	1 414	585	2.4
Iraq	129	114	80	34	2.4
Jordan	312	266	171	95	1.8
Kuwait	358	290	117	173	0.7
Lebanon	108	75	43	32	1.3
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	71	58	23	35	0.7
Mauritania	9	9	0	9	0
Morocco	607	536	141	395	0.4
Oman	103	83	47	36	1.2
Palestine	20	20	9	11	1.2
Qatar	85	67	32	36	0.9
Saudi Arabia	1 575	1 240	946	294	3.2
Somalia	6	6	0	6	0
Sudan	125	112	38	74	0.5
Syrian Arab Republic	141	134	53	83	0.7
Tunisia	342	293	147	146	1
United Arab Emirates	177	137	72	65	1.5
Yemen	36	32	4	28	0.1
Total		5 905	3 515	2 393	1.5

It may be noted that it is researchers from the Maghreb who are most active in international collaboration.

Let us take a closer look.

Tableau 3: Collaboration between researchers from Arab countries and the rest of the world (1995)

Pays	Joint publications	Multi-national Orgs.	Inter-Arab	Third world	Eastern Europe	OCDE without USA	USA
Algeria	227	8	3	0	3	181	6
Bahrain	29	6	3	5	2	9	2
Egypt	585	49	123	6	11	213	154
Iraq	34	0	12	1	2	15	5
Jordan	95	12	18	4	1	35	23
Kuwait	173	17	26	14	3	70	25
Lebanon	32	4	1	0	1	13	14
Libyan Arab Jamahiriya	35	4	7	0	6	14	2
Mauritania	9	2	1	0	0	5	0
Morocco	395	7	2	1	2	346	29
Oman	36	2	4	8	1	16	4
Palestine	11	0	2	0	0	4	4
Qatar	36	0	25	1	0	4	6
Saudi Arabia	294	0	79	14	0	115	72
Somalia	6	0	0	0	0	6	
Sudan	74	0	11	3	1	48	10
Syrian Arab Republic	83*	30	2	0	6	39	5
Tunisia	146	7	3	0	2	122	10
United Arab Emirates	65	0	25	3	1	24	12
Yemen	28	2	8	1	0	13	4
Total	2 393	150	355	61	42	1 292	386
%	100**	6.3	14.8***	2.6	1.8	54	16.1

The total in the inter-Arab column must be divided by two, since each joint article between two Arab countries is counted separately for each country. Half of 355, i.e. 178, should be deducted from the total of 2 393. These adjustments have not been made in the table.

- It may be observed that collaboration among Arab countries was fairly marginal, since joint publications were no more than 7.4%, although they accounted for 54% with OECD countries (excluding the United States) and 16.1% with the United States.
- Little regional collaboration. Although researchers from the Maghreb collaborated in large numbers with their colleagues abroad (69% of publications for Algerians, 74% for Moroccans and 64% for Tunisians), collaboration within the Maghreb was minimal. Thus, out of a total of 1 264 publications by Maghreb researchers, 804 were joint publications with researchers abroad and only 11 with other countries in the Maghreb.

* Of the 83 joint publications for the Syrian Arab Republic, 30 are the result of work in ICARDA (International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas). They are entered in the column for multinational organizations.

** Unadjusted (counted twice with Arab countries).

*** Each joint article within the Arab world is counted twice: once for each of the countries involved. Thus 14.8% should be divided by 2 and replaced by 7.4%

- Collaboration with Western European countries accounted for 70% of joint publications in 1995, while that with the United States represented 16.1%. But a country-by-country comparison, shows that apart from the three Maghreb countries for which France was the principal partner; and the Syrian Arab Republic, which mainly collaborated with France and Britain, all the other countries had the United States as their main partner.
- Collaboration (joint publication) with East European countries, including Russia, was minimal.
- The picture of the Arab scientific community that emerges from joint publication is a very fragmentary one. This is due not only to lack of regional networks but also to the range of main partners.
- If one now consider the performance of this community in comparison with other scientific communities, we have the following table for 1995 (with 1993 populations).

Table 4: Publications per million inhabitants (1995)

Country	Population (millions) 1993	Number of publications	Publications per million inhabitants
Arab world	270	7 139	26
Brazil	156.5	6 634	42
China	1 178	13 020	11
India	898	16 606	19
Three Maghreb countries	61.4	1 250	20.4
France	57.5	48 296	840
Switzerland	7.1	13 331	1 878

It appears that, even if the level of scientific research is not high, the Arab scientific community possesses not only a substantial human potential but also the necessary framework for creating a modern structure for science and technology.

In this connection, a few suggestions for future Arab-Japanese collaboration can be made.

One suggestion is to abandon the method – both damaging and ineffective – of aid and knowledge/technology transfer in favour of the method of assimilation and work between partners (which will be to everyone's advantage sooner or later). It is therefore a matter of promoting and consolidating research networks between already existing teams that have been identified as centres of excellence. These networks could be set up by either public or private organizations. There are at least a hundred international companies in Arab countries. These research networks – with Japan in particular – would guarantee both dynamic and top-level research and researcher mobility while avoiding the pitfalls of *brain drain*.

Towards a Dialogue between a Japanese Historian of Science and Arabs

Abstract of presentation by Shigeru Nakayama
Professor Emeritus, Kanagawa University, Japan

The author describes to the Arab world the way Japanese have modernized, and questions the extent to which the Japanese approach is applicable to Arab countries. He also suggests that certain factors may not have been taken into account in the modernization of the Arab world, which demonstrates that the Japanese do not believe that their historical evolution is necessarily the only suitable one.

The Shifting Centres of Science and Culture

Throughout history, the centres of scientific and cultural excellence have shifted from an established centre to a peripheral area. For instance, in the classical tradition of mathematical astronomy, an important field in the emergence of modern science, the centre moved repeatedly from ancient Mesopotamia, to the Hellenistic world (including northwest India and Syria), to the Islamic world, and eventually to Renaissance Europe. During these shifts, the language in which science was communicated was more important than the location or ethnicity of the peripheral area. The central language changed from cuneiform to Greek, Syrian, to Arabic and Persian, and Latin. The first question the author puts to his Arab colleagues is: "What occurred when the central language moved from Greek via Syrian to Arabic and, later, from Arabic to Latin?"

Centre-Periphery Hypothesis in Science and Culture

A centre-periphery hypothesis can account for such shifts in several steps:

1• People at the centre, of course, express themselves in their own language. On the other hand, peripheral scholars and students move to the centre to obtain what that centre possesses and produces. Those in the periphery read, and often write, in the central language, but they think about science and learning in their native language. Thus, bilingualism is the norm at the periphery.

2• On the other hand, central scientists pursuing their research need not be concerned about what is occurring at the periphery. Such a situation can result in the stagnation of normal developmental practice. In the centre, scholars and scientists look for new information only in their own language. They fail to be receptive to fresh paradigms in a language other than their own. On the other hand, peripheral scholars and scientists accumulate information in the central language as well as in their own. The abundance and variety of information available to them increases the likelihood that they will create a new paradigm.

3•The periphery becomes the centre, firstly, when the language used by peripheral scientists to express their thoughts, and their work changes to their own and, secondly, when other language groups use it. People turn to the new centre for information and scholarship.

Centre-Shift to and from Arabic

By the twelfth century, Arab scholars could express their science and culture in Arabic with no further need for translations from Greek. On the other hand, Europeans from the year 1000 were feverishly translating Arabic sources into Latin. Arab science was becoming the centre. As we know today, Islamic science is based primarily on the Hellenistic heritage of mathematical astronomy, with local contributions in algebra, alchemy, etc.

It is clear that in the fifteenth century Islamic science was more advanced than that of Europe. We know from research of the last fifty years that Medieval Latin scholars were basically translating and imitating Arab culture and science. However, this was no longer true in the seventeenth century, when the Scientific Revolution took place.

What occurred between these two periods? Based upon the above centre-periphery hypothesis, seventeenth-century Europe must have contributed many new elements unknown to the Arab world. These included an interest in mechanical philosophy, the institutionalization of early modern academies, etc. The role of the media in the form of the Gutenberg Revolution should be emphasized. The spread of movable type has freed Latin scholars and scientists from the endless lab of correcting manuscripts, and promoted widespread discussion of common themes.

Centre-Shift within Modern Science

The same pattern of evolution may be applied to the centre of modern science, from seventeenth-century England to eighteenth-century France to nineteenth-century Germany and to twentieth-century United States of America (USA). The author has argued elsewhere that the shift of the centre of science from Germany to the USA in the 1920s occurred in linguistic terms. In the early twentieth century, German scientific journals cited mostly German articles while Americans cited sources in many other languages, giving them more abundant information.

Centre-Shift in East Asia

In the East Asian tradition, the centre remained in China throughout history. Scholars and scientists in East Asia, including Korea, Japan and Vietnam, all wrote their monographs in classical Chinese. If the definition of centre in terms of language is strictly applied, all of these are actually Chinese science rather than vernacular science. Hence, there was little paradigm change, and hence little scientific revolution. All East Asians shared paradigms established around the first century A.D. Despite steady progress and proliferation in traditional science, the result was stagnation.

The historical tradition inherited from Guo Shoujing is a perfect example of what happens when the center stops moving, leading to a sinking of the scientific

thought. Guo and his team's astronomical system, the *Shoushi li* (Season-Granting System, 1281), is generally considered to be the crowning achievement of traditional Chinese astronomy. His determination of solstitial time errs by only several minutes, while that of Ibn Yunis was incorrect by several hours, and Ptolemy's by more than a day. Later, Laplace praised Guo as "the Tycho Brahe of the East." In fact, Guo's observations helped Laplace establish the validity of his own theory of secular variation in the obliquity (the angle between the ecliptic and the Equator).

The approach of Guo and his team was purely numerical. They rejected the grand conjunction as the starting point of his calendrical system, earlier determined by the onerous calculation of what amounted to arbitrary indeterminate equations. They also rejected fractions in favour of a consistent decimal system. Their style embodied the numerico-algebraic approach of traditional Chinese mathematics, as opposed to the geometrical style of Europe and the Arab world. By adopting this approach, Guo attained some of the most accurate observation-based constants in pre-modern astronomy. However, because of this rigour and the rejection of other approaches, traditional Chinese science underwent no major paradigm change or revolution.

The shift of the centre from China to Japan occurred only in the early twentieth century, in connection with the translation of modern Western scientific work. It was not a shift of frontline scientific activity but a shift to a sub-centre in which Western science was being turned into ideograms. Until the nineteenth century, the translation of Western scientific terms and works occurred in both the Chinese and Japanese languages. The Japanese, who still admired classical Chinese, followed technical translation and borrowed its new terms as much as possible. However, by the 1880s, Chinese were drawing heavily on Japanese translations.

After the USA?

Even though American science remains predominant in the contemporary world, the centre will probably move at some point in the future. But where will it go?

Before the Second World War, one of the requirements for obtaining an American Ph.D was to master French and German languages, in order to communicate with European colleagues. After the war, however, language requirements were limited to a mere reading knowledge. Today, American scientists at most universities are not required to learn any foreign languages; even in universities that maintain a language requirement for scientists, the examinations are perfunctory. If the centre-periphery hypothesis discussed above is applied, the present situation in American science clearly signals the beginning of decline, since scientists are able to collect only information available in English.

However, as long as American science remains open and generous to foreign scholars and students, its centrality will presumably survive. Instead of learning foreign languages, Americans supplement their scientific and cultural information by absorbing human resources from abroad into graduate schools and research laboratories. In the computer and Internet age, defining scientific centres by national barriers, geographical locations, or even languages is less and less meaningful. In this so-called technological globalization, there can be no centre, only a network that covers the whole globe.

A Comparison of Arab and Japanese Modernization

There are two comparative histories of modernization. One compares two areas that were in direct contact while the other compares regions with no contact. The relationship between Japan and other East Asian countries and that between the West and Arab countries fall in the former category, while Japan and the Arab countries belong to the latter category. Between Japan and its ex-colonies, Korea and Taiwan, the contact combined modernization with bloody imperialism. Between Japan and the Arab countries, however, comparison is not contaminated by direct contact.

When the Japanese opened their country in the late nineteenth century, they consciously strove to halt the aggressive Western powers. The Japanese chose whatever knowledge and ideas would assist them in developing their nation. They enjoyed a period of window-shopping, in which they experimented with and partially adopted many models of scientific institutions – American, English, French, and German.

If some form of modernization had occurred in sixteenth-century Japan, it would have raised issues of religion. But it can be said that the nineteenth-century Japanese were religious pluralists, Confucian in official ideology and Buddhist or Shintoist for personal salvation. The Japanese avoided conflict between religion and science by maintaining a dichotomy between the spiritual and the material.

Identity Problems: Spiritual-Material Dichotomy or Cultural-Material Dichotomy

The nineteenth-century Japanese Confucian philosopher, Shuzan Sakuma, facing the aggression of the technologically advanced West, contrasted Eastern morality and Western techniques. This same dichotomy was widely used, and simplified into Japanese soul vs. Western talent, it became a motto for those who imported Western science. Other Eastern peoples, when facing the aggression of Western material culture, invented similar phrases. Chinese Westernizers adopted the slogan *Zhongti Xiyong* (Chinese fundamentals and Western utility) in order to avoid attacks by nationalists. The author's Indian friends also contrast Indian spiritual culture and Western material civilization. Similar situations can be observed throughout the modern Arab world.

Whether consciously recognized or not, dichotomies of this kind introduced Western science and technology while denying that they threatened identity or traditional value systems. In this respect, the Japanese were more successful than other non-Western nations in accepting modern science and its material correlates, perhaps because their ideology was less ethnocentric than that of the Chinese.

Initially impressed by the superiority of Western military technology, the Japanese eventually turned to specialized and compartmentalized aspects of Western science. These seemed more advanced than traditional Confucian studies because technical research could focus on narrow, clearly defined tasks.

Actually, from the late eighteenth century up to the mid-nineteenth century, a handful of translators expressed their perception of Western science into *kyūri*,

literally, “investigating principles”. They adapted this old Neo-Confucian word because they considered the natural-philosophy aspects of Western science, which is absent in the Eastern tradition, to be its essence. They thought of science’s component of natural history as merely a matter of classification. “Science” became an institutional conception devoid of philosophical connotations. Indeed, late nineteenth-century Japanese no longer distinguished science from technology. They believed that Western science of their time, because of its specialization and compartmentalization, was superior to traditional Confucian studies, which were dominated by socio-ethical values. Since compartmentalized science was neither profound nor subtle in its implications, but rather superficial and secular, it was easily imitated, borrowed and diffused among the populace.

A spiritual civilization is not easily transferrable, and hence all the more valuable in such forms as poetry and introspective philosophy. However, scientific and material civilization is easily and rapidly transferable. Still, in the contemporary world, disparities in modern technology are arguably the major causes of North-South differences.

The Language Issue

During the modernization of the Meiji period (1868-1911), Arinori Mori, the Minister of Education, wished to substitute the English language for Japanese in primary-school education. Even if it had been possible, the cost in terms of cultural loss would have been great. Subsequently, the government organized committees to standardize the translation of scientific and technical terms in each discipline. This was mainly necessary for secondary education. Otherwise, knowledge of modern science could not be widely disseminated and would have been confined to a foreign-educated technological elite.

In university education and research, authors could employ foreign technical terms within Japanese sentence structure without translating them, since specialists were capable of reading technical literature in European language. On the blackboard in university astronomy and physics courses, no Japanese words, only European technical terms, appeared. Even now, this practice continues at least at the graduate school level. Many Japanese research scientists use English for their academic publications. In that sense, they are bilingual. However, they consider themselves greatly disadvantaged in international competition because they are unable to write as well as their colleagues whose mother tongue is English.

It is not known whether the Japanese approach to modernization, which retains vernacular elements, is truly efficient. Only history will tell which approach is best. It is clear that modernization can be successful without European languages. Over half of the scientific papers that Japanese academic scientists publish are now in English, but this is one of the reasons for the inferiority of their research: the written expression of their reports is frustratingly constrained. The Japanese excel in industrial science: since there is no world standard in this field, Japanese industrial scientists do not have to write in English. As information-hungry peripheral scientists, the Japanese efficiently gathered information through official translations and information bureaus. In the 1980s, when Japanese industrial science attracted world attention, American techno-nationalists demanded “symmetrical access”: since Japanese could access English resources, the Americans complained that their own researchers could not

(actually, did not try to) draw on Japanese resources. In contrast to the academic world, the transfer of information in the private sector of industrial scientific and technological research depends on personal contacts, often on the shop floor alongside the production line. This system of industrial science spread from Japan to other parts of South-East Asia.

Post-War Model: The Japan-East Asia Mode of Production

In the 1980s, Japanese industrial technology challenged the USA, and developing countries drew on this competition. Writers have described the Japanese post-war experience as a “miracle”, but Japanese scientists do not think of it that way. It was merely a shift from the military-oriented paradigm before the Second World War to the market-oriented one in the post-war period. Historians, marvel at the fact that Japan was able to survive in the nineteenth century, in the midst of an imperialistic world. At that time, Japan tried to survive by becoming imperialist.

The twentieth-century paradigm shift significantly raised living standards. Although pre-war Japan succeeded in modernizing, the country spent most of its new wealth for armaments and much less on upgrading living standards. For instance, in the economic recovery after 1945, the target was to recover the 1934 standard of living. After 1934, the Japanese economy lost its strength through the costly war in China. In 1941, when the USA entered the Second World War, Japan's economy was too depleted to endure long hostilities. By the end of war in 1945, Japan was bankrupt. At the time of the cease-fire, the Japanese could not imagine that peace would last, since war was waged throughout much of the twentieth century. However, within a decade after the war, Japan reached their pre-war standard of living, and the Japanese have enjoyed unprecedented prosperity ever since.

In the Meiji period, Japan had no scientific community. Those who wanted to study modern science and technology had to do so from Western books and teachers. By 1945, there was an established scientific community, which educated the author's generation. The “post-war miracle” was not revolutionary for scientists; the traditions remained intact. Only social and political change brought about the new market-oriented paradigm of scientific research and development that replaced the military-oriented one.

During the 1960s and 1970s, in discussions concerning technology transfer, people from developing countries claimed that advanced countries pursued contemporary science and technology exclusively for their own benefit. This implied that the North-South gap would continue to widen. That was true during the Cold War period for defence-oriented technology, which centred on nuclear and space engineering. Concerning Asian development, however, Japanese high technology was passed on to the Asia's newly industrialized states and ASEAN countries, and now to mainland China. The gap is now steadily narrowing instead of growing, since market-oriented technology can easily be taught on the job. There is no need for a basic research and development capability; lowering labour costs forces the transfer of practical knowledge.

The author calls this post-war pattern of development the “Japan-Asian mode of production.” Immediately after the war, Japan enhanced American technology by

the previously overlooked factor of quality control. This trend was later transferred to Korea, which now produces the best quality semiconductors in Asia. This mode of transfer may well spread from Korea to China, while Japan is losing its leading position.

In the Context of Technological Globalization

When the Cold War ended in the 1990s, a debate on globalization arose all over the world. The literature on this topic suggests that most social scientists (Marxist or otherwise) who deal with traditional concepts of labour, capital, markets, etc., see globalization rather pessimistically as an inevitable outcome of American privatization.

On the other hand, those who considered the Internet crucial to globalization appear to be optimistic. In 1994, the author chaired a symposium on new technology organized by UNESCO. Many representatives of developing countries enthusiastically claimed that by using the Internet they could overcome North-South disparities. Although this may become true in the future, it is now clear that they were overly optimistic and a little rash. Media technology is now the most essential of all prerequisites for successful technology transfer.

Discussions concerning the digital divide continue. Personal computers are the main conduits of the digital revolution, but they are still expensive. It is not certain that they can diminish the digital divide between North and South or between Japan and the poor regions of the Arab world. The divide between West and East Asia – between alphabetic and ideographic languages – also persists. It has left Japan and the rest of East Asia behind in the digital revolution. Thirty years ago, only a small proportion of Japanese scientists and professionals could use a typewriter. Most business depended on handwritten letters, because the average Japanese professional could not type. It is important to note that young Japanese overcame this “typewriter allergy” over the last ten years: they have bypassed the typewriter keyboard, directly leapfrogging from handwriting to text messaging by the ten-key pad.

Leapfrogging Modern Europe?

Text messaging may help to promote literacy if it is available from childhood. Today's Japanese youngsters write better on the mobile Internet than on paper. If mobile phones were to be distributed even in the remotest areas, with an ODA (Official Developmental Aid) budget or otherwise, nomads could easily overcome the digital divide. Where population density is low and wired communication undeveloped, mobile phones could quickly obviate the need for wired networks. In many countries, the number of fixed telephones has ceased to increase, and a few see no need for a fixed network. Analogously, in every aspect of high-technology development, such as environmental technology, our recent experience in East Asia demonstrates that the local scientific community can bring about technological leapfrogging.

Throughout the history of technology, its transfer has followed a standard sequence in which developing countries follow the same course that advanced

countries experienced earlier. In view of the rapid development of high technology at the present time, however, there are many historical steps that countries can bypass. In the modernization process, for instance, Japan mostly bypassed the stage of gas lighting, leapfrogging from the kerosene light to electricity. Nowadays, it is possible to bypass wired networks and centralized power stations, to be replaced by Internet and decentralized unwired sources of energy such as windmills. In fact it may be possible to entirely bypass the development of the West in the Industrial Revolution, leapfrogging from the technology of traditional Arab culture to that of post-war East Asia.

The Modernization of Egypt in the Nineteenth Century

Abstract of presentation by Pascal Crozet
Researcher, CNRS, Paris, France

Introduction

Muhammad 'Alī (1805-1848), the “founder of modern Egypt”: the phrase is famous. It is also extremely vague once one ponders the meaning of the modernity thus posited. It might even seem excessive when we remember that it tends both to ignore the social and economic upheavals of the late eighteenth century¹ and to minimize the archaism and feudalism that remained. However, it is undeniable that, for Egypt, the first half of the nineteenth century was a period abounding in modernization and reconstruction of all kinds affecting a wide range of spheres (army, agriculture, industry, infrastructure, education, machinery of government, etc.) and entailing intensification of contacts with Europe.

Between Muhammad 'Alī's seizure of power in 1805 and the start of British occupation in 1882, Egypt enjoyed a *de facto* independence that was instrumental in endowing the projects of that time with characteristics that were no longer to be found in the subsequent period. Accordingly, the author confines himself to the nineteenth century when discussing the subject of modernization here. More specifically, he intends first to consider the question from a general point of view, examining in particular the nature of Muhammad 'Alī's plans, before concentrating on one aspect of the problem, namely, modernization of scientific and technical knowledge and matters relating to the position of modern science in Egyptian society. Lastly, he attempts a brief comparison with the case of Japan.

Muhammad 'Alī and the European Challenge

For a proper understanding of what was at stake in Muhammad 'Alī's policy, one must first return briefly to Egypt's history from the end of the eighteenth century. From 1780 onwards, the country entered a period of economic difficulty which cyclical aspects, certainly a decisive factor; compounded an underlying structural crisis linked essentially to the impact of the European economy, which was beginning to have a destructive effect on traditional craft and commercial activities.² European textiles thus penetrated the Egyptian market at extremely competitive prices, Egyptian exports of Yemeni coffee began to suffer competition from West Indies coffee, etc.

In 1798, Bonaparte's expedition made the country a French protectorate. The causes of this intervention, doubtless many, are to be found for the most part in the

1. See, for example, André Raymond, “Le Caire ; économie et société urbaines à la fin du XVIII^e siècle” in the proceedings of the symposium organized by the GREPO, *L'Égypte au XIX^e siècle*, CNRS (Paris, 1982), pp. 121-139 (pp. 130-139).

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 131-123.

growth of European expansionism and the European powers' interest in a strategic point on the route to the Indies.

In 1805, after a few troubled years following the departure of the French, Muhammad 'Ali seized power with the help of a popular revolt. Relying on élites different from those of existing political systems in the eighteenth century, he established a strong power-base which guaranteed that his reign was a long one, since it continued until 1848. What, then, were the broad outlines of Muhammad 'Ali's policy? The country had just suffered three years of French occupation, during which it had lost its sovereignty; above all, the Egyptian economy had been disrupted precisely because of European expansionism. The Pasha's plan was therefore to create on the banks of the Nile an empire that was independent of the European powers. This was primarily a military project: providing the country with an effective defence by modernizing the army and armaments, since once civil peace had been restored it was obvious that Egypt was not safe from an act of force. The British expedition of 1807, which saw the British capture Alexandria by surprise and hold the city for six months, sufficiently demonstrated the weaknesses in the defence system of a country in which the Western powers did not seem to be losing interest.

But Muhammad 'Ali's project was also, and perhaps even mainly, an economic one: Egyptian products were supposed to be able to regain a certain competitiveness in comparison with their European counterparts. Besides creating an army on the European model and conquering territory (Sudan, Syria, Yemen, the Hejaz, Crete) with the aim, amongst other things, of controlling commercial routes, Muhammad 'Ali was thus led to establish manufactures and genuine modern industry. The successes achieved on this score were undeniable and began to interest, or worry, European circles. A few examples:

- Shipbuilding (in the 1830s Egypt was said to have the seventh largest fleet in the world, ahead of Spain and Austria-Hungary);
- Cotton industry (again in the 1830s, Egypt probably ranked ninth in the world for production of spun cotton and fifth in terms of spindles per inhabitant, outstripped only by England, Switzerland, the United States and France);³
- Iron and steel, other textile industries (silk, wool, flax, hemp), sugar, etc.

Agriculture nevertheless remained Egypt's main economic potential. In order to increase yields and develop new crops for industry and export, Muhammad 'Ali initiated major hydraulic works to regulate the river, increase perennial irrigation and optimize water distribution. A complex network of main, secondary, feeder and drainage canals, equipped with locks and regulating structures, thus took the place of the older, more varied, small-scale systems.⁴

But the new tasks taken on by the Egyptian state did not stop there. Thus in 1825 a Health Board was established which endorsed the introduction of modern medicine into Egypt; originally intended to manage the army's medical corps, this

3. Jean Batou, *Cent ans de résistance au sous-développement. L'industrialisation de l'Amérique latine et du Moyen-Orient face au défi européen. 1770-1870*, Droz (Geneva, 1990); see particularly the chapter on "L'Égypte de Muhammad-'Ali, 1805-1848", pp. 45-123.

4. Ghislaine Alleaume, "Les systèmes hydrauliques de l'Égypte pré-moderne. Essai d'histoire du paysage", *Itinéraires d'Égypte. Mélanges offerts au père Maurice Martin s.j.*, C. Decobert (ed.), IFAO (Cairo, 1992), pp. 301-22.

board gradually had its prerogative extended to the whole of the Egyptian population, mainly with the foundation of civilian hospitals.

Generally speaking, the modernization of Egypt, in the first half of the nineteenth century at least, must be considered to have been pursued above all to counter the rise of European imperialism rather than as an instrument of Western penetration or domination, as could be the case in other regions of the world marked by the colonial venture. The fact remains that at the end of Muhammad 'Ali's reign, under pressure from the European powers uneasy at Egyptian growth, the experience ended in failure and led to a situation of increasing economic and political dependence for the country.

This dependence was established gradually following military defeat in 1840 and the firman of 1841, which was exacted by the British and restricted Muhammad 'Ali's army to 18,000 troops. Deprived of its military outlets, Egyptian industry – and especially the cotton industry – then withdrew from certain sectors and concentrated on civilian outlets. Even so, some ten years later the last Egyptian cotton mills were closing their gates one after the other; thus bringing to an end the country's first experience of industrialization. The underlying reasons for this failure unquestionably bear the stamp of particularly strong European interventionism. To merely mention the most frequently cited causes: the English trade offensive, with English products gaining an increasing share of the Egyptian market; the absence of customs protection, exacted by the British; the 1838 Convention of Balta Liman, directed mainly against Egyptian monopolies, which were gradually dismantled; and the absence of an effective private sector able to take over from the state.⁵

European economic penetration then seemed inescapable, being merely the mainspring of much wider foreign penetration in terms of people, interests, capital and projects. A local élite of European origin took shape and was more and more to rival the state in its role as an "agent of modernization". Although Muhammad 'Ali was perfectly well aware of European covetousness with regard to Egypt, some of his successors were undoubtedly less vigilant in this respect, and the latter half of the century was marked by the gradual takeover of the Egyptian economy by European projects, the construction of the Suez Canal being the most famous. The aftermath then became lost in the financial crisis of the 1870s, the Franco-British supervision of state finances, and lastly the British occupation in 1882, which ushered in a new period in the country's history, in particular by gradually banishing the Egyptian officials in charge of higher education, health and public works.

Egypt's Scientific Development

To implement the modernization programme and so fulfill the new tasks that the state had taken on in fields such as industry, health and public works, new skills were required, based on technical and scientific knowledge then unfamiliar on the banks of the Nile – what might be called the "tools of modernity". For this purpose,

5. Jean Batou discusses this point at length with a critical examination of some of the various interpretations already put forward ("L'Égypte de Muhammad-'Ali", pp. 415-421). However; his conclusions still seem to be exceptionally cautious. See also Michel Seurat, "État et industrialisation dans l'Orient arabe (les fondements socio-historiques)", in *Industrialisation et changements sociaux dans l'Orient arabe*, André Bourgey (ed.), CERMOC (Beirut, 1982), pp. 27-67 (pp. 41-42).

the Pasha had a large number of European experts brought in or was able to take advantage of those who came to offer their services. He sent more than a hundred Egyptian students to be trained in Europe (especially in France), some of whom attended the *École Polytechnique* or the Faculty of Medicine in Paris. Lastly, from the 1820s onwards, national colleges were established in Egypt itself: the School of Medicine and Pharmacology, the School of Civil Engineering, the School of Mechanical Engineering, staff colleges, artillery schools, military engineering schools, cavalry schools, etc. Although the models adopted for organizing the teaching in these establishments were French in origin and the courses were usually similar to their European counterparts, the lectures were given in Arabic by a growing majority of Egyptian lecturers and were based on textbooks translated for the purpose in all subjects.

This trend towards translation, which received considerable impetus from the foundation in 1837 of a School of Languages to train translators, led in some fifteen years to the development of a lasting modern scientific language in Arabic which respected the cast of the language. It must finally be emphasized that the appearance of a new civil service designed to take graduates from the colleges, which thus helped to institutionalize highly scientific professions such as engineering and medicine. Thus was created, within Egyptian society, a modern sector, which is often contrasted with the traditional sector represented by the classical training of Al-Azhar University as being indicative of a certain duality in this society.

But this did not constitute the foundation of a genuine scientific community for all that, since Egypt's rulers were much more interested in scientific applications and the resulting techniques than in scientific development itself: European science, was transferred essentially through its association with certain techniques, with no research being contemplated at the time. Thus no scientific institution emerged on the banks of the Nile that was comparable with the academies, which the European capitals had acquired; certain fields of technical expertise (currency, weights and measures, etc.) that could have been assigned to centralized institutions of this kind were left to short-lived boards, for example.

The education system established by Muhammad 'Alī alongside the traditional system was also entirely subject to the purpose for which it had been created: supplying experts to government services, and nothing more. The pupils in government primary and secondary schools were thus intended solely to fill the national colleges. Even so, the Egyptian landscape unquestionably changed a great deal: in the course of the nineteenth century was introduced into Egyptian society new knowledge and new practices, sufficiently attested by a certain amount of research work, the foundation of the national colleges and the institutionalization of the medical and engineering professions. We are, so to speak, actually witnessing the creation of an Egyptian scientific *environment*.

The better to grasp the position of science in this Egyptian scientific environment, is to specifically reconsider very briefly the nature of these two projects. In both cases, the Arab scientific heritage, which was particularly rich, would be drawn upon, as if to place the development of science in Egypt within a certain historical continuity.

In inventing a new scientific language, the overwhelming majority of translators tried to reduce the use of borrowings from European languages, which were in fact relatively rare, and to adopt those solutions that most respected the cast of the

language by neatly matching the local fabric of science and language. To that end, they drew extensively on traditional scientific literature wherever possible, in particular undertaking systematic research into ancient works. Better still, the author was recently able to show that the translators of stonemasonry manuals had borrowed very considerably from the rich specialist vocabulary then in use among those in the building trade, thus demonstrating a concern to produce texts as far as possible in keeping with practices in the field.⁶ It is clear that this was not simply one of many technical solutions intended to compensate for the lack of Arabic equivalents for the French terms to be translated: it was, a matter of placing the new scientific language within a certain historical continuity.

The same determination is found when one studies the trend to spread scientific knowledge in the latter half of the century. One of the main vehicles for such popularization was unquestionably the magazine *Rawda al-madaris* ("Garden of the Schools"), which appeared twice a month between 1870 and 1877, publishing information on life in Egyptian schools, articles on a range of subjects both scientific and literary, and as a supplement, in successive instalments, school books or easily accessible works, a number of which remained incomplete. Medicine, mathematics, astronomy and botany thus rubbed shoulders with geography, rhetoric, theology and literature. Other magazines at least partly devoted to the popularization of science appeared and proliferated during the last decades of the century. The most famous was undoubtedly *al-Muqtataf*, which was founded in Beirut in 1876 and moved to Cairo in 1885. But other titles could also be mentioned.

According to these texts, science is never imagined as an essentially Western product; contrary to what we read in most Western observers, for whom the residual traditional scientific activity seems to pertain to an obsolete science virtually unconnected with European science, the country's recent scientific development is never presented as the result of a modernization that would imply a radical difference between the position occupied by science during the golden age of Islamic civilization and that which it was assigned in the nineteenth century. On the contrary, the view usually expounded in the introductions to the books and textbooks of the time, combined with reminders of the practical utility of scientific knowledge, was that science had *almost* disappeared among the dwellers on the banks of the Nile and that it was only fair that it should *regain* its rightful place. In addition, the educational power of science was often emphasized.

This pursuit of a legitimacy for the sciences that was not based solely on the technical progress they made possible, together with the interest taken in them by the authorities, who gave them a much broader role than had originally been the intention, seems to us unquestionably one of the – unrecognized – features of the period. This attitude was nevertheless to disappear during the British occupation. The generation that would have perpetuated it was to be banished: some would be compulsorily retired, being regarded by the new power as obstacles to the remodelling of an education system now based on very different views; all were to be stripped of genuine decision-making power; generation replacement was no longer guaranteed; Egyptian teachers in the national colleges would all be replaced

6. Pascal Crozet, "Entre science et art : la géométrie descriptive et ses applications à l'épreuve de la traduction", *Traduire, transposer, naturaliser : la formation d'une langue scientifique moderne hors des frontières de l'Europe au XIX^e siècle*, Pascal Crozet and Annick Horiuchi (eds), L'Harmattan (Paris, 2004), pp. 171-200.

by British ones, while English was permanently substituted for Arabic as the language of instruction. Consequently, like Muhammad 'Ali's industrialization plans, the projects of the nineteenth-century Egyptian scientists were to die with them.

The fundamental idea upon which the views of these Egyptian scientists seem to rest was that science was not essentially European but belonged to everybody – and also that there could not be more than one type of human rationality or historical positivism. It is true that this idea is not expressed explicitly by nineteenth-century figures, but this is for a simple reason: *it was self-evident at the time*. It was to appear implicitly only later – too late – precisely when it was a matter of emphasizing the nature of the rhetoric used to combat it by certain British officials, who peremptorily declared that Arabic was unsuitable for scientific discourse and that European know-how was useless without European authority.

By Way of Conclusion: a Brief Comparison with the Japanese Situation

A comparison with modernization in Japan will, in some ways explain a number of the factors that could have led to Egypt's failures, since the two experiences unquestionably have numerous points in common.

In both cases one deals with independent states that modernized and introduced European science and technology to counter European expansion. In both cases this modernization began by giving priority to the military aspect before subsequently opening up to civilian applications, from the 1830s in Egypt, and essentially with the 1867 Meiji Restoration in Japan. In both cases, one of the first tasks to be accomplished in order to introduce European science was to invent a scientific language, in Arabic and in Japanese. Again, in both cases the existence of a rich scientific heritage that must be taken into consideration can be observed: the presence of representatives of traditional Japanese mathematics (*wasan*) in the Tokyo Mathematical Society when a new scientific vocabulary was being decided upon is one example. Furthermore, some scientists seem to have followed the same path: this was the case for some of the first students sent to study in Europe – Muhammad Bayyūmī in Egypt and Kikuchi Dairoku in Japan, for example – who chose to invest their efforts in the project to create a scientific language and in the writing of textbooks rather than engaging in international-level research. On the subject of language, there is reluctance in both cases with regard to borrowings from European languages, a reluctance that was to soften in the following century. In short, the points in common seem fairly numerous.

The divergent fates of these two experiences nevertheless suggest that other factors, doubtless more important, must have come into play to differentiate them. There are certainly social and cultural aspects that could undoubtedly have played a major role. But, to conclude, attention should be drawn to two factors, which seem essential for an understanding of the Egyptian failures in terms of the Japanese successes.

The first factor arises from Egypt's geographical position: lying on the route to the Indies, the country was coveted by the European powers from the beginning of the nineteenth century in a way that Japan never was. The significance of this

factor both for the failure of Muhammad 'Ali's attempt at industrialization and for the gradual annexation of the Egyptian economy by foreign interests, has been mentioned above.

The second factor is a consequence of the first and particularly of the colonial situation prevailing in Egypt from the final years of the nineteenth century. It concerns the relationship of the champions of the new science with their own scientific heritage. It was of their own accord that Japanese scientists consigned the *wasan* mathematical tradition to history after discussions in the Tokyo Mathematical Society in which *wasanka* were able to participate.⁷ In Egypt, on the other hand, this historical continuity, followed steadfastly throughout the nineteenth century, was broken from outside by the British occupiers. This was an event of unquestionable importance, which could only be lamented subsequently by scientists of international stature such as 'Ali Mustafa Musharafa (1898-1950), who would see it as a major obstacle to the country's scientific development; Musharafa was thus to write in the 1940s:

In Egypt we pass on the knowledge of others, and then we leave it floating, unrelated to our past and unconnected with our land; it is a foreign commodity, foreign in its features, foreign in its words, and foreign in its concepts. If we refer to theories, we associate them with foreign names whose features we barely recognize; if we express concepts, it is with intimidating words that put thought to flight and disturb the imagination.⁸

Does this therefore suggest that the appropriation of modern scientific knowledge, the precondition for genuine independent scientific development, can occur only at the cost of reconciliation with one's own history?

7. See, for example, Annick Horiuchi, "Langues mathématiques de Meiji : à la recherche du consensus ?", *Traduire, transposer, naturaliser*, op. cit., pp. 43-70.

8. Quoted by Roshdi Rashed, "Recherche scientifique et modernisation en Egypte : l'exemple de Ali Mustafa Musharafa (1898-1950). Etude d'un type idéal", *Entre réforme sociale et mouvement national. Identité et modernisation en Egypte (1882-1962)*, Alain Roussillon (ed.), CEDEJ (Cairo, 1995), pp. 275-284 (more specifically pp. 282-283).

Sharing Modernity: Japan and the Arab World

Abstract of presentation by Burhan Ghalioun
Professor, University of Paris III, France

Introduction: Rethinking the History of Modernity

The abrupt arrival of modernity and its corollary, the modernization processes begun by all societies since the eighteenth century, has been a major preoccupation of institutional thought in the past few decades. From the Frankfurt School's criticism of the discourse of modernity to the many more recent essays on the crisis of modernity and postmodernity, the whole of contemporary thinking seems to be a sort of inquiry into the sense, import and destiny of a modernity that is both innovative and destructive. The debate on modernity has offered modern thought an opportunity to resume conceptual work on seemingly forgotten classical themes and to reopen ethical, political and philosophical problems.

Unfortunately, most of the thinking so far on the import and evolution of modernity has related to the West and to modernity as it developed in those societies. The value of this interregional dialogue lies in the attempt to encourage reflection on the evolution of modernity in non-Western societies. In these societies, which do not share the same history, the same geopolitics or the same cultural heritage, modernity did not emerge from within the regional civilization as a sort of reconfiguration, as was the case in Western societies, but was imposed from outside as a necessity, a constraint and an obligation for survival. It thus entailed the introduction of differences or even splits in both time and space. Its progress coincided with breaks that these societies were obliged to make in their historical continuity and their cultures, and even in their ways of identifying themselves.

Far from being the outcome of a simple act of adapting to and imitating new ways of life and thinking by newcomers, as it has often been described, modernity is, on the contrary, a highly complex and hazardous change, entailing a heterogeneous mixture of internal and external wars, destruction, alienation, individual withdrawal, assimilation of new references, unlearning, subjectivization and fragmentation.

This is demonstrated by the Arab example. The modernity that is now the main theme of the debate on our civilization and the future development of all our societies is even more central to thinking on the Arab world. The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the majority of Muslim countries, with the consequent spread of deadly attacks across the world, disturbs both political leaders and ordinary citizens.

This unexpected return of religion and its political instrumentalization is today indicative, for most observers, of the problems experienced by the Arabs in breaking with the past. Without going so far as to assert their inability to embark firmly on the path of modernity like the rest of humanity, many researchers, echoing broad swathes of international opinion, including in Arab countries, see the rise of Islam as a consequence of the failure of the modernization project initiated in the region two centuries ago. Some attribute this failure to the nature of the Muslim religion, whose very doctrine is supposed to prohibit separation of the spiritual from the temporal. Others see it as a consequence of the Arabs' rejection of the values of modernity

through fear of losing their identity or their honor by having to accept a modernity originating in the “hostile” culture of the West.

But notwithstanding these interpretations inspired by current events and usually prompted by political and ideological choices, there is no doubt that the Arab world’s relationship to modernity today is highly problematic. This is clearly demonstrated by the latest studies carried out by local and international institutions on the condition of worsening “under-modernization” suffered by the Arab world at the dawn of the twenty-first century.

Thus the comparison of the achievements of the Arab world on the path to modernization with what other cultural areas have been able to achieve since the end of the nineteenth century (constantly referred to by Arab authors) returns in an acute form today. It is of even greater interest when this comparison is with the modernization of Japan. For ever since the beginning of the twentieth century Arab scholars have continually and persistently compared the results of their modernization with those of the Japanese, on the one hand in order to understand why they found it so difficult to make headway on the road to modernization and on the other because of the exemplary character of the latter’s success in a country with an Asian and Oriental culture. Indeed, here are two radically contrasting outcomes of a modernization that seemed to be shared at the outset: the dazzling success of Japan and the exemplary failure of the Arab world, which, according to some, exceeds any other modernization failure throughout the world.

A comparison of the Japanese and Arab experiences has also been the source of the emergence of a whole set of issues, with numerous questions raised by Arabs concerning modernity: its import, their relationship to it, the compatibility of its values with those of tradition, the causes of societies’ historical failure or success and their capacity to rise to the level of universalism.

Modernity and Culture

The initial arguments put forward to explain the problems arising from modernization of the Arab world were considerably influenced by the ethnological approaches prevailing in the nineteenth century concurrently with the advance of colonization. The mental habits, customs and specific racial or cultural characteristics of each people were perceived to be the determining factors in the outcome of modernization, since they were primarily responsible for defining the attitudes and strategies of societies and individuals.

Thus, under the influence of ethnological approaches, Arab intellectuals slanted their explanations mainly towards ethical and educational questions. In this connection, a body of work, including Edward Lane’s book, *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, was translated into Arabic and played a major part in establishing the moralistic approach to modernization in Egypt and the Arab world. The central idea disseminated by this ethnographic literature can be summed up by the argument that Arab indolence is not compatible with modernity, which presupposes a culture of effort and discipline. Thus, discussion of all the issues relating to the *Nahda* and the Muslim reformist movement focused more on criticism of the traditional ethics, attitudes, thought and cultures that were claimed to debar Muslim societies from technical and intellectual innovation and thus condemn them

to stagnation than on questions of institution-building, law and politics. Conservatism, fatalism, perversion of religious faith, abandoning the path of rational thought, saint worship, self-absorption and refusal of innovation, which the critical thinkers of the *Nahda* and the reformist movement were continually condemning, were seen as the outward signs of a specific culture: that of decadence, which should on no account be confused with Arab and Islamic culture.

Even today, culturalist theories still take precedence in attempts to explain the backwardness of Arab societies. Modern Arab critics and philosophers are divided between those who, to remedy this ethical and rational deficit, are banking on a rehabilitation of classical Arab culture once it has been dissociated from its irrational aspects and those who count instead on increased borrowing from the West, which alone is able, in their opinion, to inspire their compatriots with the values of rationalism, liberalism, nationalism, historicism and positive action essential for embarking on modernity. In the first case it is, above all, the decay of the religious tradition that is identified as the main factor in the spread of those beliefs and practices that, for more than a thousand years, have been destroying Muslims' innovative and creative spirit and condemning them to decline. The suspension of *ijtihad* (utmost intellectual endeavour to reinterpret religious texts) and the defeat of rationalist philosophical currents such as Mu'tazilism and Averroism are here presented as the direct cause of the degeneration of secular and religious Arab culture. In the second case, it is argued that one must rely on the development of modern education, thought and training to overcome problems in assimilating the values of modernity.

However, neither the rehabilitation of Islam and classical Arab culture – synonymous with rationalism, liberalism and justice – nor a transformation of thought and of the education and training system has been able to meet the challenge of progress. Ever since the nineteenth century, the Arab world has continued to suffer from backwardness, an inability to meet the demands of modernity and the absence of a drive for modernization and endogenous development.

In fact, a rehabilitation of classical culture is not tantamount to adopting the principles of modernity. It may even have unforeseen undesirable effects. As A. Laroui has pointed out, by endeavouring to modernize it, religious reformists have once again rescued traditional thought in other forms. And, as has been emphasized more recently by B. Lewis, preaching a return to the roots of authentic Islam was one thing, but looking for solutions in the practices and theories of Christians was another and, according to the ideas of the time, a patent absurdity. On the other hand, in the absence of a promising socio-political environment and genuine economic prospects, modern education and training systems have not succeeded in engendering the desired rational attitudes or in stimulating production of the technical and scientific knowledge needed for innovation and modernization.

Modernity and Modernization: a Few Observations on Methodology

The cultural theories developed in the wake of ethnographic and ethnological theories still predominate in today's explanations of modernization. From this point of view, nations' achievements would appear to match the capacities of their respective

cultures to adapt to modernity or even to contain modern values and principles in embryo. Thus all communities as cultural communities tend to be identified or in terms of cultural areas and to interpret the individual fate of each as the result of its culture or its culture's attitude to modernity. In this way, modernization questions have been successfully voided of all the following dimensions: political (structure of power and of government), sociological (role of social groups, classes and élites), economic (resources, forces and relations of production) and geopolitical (strategic issues involved in any change).

In order not to fall into the naive approach linking the outcome of a country's modernization processes with its culture while reducing the idea of culture to the notion of a fixed cultural heritage, the instruments of thought and analysis prior to any comparison, must be refined .

The author upholds the following arguments here:

- 1•Modernization must not be confused with modernity. While modernity is a genuine innovation that occurs without people's knowledge and entails far-reaching mental and physical transformations in the long term, modernization is merely the phenomenon of dissemination of innovations necessarily produced in a clearly defined area and through a convergence of causes that is unlikely to be repeated.

This means that cultures which have not experienced the initial innovation do not have to recreate the same conditions that led to modernity. They can acquire them through learning and force of habit, which are natural mechanisms in all cultures. Dissemination of innovations does not require any conjunction of special factors. It happens automatically everywhere as soon as societies and cultures learn of their existence. Apart from isolated ethnic groups in forests, all cultures throughout the world have reincorporated innovations from technical revolutions since the Stone Age. This is possible for all cultures. It is the opposite phenomenon that raises problems.

Modern theories have demonstrated, moreover; that culture is never a monolithic entity but always consists of a set of subcultures which interfere or co-exist with one another without taking into account the contradictions that their make-up may involve. This is also what happened in Europe in the past.

History has further shown that all major nations or cultural communities have taken very concrete steps, often without coercion or procrastination, to adjust the structures of their societies to modernity. This was the case in the Russia of Peter the Great (1672-1752), for example, as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century. It was also the case for Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, Japan, India, China and Latin America in the nineteenth century, and then for all other societies in the twentieth century.

- 2•Modernization is not a matter of a simple cultural choice. It is a major historical struggle with many different material, ideological, political and strategic issues at stake. It involves players who do not all have the same interests in the transformations that it brings. It creates threats to internal and external forces, which lead to reactions and resistance that may be more

or less effective. Thus it is not enough to choose modernity in order to have it. It is not in the interests of the industrialized countries, which through their scientific and technological advance and their strategic, economic and military position control global markets and resources, to allow new nations access to the same technology and progress and to have them as competitors. In fact, it is very much in their interests to maintain the status quo.

However, quite apart from culture, nations aspiring to modernity have to win not only the battle of ideas and interests within their societies but, more importantly still, the battle against nations which hold or seek to hold a monopoly of modernity's intellectual and material resources in order to secure positions of supremacy and privilege. The outcome of these multiple battles also depends on the nature of the forces involved, the strategies adopted, the obstacles encountered and the specific circumstances at the time when they are attempting to enter the system. For these reasons, modernization processes must be regarded not as the straightforward act of merely enforcing legal and political decisions but as a real and complex struggle pitting internal and external modernizing forces against sometimes more powerful forces, and of which the outcome is never certain. It is, moreover, on the outcome of this confrontation that the quality and structure of the resulting modernization will depend.

- 3• Contrary to modernity, which is distinguished by its singularity, modernization is many-faceted. It is necessarily uneven – scattered and fragmented through time and space. It occurs independently or contingently, completely or partially, wholly or selectively, radically or superficially, continuously or reversibly. It depends on the specific material, logistical and intellectual conditions that have determined the action of societies. It is a historical experience whose outcome is contingent on both objective and subjective conditions and depends on the moral and intellectual quality of the players (states, classes, elites and multifarious social groups), those who are asserting their right to modernity, and above all those who oppose it both inside and outside the society. Not only is this historical experience not a simple expression of nations' cultures, but it is itself the creator of a culture, that of the modernity just as it is going to be realized, in a specific form and under specific circumstances.

This accounts for the fact that there cannot be a single model of modernization; there can only be innumerable different methods of dealing with modernity. It is also the reason why appropriation of modernity is not the same in all societies. It can happen in various ways: dynamic or unchanging, organized or chaotic, completed or hindered, creative or imitative. The result is visible today in the diversity that can be observed in the practice of modernity throughout the world. It is a differentiated modernity.

However, these various currents of modernization must not obscure the main point, namely, societies' different routes to modernity and therefore the specific relationship of each community to its rational and material values, rather than various types of modernity with different contents.

Today, societies are not differentiated by the varying nature of their modernity. They are all rooted in the same order of truth, action and ideas.

They are differentiated not by the fact that some are being modernized or have made a success of their modernization while others remain traditional and resist modernity – as certain ethnocentric intellectual tendencies would have people believe – but by the method of their modernization.

For this reason, regardless of enduring traditional cultures, socio-economic structures and geostrategic position, the modernization approach developed by the Western countries from the eighteenth century onwards is no different in content from the approaches adopted by other countries such as Japan, Egypt or even certain parent states in colonized territories. They were all based on absorption and assimilation of science and technological know-how together with the establishment of a rational bureaucratic administration, accountable political authority independent of clannish powers, and a buoyant manufacturing economy. The difference lies rather in the form of modernity resulting from these approaches and the relationship between its various elements and levels as well as with centers of modernity.

Instead of talking about the success or failure of modernization, which suggests that some societies have remained outside modernity because of their failure, one should speak of forms of modernization.

In any case, despite appearances, universalization of the values of modernity has been a dominant theme of the whole history of humanity for at least two centuries. It became necessary to embark on modernization everywhere despite all the resistance that it was to come up against at the outset. Irrespective of the nature or quality of their cultures, all national élites realized the importance for the survival of their states or empires of adjusting their ways of life, working and thinking to the standards of modern civilization. Societies that were initially reluctant had to pay a higher price for their delay, as in the case of China, whose internal divisions prevented effective modernization until the beginning of the twentieth century. Societies which, for one reason or another, did not succeed in making this adjustment, fell apart and saw their governments disappear.

However, all the societies that we know today have been shaped by modernity. Even those that we may suspect of being still strongly marked by tradition actually obey the logic of global modernity. The industrialized countries are distinguished from other countries in the South not by the fact of their modernity but by their specific types of modernization, which may be called complete, whereas in many other countries this modernization has taken on somewhat distorted or incomplete forms. Thus, in any comparison of modernization routes we must avoid contrasting two categories of society: one called “modern”, having made a success of modernization, and the other called “traditional”, having failed and ended up outside modernity. No contemporary society exists outside modernity or in its own particular time, even if we do not all live in the same type of modernity and we do not all have the same relationship to it.

Given these methodological considerations, a comparison can be made between the different modes of modernization that have shaped the experience of nations and their relationship to what should now be called a shared modernity, which is going through a major existential crisis.

4• Three patterns of modernization can be singled out:

- Liberal modernization;
- Forcible state modernization;
- Colonial and neocolonial modernization.

In the main Western countries, modernity arrived not by way of forcible modernization but as the outcome of a convergence between state policies and socio-ethical developments within the societies concerned. It arose from a long process of collapse of the old feudal order and the underlying formation of a new social, political, economic and cultural order. This was a self-referential type of modernity, containing within itself the dynamics of its own development. It spawned a centralized, inventive, integrating and open-ended form of modernity. In view of the high level of cohesion common between the various economic, political and cultural spheres in the society undergoing change, recourse to coercion to complete the transition to, and implementation of, modernity seems less frequent and general than in other modes of modernization. Thus the emergence of modernity was accompanied by affirmation of the values of freedom, equality, law and solidarity. It was established as a completion and emancipation.

This was not the case in the other processes of state modernization. All the old empires that were caught unawares by the rise of Europe and the threats that this posed to them embarked on more or less ambitious and effective modernization projects. They all adopted the method of forcible transformation supported by a (supposedly) rational bureaucracy and an omnipresent and totalitarian state. However, Japan was the only country to enter modernity quickly by means of forcible and self-referential modernization, thanks to its intellectual resources and particularly favourable circumstances. The other old empires, transformed into major modern nations, are still struggling to complete this modernization, whose substance is nothing less than the restructuring of societies on new foundations and according to new political, ethical and epistemological principles.

However, there is another type of modernization which, while transforming the mental and physical structures of traditional societies along the lines of modernity, did not help to restructure them and even undermined their deep-seated balances, accentuated their disintegration and helped to destroy their structures. This could take extreme forms in the case, for example, of settlement colonization when the so-called indigenous population was faced with competition or even decimated and replaced with a new population of European origin. But the modernization of old provinces could take less aggressive forms. Most of the societies which, at the time when modern Europe was expanding, did not have the resources or favourable circumstances to undertake and control the process of transformation themselves had to suffer the fate of colonies, whose economies and human and material resources were managed in line with the needs of the parent countries. Decolonization changed the nature of such cannibalization of subject societies by the major powers but did not eliminate it. This meant

that the majority of peoples, naturally living outside the large empires that had successfully managed their own transformations and conversions, did not experience and were not to experience modernity other than in its neocolonial structure-destroying version, which made the choices and pace of modernization, and the sectors marked out for it, subject to the requirements of the industrialized powers' economies and global strategies. As a result, the modernization that those societies have experienced remains, whatever the region or culture, dependent, imitative, partial, unfinished, reversible, disorganized and sometimes even synonymous with chaos.

In this case, Japan's spectacular development is the result, not of its success in modernization, but of a centralized form of the latter that it succeeded in establishing. Similarly, the persistent backwardness of the Arab world is due not to its failure in assimilating the elements of modernity but to the peripheral and dependent form of modernization imposed upon it.

Conclusions: Towards a Shared Modernity

Modernity has drawn all societies into one and the same civilizational period. All societies are now following the same path, even if they are not doing so in the same manner or with the same chances of success.

In their determination to leave behind the traditional order and enter the age of the industrial revolution, all non-Western societies adopted despotic state methods in order to catch up as quickly as possible. In societies where forcible industrialization did not yield the expected results, crisis led to a tragic collapse of existing sociopolitical state systems.

It led many of these countries to revise their traditional strategies in order to accept colonial or neocolonial integration in a world market and economy dominated by the major industrial powers.

Wherever palpable progress was made, the return to normality occurred more calmly and pacifically. Political normalization took the form of reconciliation with the values of liberal modernity, leading to a gradual democratic transition. In the Arab world, this normalization is still being delayed by the role assigned by the international system to authoritarian power in order to maintain order and security in dispossessed societies in revolt.

While the collapse of communism has opened up Europe for the entry of the countries of Central Europe and the former Soviet Union into the Western system of democracy and the free-market economy, the only thing on offer to Arab countries, ostracized on account of the global war against terrorism, is the plan for reform and democratization under consideration in Western diplomatic circles. Imposed on Arab governments that have more or less rejected it, this plan for restructuring the region looks very much like an international mandate for control and surveillance of the Arab world.

However, the refusal to admit Arab countries to the club of European democracy is not the only factor delaying this transition. It has doubtless been abetted by the development of a divided consciousness arising out of the relationship of conflict with modernity that we have just been examining.

In view of the unfavourable internal and external conditions, the chances for democratization, socio-economic development and intellectual emancipation do not seem very great at the moment. Prospects for change are slim in comparison with the forces of inertia and conservatism. The state of crisis and decline is thus likely to continue. Only two ways out are possible: either a peaceful civil revolution for a general emancipation from dual internal and external domination, which would lead to the destruction of deep-rooted authoritarian systems and, in their wake, abolition of the neocolonial order in the Middle East, or else the establishment of a partnership between Arab countries and the industrial powers, offering the peoples of the region genuine prospects of integration and inclusion in the economics, politics and values of our civilization. Just as continued exclusion condemns populations to asphyxiation and drives them ineluctably to confrontation and war; so recognition and involvement develop their sense of responsibility and encourage sharing. Only a rewarding, stimulating and status-enhancing modernization holds the key to a shared modernity.

Cultural Diversity and Modernization: For a Cross-Regional Dialogue

Said Al-Kitani

Director, Office of the Minister of Education,
Oman

Introduction

The attempt to globalize the cultures of the world is not new. This phenomenon has its roots in the history of humankind. Nations around the globe attempted to “market” their civilizations and cultures through violent means, such as wars or peaceful means, such as education and trade. However, the history of humankind tells us that those attempts have never been successful; cultures tended to interact but never replaced one another. Therefore, in the current great debate over globalization, this phenomenon should be regarded as a means of allowing more interaction among nations and more dialogue among civilizations and cultures.

This view of globalization is dictated by the common environmental, health and economic risks that have begun to face the world since the beginning of the twentieth century. Today, nations of the world realize that they are facing common risks and dangers that urgently require shared solutions. Such solutions can be reached and shared through establishing networks of serious dialogue among nations and cultures around the world: a role that UNESCO successfully fulfills in today's world. The initiative of “Japan-Arab dialogue” comes under this umbrella.

The first question that might be posed in this regard is: “Why focus on Japan and the Arab world in particular?” In fact, there is much in common between Japan and the Arab world. Both have a long, rich history that extends back thousands of years with very similar value systems. More importantly, both had experienced almost the same political and social conditions during the nineteenth and part of the twentieth centuries. Documents of this period from both Japan and some countries of the Arab world reveal that there was considerable communication between the two regions in relation to prevailing political conditions.

Apart from some geographical and demographical differences between Japan and the Arab world, both had the same opportunities to enter the twentieth century with great social, economic and scientific advances. However, while Japan has achieved much in these areas, the most recent United Nations Human Development Report asserts that the Arab world is still suffering from the same problems of the last century in relation to human resources development and that no substantial progress has been made. There are certainly lessons to be learnt from the Japanese experience in this regard. The author attempts to summarize some of those lessons as offered by those who have studied this timely topic.

Brief Historical Background

The cultural and social developments of any society are a result of its past experiences. Japan and the Arab world are no exceptions to this universal law of

history. Therefore, in order to understand the present one needs to step back and examine the history of the phenomenon under study.

The history of Japan is mainly influenced by three religions: Shinto, the original religion of Japanese people; Confucianism, which was established by the illustrious Chinese thinker more than 2500 years ago; and Buddhism, which reached Japan from India. These three religions played a great role in shaping the Japanese philosophy of life throughout history. Similarly, the Arab world's history was influenced by three religions, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These three religions played, and are continuing to play, a great role in shaping the identity of the peoples of the Arab world.

All of the above-mentioned religions are concerned with defining good and evil, and encouraging people to support good and abandon evil. This, in part, explains the closeness of Eastern cultures today. From this historical background, the author offers a brief account of the political and social developments in Japan and the Arab world during the nineteenth century, which had a considerable impact on subsequent events.

The Arab World during the Nineteenth Century

During the nineteenth century, most of the Arab world was part of the Ottoman Empire. The only Arab state that could be compared to Japan in terms of political and social development at that time was Egypt in the period of Muhammed `Alī Pasha and his successors. Thus, Egypt is regarded as the best example of an Arab country that could be one of the developed countries in the world if internal and external political environments had been conducive at that time.

Muhammad `Alī became the ruler of Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century (1805). Egypt was then facing both internal and external political challenges. Internally, Muhammad `Alī had to rebuild the Egyptian army after his difficult rise to power. In addition, he had to introduce serious reforms to social and economic structures, as will be explained below. Externally, French and British forces were competing to control Egypt for political reasons due to its strategic location.

Muhammad `Alī started his reforms by re-building the Egyptian army. The first step was to eliminate the Mamluk military forces that previously held sway in Egypt. The second step was to recruit and train new soldiers for his army and develop military-related industries in Egypt. It is during this period that Muhammad `Alī depended on foreign experts to achieve these tasks. Official documents show, for example, that he called upon Colonel Joseph Seves to train some units in his army and selected the engineer Pascal Cost to manage a gunpowder factory and other industrial projects.

This period in Egyptian history also witnessed very significant social and economic reforms. Muhammad `Alī introduced a taxation law in 1813 after completing a comprehensive survey of agricultural lands and passing new laws regarding the terms and conditions of land ownership. More importantly, Muhammad `Alī made all possible efforts to establish a strong industrial base and encouraged the arrival of labour from the Mediterranean region, East African and European countries to work in the new industries.

From the beginning of his rule, Muhammad `Alī realized the importance of human resources in social development. In 1814, Egypt carried out a national census,

which revealed that the Egyptian population at that time numbered only three million, which highlighted the urgent need for a skilled workforce to satisfy Muhammad Ali's ambitions for Egypt's economic and political development. For this reason, improving education became one of Muhammad `Ali's foremost priorities. He encouraged education at all levels and established numerous elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, Egyptian students were sent abroad to European countries such as France, Britain and Austria to continue their studies in various fields of science.

The rapid change that were underway in Egypt ran counter to the external political forces that were competing to control Egypt. Therefore, those forces attempted to prevent Egypt from expanding its influence and building a strong nation. This was achieved through warning the Ottoman Sultan against Muhammad `Ali and his "ambitions". This was the beginning of the end; external political forces found their way to both the Ottoman Sultan and Muhammad `Ali.

Japan during the Nineteenth Century

The author focuses on the end of the Tokugawa era and the beginning of the Meiji era (1868). During this period, the treaties that foreign countries imposed on the previous government of Japan were rejected by the new Japanese ruler. Moreover, the new Emperor called for comprehensive administrative and financial reforms in Japan. As a result, he had to engage in war against those who opposed reforms. These reforms had been based on imperial principles that emphasized the importance of national unity, equality among people, protection of public interests and the significance of modern culture and education. The reforms included the introduction a new system of educational and agricultural reforms, tax reforms, press reforms and others.

More importantly, during this period the Meiji government started to send students abroad to enable them to acquire modern knowledge in various fields of science. At the time, Japan depended on foreign expertise for its development plans. Some studies show the following number of foreign advisors and consultants in Japan between 1881 and 1898: 776 British, 290 Germans, 388 Americans, 121 French, 51 Dutch, 41 Italians, 14 Swiss and numerous foreigners at lower levels.

Japan realized that its future development depended on industry rather than agriculture. Therefore, it developed laws and regulations that directed farmers towards cities in order to create the human resource base that was necessary for modern industries. One of the outstanding features of this period was the policy of privatization of industries. The Meiji era started by controlling and developing the major economic establishments. However, the growth of those establishments brought a number of financial challenges, to which the Japanese government responded by privatization, for the first time in Japanese history.

Lessons to Be Learned

This very brief account of the attempts to modernize both in Egypt and Japan during the nineteenth century shows that the two experiences have many points in common, and this raises very serious questions. Numerous studies conducted during the last few decades focused on the Japanese experience and the astonishing achievements it brought about. In the context of this very important initiative to

foster the Arab-Japanese dialogue, the author once again raises these questions, which will hopefully provide some insights on how to carry this dialogue further in the present context.

It is clear that both Egypt and Japan, were subjected to enormous internal and external political pressures during the nineteenth century. An important objective of both Muhammad 'Alī and the Meiji emperor was to alleviate those pressures. Due to the historical and religious differences between Egypt and Japan, this was accomplished differently in the two countries. It can be argued that the religious position of the emperor in Japan played a great role in convincing the people to accept the new changes that had been occurring since the Meiji emperor came to power. Nevertheless, this is not the only factor that can explain the difference of experiences. The most important reason for success was introducing well-intended reforms that aimed at protecting the two countries from external influences and achieving social equality.

It is clear that both countries acknowledged the lack of an adequately educated and trained workforce that was necessary for achieving the reform plans. Therefore, they depended on foreign expertise in developing various sectors. That expertise came mainly from Western countries. At the same time, both countries made all possible efforts to prepare their national workforce through improving local educational systems and sending students abroad to specialize in fields of science unavailable locally. For Japan, this was a temporary transitional period, while Egypt "Westernized" its culture for a longer period.

Although both countries understood the significance of education, it is also true that both countries allocated large budgets for building national armies that could protect them from internal or external enemies. While this was a matter of national security, some sort of balance was needed in order to achieve equally important development in the social sectors. This posed a problem in Egypt. Scholars who wrote on the issue indicated that most of the budget of Egypt at that time was spent on the army, at the expense of other areas, such as education.

Finally, it can be argued that one of the most crucial lessons to be learned from these two experiences is the role of value systems in bringing about change. Japan could ensure smooth interaction between the Japanese identity and culture and emerging modern society. Most importantly, the Japanese traditional culture and values have always penetrated the very fabric of modern culture without serious resistance to new changes. In fact, this is as true today as it was in past when the samurai surprisingly accepted without serious resistance to join the emperor's project for reforming Japan. This historical perspective can serve to encourage the skill formation model prevalent in East Asia, particularly in Japan.

Illustrations



Symposium participants



1. Mr Teiichi Sato
2. Mr Koichiro Matsuura
3. Mr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan
4. Mrs Atsuko Toyama
5. Mr Abdulrazzak Al Nafisi
6. Mr Mounir Bouchenaki
7. Mr Roshdi Rashed
8. Mr Tamotsu Aoki
9. Mrs Katérina Stenou

The creative process

Calligraphy demonstration by Master Massoudy



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Master calligraphers at work

Calligraphy demonstration by Master Tanaka



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Scenes from the podium



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- 14. Opening of the symposium
- 15. Working session
- 16. Presentation of the T-shirt specially designed for the symposium



16

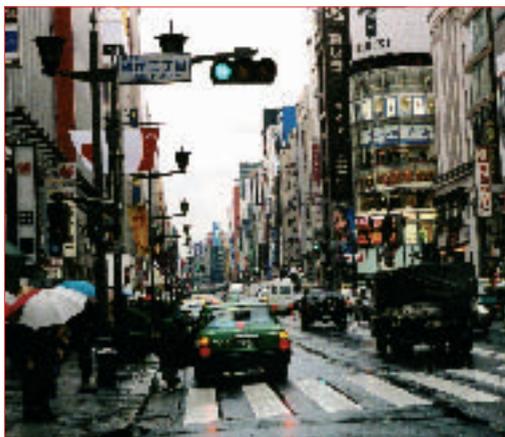


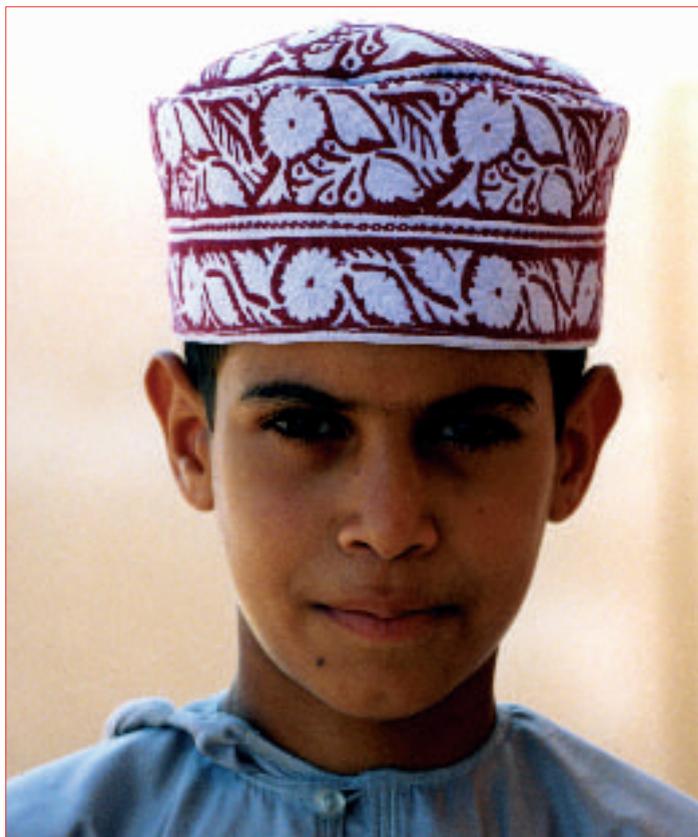
Timeless images and scenes from everyday life

A selection from the photograph exhibition
on display during the symposium









Session 2

Exploring the Common Goal: Sustaining Cultural Diversity

Introduction

The main purpose of this session is to find a way of identifying and working with problems of universal significance common to all human societies in the world today from the Arab-Japanese point of view. To discuss these problems, there are two important issues to be taken into consideration: the problem of globalization on the one hand and the problem of cultural diversity on the other hand, but of course these two problems are closely connected. Globalization is having a major effect on culture. What are the characteristics of the contemporary culture being exposed to these effects? The problem of contemporary culture from the concrete perception that Arabs and Japanese have of their respective countries, regions and societies has to be considered.

Cultural diversity should be preserved, but what does it mean to preserve cultural diversity in a situation where various forms of exogenous and endogenous change are occurring? In the case of culture, what are the values that should be preserved? Does cultural difference necessarily lead to conflict (the clash of cultures)? Is there such a thing as “universal values” that should be respected and maintained by all people and all cultures irrespective of their differences? Are there any “universal values” that should be promoted in common, regardless of the difference between states, societies or regions? There are many questions surrounding this problem, which is very crucial and important for the world today. This session attempts to answer these questions from the Arab-Japanese perspective.

Each speaker treats globalization and cultural diversity as being more or less related to each other:

The following five papers are presented here:

- Globalization, Cultural Diversity and Japanese Culture: For the Development of a Multicultural World (Tamotsu Aoki, keynote speech)
- Japan, the Arab Countries and Cultural Diversity (Bassam Tayara)
- Managing Cultural Diversity: From Perspective to Advocacy (Abdelmalek Mansour Hassan)
- Between Tolerance and Intolerance: How Can We Achieve Cultural Pluralism with Muslims? (Masanori Naito)
- Methodological Cosmopolitanism: How to Maintain Cultural Diversity Despite Economic and Cultural Globalization? (Hans-Georg Soeffner)

The five papers above can be divided into three groups:

First, the papers concerning a rather general view on globalization and cultural diversity (Tamotsu Aoki and Abdelmalek Mansour Hassan); second, the papers concerning a comparative view of Arab and Japanese culture (Bassam Tayara and Masanori Naito); and third, the paper concerning a viewpoint from the European Union and Germany (Hans-Georg Soeffner).

Here, the papers are presented in this order. However, it should be noted with regret that due to limitations each paper could not be published in its entirety.

On the basis of the documents presented hereafter; and of the discussions, the following recommendations and remarks may be made:

I•Understanding Globalization

Globalization is a great wave of change affecting the whole world today. Since the sixteenth century, such waves of change have been spreading throughout the world, especially in the non-Western world, where great changes have occurred at least twice during Westernization and modernization. Globalization has come as the third wave of great change, starting in the last quarter of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world has become multi-polarized, and there is no single overwhelming driving force promoting globalization. "Americanization" is only one form of change leading the world and human society. There is no longer any one model to which all the world aspires. However, it is very important to observe what globalization is bringing to the world: its only force is to make the world much more conformist and regardless of the cultural differences of human society.

II•Globalization and Culture

The speed of change in the process of globalization is accelerating as a result of the remarkable developments in information and communications technology. This is having a major effect on culture. The force of globalization is covering the world through its conformist effects and by creating a superficial sameness in peoples' everyday lives. Globalization is a very strong threatening power that could destroy the diversity of culture.

III•The Importance of Cultural Diversity

Under the current conditions of cultural change, what could it possibly mean to preserve cultural diversity? Although there are positive and negative aspects of cultural diversity, it is a fact that cultural diversity is fundamentally important. This is because being culturally and intellectually creative, and having the right to be different is an expression of human societies' and individuals' freedom. Cultural diversity is the natural embodiment of the fact that individuals are differently structured and constituted. To establish the most appropriate concept of cultural diversity, in order to gain a fuller and more accurate understanding of its current reality and future prospects, there must be a comprehensive and adequate assessment of the impacts of the traditions now in progress. More importantly, criteria should be established for determining what kind of cultural diversity is most desirable.

IV•Understanding Other Cultures

There are many differences between Arab and Japanese cultures, but it is however possible to learn about each culture and to understand each other. Basic necessity is to make good opportunities for both sides for mutual understanding. The history of relations between the Arab-Islamic world and Japan shows that there were few opportunities for direct knowledge of one another and that even when such opportunities occurred, they always came about, until recently,

through relations with the West. However, things are beginning to change in that both the Arab world and Japan have understood the importance of having a fuller knowledge of each other in the promotion of cultural exchange. Now Arabs and Japanese need to go beyond that, and to invest in studies on the ground and in an exchange of visits to explore their respective cultures and to get to know the different ways of life of the many regions that make up these two great populations.

V•**Tolerance and Cultural Values**

How can the cultural values of each country, society or region be maintained under the pressure of a great wave of change? In modern times, as the power of Western civilization became predominant, especially since the nineteenth century, Arabic, Japanese and other non-Western worlds were under the pressure of Westernization and modernization. Western civilization attempted to change the non-Western world according to its norms and value systems. This attitude of the Western civilization and its power to change other peoples' cultural values caused a feeling of threat among the non-Western people despite the benefits brought by Progressivism and Modernism. Still today, there are many prejudices, such as "Islamophobia", in the world. Tolerance towards and respect for the other's cultural values are needed now more than ever .

VI•**"Methodological Cosmopolitanism"**

In a globalizing world, the fact that people of every country and region have more or less contact with each other is almost unavoidable. In this situation, it is necessary to be somewhat cosmopolitan but it does not mean that cosmopolitanism must be imposed on each other. Rather it is necessary at present to try to develop a "methodological cosmopolitanism", which would mean interfacing the idea of a world citizenship in a methodological and systematic fashion with existing structures capable of providing the world not with a "world state", but instead with shared forums for exchange, such as UNESCO and the International Court of Justice.

VII•**The Creation of a Multicultural World**

The real world situation is that the force of arms tends to dominate. The preservation of cultural diversity should be seen as a basic form of protest against this situation by human beings and culture. It is ardently hoped that an age in which countries and regions throughout the world compete against each other using their charming and meaningful cultural strength, instead of arms, will come soon. Such a world would be called "multicultural". The Arab world and Japan should cooperate to create such a multicultural world in the coming century.

Globalization, Cultural Diversity and Japanese Culture: For the Development of a Multicultural World

Abstract of presentation by Tamotsu Aoki

Professor, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, Japan

Moderator of the session 2

The Significance of Globalization

When considering the issue of how to preserve cultural diversity, it is necessary first to investigate the phenomenon of globalization. The pervasive effects of globalization are now undeniably visible throughout the world. Great unprecedented change is now occurring everywhere. A particularly notable aspect of this change is the revolutionary development of information technology, which is having a remarkable effect on culture in every region of the world. The greatest influences of globalization are seen in the area of economics, especially in the expansion of the consumer economy, and in the area of culture, including language.

Let us reflect here on what globalization means for the world, and for human beings and culture, and first consider once again the significance of the great change that has occurred in the world. From the viewpoint of Asia, including Japan, change has come principally from the outside, at least since the beginning of the modern era. The first great wave of change came as a result of the worldwide expansion of Western Europe beginning in the age of maritime exploration in the sixteenth century. In most cases “Westernization” was identical to “colonization”, which spread its effects to nearly all the countries of Asia. Various forms of change were thus imposed upon Asia as a result of conquest and colonization. In many cases, indigenous and traditional cultures were forced to accept Westernization in the various fields of daily life, language and even religion.

The second phase of change began at the end of the nineteenth century and became particularly noteworthy in the twentieth century. This was the wave of modernization, which was to some degree a continuation of the previous phase of “Westernization-colonization”. In the mid-nineteenth century, Japan had little choice but to change course from a policy of isolationism (*sakoku*) to openness (*kaikoku*) in the face of pressure from the Western powers. As a state, and as a nation of people, Japan’s main task became the construction of a modern state and society to equal that of the West. Japan’s greatest modern thinker, Fukuzawa Yukichi, wrote in his *Outline of a Theory of Civilization* that the world at the end of the nineteenth century was divided into three stages according to the degree of progress attained. These three stages were “barbarian”, “half-civilized” and “civilized”. He placed Japan in the “half-civilized” stage, and urged his countrymen to build a “modern civilized” state on the model of the already “civilized” countries of the West. However, it is also noteworthy that while urging people to learn from the West, Fukuzawa also emphasized that the West was no more than the closest example of the ideal civilization at the current

time. He cast doubt on whether the West in its current state was the full and true embodiment of civilization. Considering all the violent means and crafty tricks of war, theft and murder employed in the pursuit of diplomacy by Western countries, he doubted that they really existed in a true state of civilization. If the future were to bring a world without war and violence, then the West in its present condition would probably be deemed “barbarian”.

Nevertheless, in Japan during the Meiji Era, the West was seen as the greatest exemplar of modern achievement at the time and was taken as the model for the creation of a modern state and society. Later, in the twentieth century, especially after the Second World War, the vast majority of newly independent states emerging from colonialism adopted the same goal of modernization. Indeed, modernization replaced Westernization as the principle goal of development.

Why such a long speech about the two phases of *Westernization* and *modernization*? There has obviously been much discussion about the advantages and disadvantages of the changes brought upon the non-Western world by these two great waves of change. Whatever the case, however, there was always at least some clear *goal* or *purpose* behind those changes. Opinion was divided over the value and significance of these goals, but their very existence has rarely, if ever, been placed in doubt.

During the phase of “Westernization-colonization”, the guiding principle and goal were the wholesale transmission of Western culture to the non-Western world. This embraced all aspects of the culture developed in the West, including the political, military, technological, institutional, educational, and even religious aspects. Behind this lay the ideas of “Christian salvation” and “Enlightenment rationalism”. During the phase of modernization beginning in the nineteenth century, there was a “mission” to modernize the whole world according to the principles of modern rationalism based on the development of modern political thought and modern science. Universities, hospitals and factories were built throughout the world, industrialization was promoted, societies and states were modernized, and “modern human beings” were created. Even the countries and regions that had suffered under colonial domination did not question this goal of modernization. Of course, this goal existed entirely on the level of principle. The reality of its implementation was exactly, as Fukuzawa pointed out, a “mixture of advantages and disadvantages”. In some respects, the reality was quite distant from the ideal. It must be emphasized only that there at least existed a determinate agent of change in the form of the West, and that the West also functioned as the goal towards which the process of change was directed.

In contrast, however, the present great wave of change, to which the term *globalization* is applied, is distinct due to the absence of any clear agent or goal. In every part of the world, including Asia, numerous forms of very rapid change can be seen, such as the spread of information technology, the expansion of economic markets, the diffusion of the consumer economy and consumer culture, the spread of mass entertainment, the homogenization of lifestyles, the domination of fast food, and the uniformization of urban landscapes, especially the proliferation of high-rise buildings. At the same time, we see the opening-up of the digital divide and growing disparities of wealth and poverty, ethnic and racial discrimination, increasing levels of violence and crime, the rampant spread of terrorism, and the continuation of

wars. The world is simply full of rapid and expanding processes of change, all in the name of *globalization*. Behind these phenomena one can discern the goal of attaining commercial hegemony through the sale of computers and other high-tech equipment. However, there seems to be no overall objective for which these changes are being pursued. No underlying principle or purpose can be found, and there seems to be almost no discussion about this either.

This is a very disturbing state of affairs, causing deep anxiety for people everywhere. Regardless of whether we use the terms “modern” or “post-modern”, it is vital from an Asian perspective that we clearly recognize the fact that humanity has now entered a third great phase of change, following the first two phases of Westernization and modernization. Of course, as often pointed out, one major force in the promotion of globalization is the United States of America. At the same time, however, there are other countries and regions playing significant roles in the advancement of globalization, such as China, Europe, India, Japan, Southeast Asia, and South Korea. One of the features of this present process of change is that it is occurring in a pluralistic and multipolar fashion.

The changes being brought about by globalization, although great in their consequences, have a certain partial and fragmentary quality to them. There is no clear indication of where they might be leading humanity and the world. There is also a fundamentally mass or popular quality to the changes occurring under globalization. They penetrate deeply into society and become internalized within people like no other changes before. The impact on culture is therefore extremely great, and this has given rise to numerous problems.

Globalization and Fragmentation of Culture

In the present day, cultures in every part of the world are in contact with one another and are undergoing changes. The cultures of Asia and Japan have been formed in the process of receiving influences from other cultures. Japanese culture itself has been described as a “hybrid culture”. In the modern age, all the cultures of Asia have been profoundly affected by Westernization and modernization. Contemporary culture has also been characterized as a “creolized” culture.

Due to its receptive openness, Japanese culture has been formed while receiving numerous influences from other cultures. At the same time, however, these foreign cultural elements have been assimilated into the Japanese cultural framework. This has allowed the majority of Japanese people to retain a sense of distinctive cultural identity despite the great changes that have occurred. This is also true of Thai culture, and probably of other cultures in Asia as well. When we compare the cultures of Asia and discuss how they differ, it may be more meaningful to consider the distinctive way in which each culture has incorporated foreign cultural elements into its own framework. We would thus be comparing each culture’s particular mode of hybridization. Every country and region has its own historically constructed tradition, but these traditions are themselves composed of different types of cultural elements.

When the issue of cultural identity is discussed, the notion of “cultural purity” is often invoked. This concern with cultural purity is sometimes asserted in the extreme form of ethnic cleansing. However, in the present day world, there can be no such

thing as “cultural purity” or “ethnic purity”. If we think about it, the consciousness of cultural difference between one’s own culture and the culture of another arises from the different way each culture has assimilated into its own framework elements held in common with other cultures. Thus, people develop a distinctive consciousness of their own culture despite the existence of commonalities with other cultures. This is where the basis of identity lies, and everyone needs to be aware of this fact.

However, the cultural changes associated with globalization now occurring throughout Asia are causing these cultural frameworks to break down. The degree to which this is occurring is variable, but there is certainly a tendency toward the loss of overall cultural coherence.

It has already been pointed out that globalization is causing cultures to be broken down into small pieces. In the past, culture has been understood as a coherent whole or totality, but under globalization it is undergoing a process of fragmentation. There is also a process of differentiation, and people have come to feel that their cultural identity is under threat. This has caused relations between cultures to become distorted, and in some cases has led to cultural friction and clashes. Globalization brings about fragmentation, not universalization.

As a result, the sense of “cultural coherence” is lost, leading many into the extreme reaction of trying to rebuild their cultural identity by exaggerating just one part of their culture. This gives rise to the phenomenon of ethnocentrism and cultural exclusionism. People forget that all cultures, including their own, have been formed through a process of receiving various influences from other cultures. They close their eyes to the reality of “cultural hybridity” and become deluded by the fantasy of “cultural purity”. From this they develop the illusion that their own culture is superior to all others. Of course, not all people living amid the upheavals of globalization succumb to this form of delusion. However, such a danger exists in the world today. Culture may contain the power to incite people into irrational conflicts that are extremely difficult to resolve following logical argumentation.

In this context, it is necessary to consider the matter of cultural diversity in relation to the enormous changes occurring all over the world as a result of globalization. We must also think in terms of preserving such diversity. Let us now take a brief look at how Japanese culture is changing amid the upheavals of globalization.

Fast-Foodization and Sub-Culturalization

The impact of globalization on culture can be described in various senses as an effect of “massification” or “popularization”. A key factor in this enormous change is the development and social ramifications of information technology. This has allowed the further pursuit of speed and convenience in daily life, which in turn has given rise to remarkable changes in the area of mass entertainment and popular culture. With globalization, efficiency and speed have come to be the primary values in modern society.

In Japan, these social changes first emerged clearly in the 1970s. Although the word “globalization” had been used earlier, it was only in the 1970s that it gained general acceptance. In the first year of that decade, a large international exhibition, known as EXPO’70, was held in Osaka. It was there that Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) opened the first American style fast-food restaurant in Japan. This was followed

in 1971 by the opening of the first McDonald's in Tokyo. Fast-food restaurants subsequently spread rapidly throughout the whole country. Japanese eating habits then underwent a rapid process of "fast-foodization". In addition to the American fast-food chains, Japanese style fast foods, such as the Yoshinoya "beef bowl", "ramen noodles", and "conveyor-belt sushi" grew. Fast-food restaurants became a dominant presence in Japan's major city centres.

Along with this change in eating habits, other aspects of life also came to be altered in a similar way. For example, the habit of dressing in T-shirts, jeans and sneakers became common not only among the youth, but also among both men and women of older generations.

Popular Japanese eating habits came to be characterized by the three qualities of "cheap, fast and tasty" as noted by Yasuhiko Nakamura. In more and more households, especially among younger couples, going out with the children to a fast-food restaurant rather than cooking and eating a meal at home became common practice. This led to a general expansion of the restaurant industry. The idea that things must be done quickly in order not to fall behind the accelerating pace of life and work became commonly accepted in society.

The process of eating at a fast-food restaurant is conducted according to a standardized sequence of actions emphasizing self-service and efficiency. The action of eating has taken on some of the properties of a conveyor-belt production line in a factory. In contrast to a traditional restaurant, the typical McDonald's has a bright red roof and white interior, in which customers finish their meals quickly, confident in the uniform flavour and universality of the food served.

Yasuhiko Nakamura, has also noted a very remarkable "speeding up" of eating behaviour among Japanese people since the 1970s. In restaurants, the time it takes to receive the food after placing an order is as little as 10 minutes for lunch, and 15 minutes for dinner. Customers become impatient if the food is delayed for more than 5 minutes, and they think it "tastes bad" when it finally arrives. If it takes more than 20 minutes from the moment of placing the order to the moment of finishing the meal, it is considered to have taken a "long time".

As globalization has progressed, people and society have become more and more enslaved to the clock. Information technology only contributes to this further. Meanwhile, Japanese eating habits have become "fragmented" and lacking in any overall coherence or totality.

Culture in Japan has lost any overall coherent pattern by which it could be recognized as distinctively "Japanese". People find themselves at a loss amid the accelerating pace of life with no basis for the formation of a clear cultural identity. They simply pass their days in an empty fashion. There is also an accelerating rate of incidence of unfortunate phenomena, such as family break-down, violent crime, and despair for the future. As previously mentioned, the changes brought about by globalization have no clear goal or purpose. At the same time, these changes have resulted in an unprecedented cultural uniformity. The wave of standardization and massification enveloping contemporary culture has penetrated even to the deep level of spiritual values, to the extent that tradition and the pursuit of artistic beauty has also succumbed to standardization. "Sub-culture" now forms the central part of culture.

The American sociologist, George Ritzer, has called this phenomenon “McDonaldization”, and identifies it as the “nightmarish manifestation of modern rationalism”. It is the ultimate realization of Charlie Chaplin’s *Modern Times*. Lately the phrase “modernization of nothing” has emerged, reflecting the fact that the result of globalization is in the end “nothing”.

There can be no doubt that the preservation of cultural diversity is an absolute necessity. However, it is necessary to go further and adopt as a common goal the fight against those forms of change that reduce all cultural meaning to nothing.

With this in mind, the author proposes that the task of preserving cultural diversity be pursued in an active and positive manner, rather than passively and defensively. This means that each culture would display to the world its own particular innate strength or source of attraction, with the aim of building a peaceful world civilization in which different cultures would coexist in true harmony, each contributing its excellence to the world and compensating for each other’s deficiencies. This would be a true realization of Fukuzawa’s ideal of civilization as the “progress of human knowledge and virtue”.

International relations and international politics in the world today still tend to be dominated by economic power and military power, especially in the form of nuclear weapons. However, even amid this state of affairs, we also see the emergence of theories of “soft power” and the “brand state”, which seek to influence international politics by appealing to cultural strength and the attraction possessed by a particular country or society. No one could deny that persuasion using the attractive power of culture is preferable to the use of military force. The real world situation is still, however, one in which the force of arms tends to dominate. The preservation of cultural diversity should be seen as a basic form of protest against this world from the standpoint of human beings and culture. The author looks forward to an age when countries and regions throughout the world compete against each other using their cultural strength. Such a world would deserve to be called “multicultural”. If the Arab countries and Japan can cooperate for the creation of such a multicultural world, then, their respective differences will only contribute to the greater meaningfulness of the project.

Managing Cultural Diversity: From Perspective to Advocacy

Abstract of presentation by H.E. Mr Abdelmalek Mansour Hassan
Ambassador of Yemen to Tunisia
President of Al-Mansour Cultural Foundation for the Dialogue
among civilizations

The Importance of Cultural Diversity

It is no secret that the ongoing international disagreement over cultural diversity is rooted to some extent, perhaps to a large extent, in politico-economic motivations and fears, although these invariably remain unacknowledged. These motivations and fears are undoubtedly important and must be objectively addressed through appropriate frameworks and channels established for the purpose of settling disputes. However, politico-economic motivations and fears are not the whole story; part of the reason for the disagreement is divergent assessments of the positive and negative aspects of cultural diversity.

The main disadvantages of cultural diversity are said to be the following:

- 1•Cultural differences act as a complication and a deterrent in relations and interaction between different cultural groups. Language, for example, is a cultural factor which acts as a barrier to communication and thereby makes it difficult for two different cultural groups to know each other well. Sometimes mere differences of belief or customs are enough to prevent intermarriage between individuals of two different cultural groups;
- 2•Cultural differences are a potential source of unsatisfactory relations between cultural groups for various reasons. For example, culturally-based differences in outlook may be an additional factor resulting in clashes over issues of public policy. Where communication is unsatisfactory, in particular, cultural differences may lead to misunderstanding and disparagement of members of the other culture.

The main benefits attributed to cultural diversity may be summed up as follows:

- 1•Cultural diversity is a fertile source of human cultural enrichment. Just as an individual may be culturally enriched by frequent contact with other individuals whose cultures are not the same as his own, the culture of a group may also be enriched by frequent contact, not exclusively with other groups with similar cultures, but with groups characterized by different cultures, and this may happen only in a context of cultural diversity;

- 2•Cultural diversity may be important for the preservation of biological diversity. Some observers have reported a link between the extinction of some biological species and the disappearance of particular cultures. It seems probable that a minimum of biological diversity is a necessary condition for the continuation of life on earth, and it may be that, similarly, a minimum of cultural diversity and pluralism is a necessary condition for the continued viability of the interaction that drives cultural development;
- 3•In addition to its practical benefits, cultural diversity contains within itself an aesthetic value that responds to every well-balanced human soul's aspiration to beauty, which it finds in diversity. This explains the commonly observable fact that individuals tend to strive for cultural diversification; this phenomenon appears most clearly in the form of aspects or elements of culture in the broad sense, such as apparel and architecture.
- 4•Regardless of any possible difference of views as to whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages or vice versa, the fact remains that cultural diversity is fundamentally important because it is an expression of the freedom of human individuals and groups to be culturally and intellectually creative, and their right, to be culturally and intellectually different. Cultural diversity is the natural embodiment of the fact that individuals are differently structured and differently constituted.

Estimated Impacts

The prevalent concept of cultural diversity looks at the transition currently under way and finds it unfavourable. This negative assessment is based on observation of the adverse impacts and harm associated with the transition in terms of cultural extinction, the decline or disappearance of cultural diversity, or at any rate the prevalent type of cultural diversity, and the hegemony of a particular culture or cultures.

Loss of Cultures

It is true that loss of cultures is not devoid of harmful effects; at the same time, however, it is not only a natural phenomenon, given that cultures are human artefacts, and as such inevitably of limited duration or viability, but also, at times, a desirable outcome, because cultures only disappear when they become seriously inadequate and incapable of performing the functions that were their *raison d'être*. Any culture that can no longer perform its vital functions or has difficulty in renewing itself is better off disappearing than being maintained; it is thus preferable that it should disappear, particularly as it is possible to mitigate the adverse effects of its disappearance.

While there are harmful, negative aspects to the loss of cultures, there are also positive, beneficial aspects, of which perhaps the most obvious is the potential contribution to strengthening cultural common denominators and to blunting cultural animosity. These advantages and positive aspects should unquestionably be

taken into account in any assessment of the impact of the loss of cultures. In general, we may say that history has witnessed the loss of many cultures for one reason or another; but that human culture, as a whole, has continued to develop, and may be in better condition today than it has ever been in the past, so far as we know. If cultures were not capable of being lost, it would not be possible for them to be replaced with new and more highly evolved cultures, and hence for the course of human cultural evolution to continue.

Loss of Cultural Diversity

The loss of cultural diversity is unlikely, and perhaps something that will never occur at all. Consequently, the growing fear of the adverse impact of the loss of cultural diversity is nothing more than a form of unjustifiable pessimism.

The decline or disappearance of the prevalent regional group form of cultural diversity, the form that is currently at the greatest risk of disappearing, would be no great loss. It must be remembered that the survival of this particular form of diversity rests essentially upon a form of cultural upbringing that imposes and consecrates cultural tradition and tends to restrict individual cultural freedom and creativity in so far as they depart from the norms prevailing in the region concerned. It is precisely this that has impelled so many people to leave their cultural regions and move elsewhere, although, to be sure, there may be other reasons and motives in many cases. But it has become increasingly apparent in recent years that the tendency for educated people to leave for or flee to other cultural regions reflects the unfortunate side of that model of regional cultural diversity. Perhaps it is not far wrong to say that the liberation of cultural freedom and individual cultural creativity from the power of cultural tradition and the pressures of a cultural region is a noble objective that justifies any action that may be necessary to attain it.

The adverse effects of the decline or disappearance of one particular form of cultural diversity, then, namely regional group cultural diversity, or the decline of cultural diversity in general, cannot be evaluated in isolation from the benefits associated with the growth of other forms of cultural diversity, namely individual and choice-based group cultural diversity, and the probable advantages of diminished cultural diversity, such as cultural rapprochement. These advantages may well offset the inevitable disadvantages, which in any case may be minimized by a variety of means.

Adverse Effects of the Culture that Seems Likely to Become Dominant

The reasons for considering that possible cultural hegemony is likely to be limited have been stated above. In the light of this, one must reconsider what are commonly held to be the potentially serious adverse impacts of cultural hegemony or globalization, such as the probable erosion of cultural diversity. In this connection, there are a number of considerations that should be mentioned:

- The negative aspects of the culture or cultures that are the prime candidates for hegemony may not be much worse than the negative aspects of the

cultures that are eroding, and, obviously, if that is the case, the corresponding positive aspects may be much greater than those of the eroding cultures;

- Perhaps even more importantly, the negative aspects of the dominant culture or cultures that are the prime candidates for hegemony may not be, or may not all be, unavoidable or intractable.

It should be clear from the above that the transition, which cultural diversity (in the common meaning of that term) is currently undergoing should not be seen in purely negative terms. Such a judgement would be no more than an individual impression based on assumptions that do not appear to be valid, and a more positive assessment might well be closer to the truth. In point of fact, it seems probable that in most cases the transition may best be evaluated taking into account the cultural background and distinctive situation of the culture concerned (and hence what it stands to gain from the changes now under way). It is essential to bear in mind that neither the positive nor the negative aspects of this transition in cultural diversity are inevitable; they may materialize or they may not depending on how the transition is managed. That is to say, the final outcome of this cultural transition may be, on balance, desirable or undesirable, depending on the way people interact with it and manage it.

Goal and Strategy

It would seem, from the commonly accepted concept of cultural diversity and the incessant cry that it must be preserved, that the general goal or basic strategy that should be adopted for the management of cultural diversity is primarily one of preservation. Such a strategy is predicated on the assumption that cultural diversity in general, or the existing form of it and the particular cultures that it comprises, is something desirable and that is currently at risk of erosion or extinction, which would entail harmful effects.

As we have seen, the assumptions and hypotheses underpinning a preservation strategy of this kind are the very assumptions and hypotheses that have been considered in our discussion so far. However, the issue of whether a preservation strategy is appropriate for the management of cultural diversity cannot be settled on the basis of the above comments alone, important (and perhaps adequate) as they may be. There are other remarks that can and should be made. In particular:

- To resort to a strategy of preserving something presupposes the desirability of the thing in question, which is assumed to be either ultimately desirable or the best available. This means that the strategy must assume either that cultural diversity is desirable in an absolute sense, i.e. in and of itself, regardless of its contents, constituent parts and forms, or else that cultural diversity as it currently exists is the best available.

The reality is that cultural diversity is not desirable in and of itself. It is not an absolute goal; its desirability depends on its positive aspects and advantages, and may be greater or lesser in different cases. It follows that while cultural diversity may be desirable in general, not all forms, types, modes and degrees

of diversity are necessarily equally desirable, and diversity is not necessarily equally desirable in all elements of a culture. For example, diversity based on free cultural choice and awareness on the part of individuals and groups is assuredly preferable to cultural diversity that is the result of nothing but tradition or mere cultural partisanship or chauvinism: the former supports the forging of active, rational intercultural relations, whereas the latter promotes either cultural isolationism, and hence the decline of intercultural relations, or else cultural hostility, and consequently the emergence of conflictual intercultural relations. Greater diversity in cultural factors such as architecture, for instance, contributes to the enhancement of architectural beauty, whereas greater diversity in other cultural factors such as religion or language may give rise to problems and difficulties. We can readily imagine how difficult human communication would be if cultural diversity was to increase to the point where every small group or family spoke its own language. Thus, while cultural diversity, or diversity of cultures, may be termed desirable, not all forms of culture are equally desirable; we need only think of the culture of violence, the culture of arrogance, the culture of extremism or the culture of consumerism to see what is meant by cultures that are broadly undesirable. And if this is so, to call for the preservation of cultural diversity without qualification is effectively to consecrate some forms of cultural diversity, and some cultures, that are not desirable at all, on the pretext of preserving diversity. Yet as we all know, there is some resistance to current widespread calls for cultural reforms on the pretext of protecting cultural diversity or cultural specificity.

The argument that the existing form of cultural diversity is the best available, and hence must be preserved is not supported by reality, logic or sound thinking, and in any case it is an assumption that bespeaks a failure to appreciate the human mind's ability to devise higher levels and better forms of cultural diversity. To insist on preserving cultural diversity just as it is, is not much different from insisting – as some do – that traditional cultures are inherently valuable and should be kept alive, preserved and protected from any change, adaptation or modernization.

- A strategy of preservation and protection, especially one with legal force, as is currently being urged, may be a valid means of managing cultures or forms of cultural diversity that are in danger of being lost, or cultures and cultural entities that have attained heritage status and are deemed to be worth protecting from change and preserving in their present form, such as historic cities and valuable manuscripts. But it is not the most appropriate way of managing the forms of cultural diversity or emerging, living cultures already referred to, and assuredly it is not the best way of managing cultures or forms of cultural diversity that are in danger of being lost because of their own deficiencies. These should be changed, not preserved.

It appears, then, that cultural diversity is being naturally preserved and is unlikely to be lost. The form of cultural diversity that consists of regional group cultures and traditional cultures, which is the form that is currently at greatest risk of erosion or disappearance, is in need, no, of preservation,

but, on the contrary, of change aimed at transforming the regional group cultural diversity model into a better model and modernizing and renewing those traditional cultures. We see, then, that a strategy of preservation is not the most appropriate way of managing cultural diversity as it stands at the present time.

- A strategy of preservation is a defensive strategy, and as such has all the drawbacks of defensive strategies in other areas. They have frequently been shown to be less efficient and less effective, and sometimes radically unsuccessful, even in attaining their declared goal of preservation. There is a growing conviction today that strategies of preservation and protection are ineffective in the areas of the economy and industry, and there is no reason to suppose that they would do any better in the area of culture, especially in view of the fact that, in contrast to their declared purpose of protecting cultural diversity, it appears that the fundamental motive for adopting such strategies is not so much a desire to preserve cultural diversity as such as a desire to preserve some particular culture or cultures, be they national, regional or ideological, and to defend them in the swirling vortex of cultural globalization, frequently on the pretext that "if every group preserves its own culture, the result will be the preservation of cultural diversity". Quite obviously, there is a difference between taking the preservation of cultural diversity as the primary or main goal and taking it as a secondary or subsidiary goal. In sound management, it is axiomatic that a secondary or subsidiary goal can be sacrificed to the main goal, and it is all the more probable that this will happen in the field of culture because a desire to preserve some particular culture is frequently accompanied by an unstated (although hardly concealed) wish to see that culture dominate and, if possible, replace the world's other cultures. How many of us can be sure that our motives, at any rate our subconscious motives, for arguing that cultural diversity must be preserved do not really boil down to a desire to see our own culture spread to every corner of the earth and be adopted by all the world's peoples? Could that be achieved without all those peoples abandoning their own cultures? And, in terms of impact on cultural diversity, is there any real difference between such a gain by our own culture, which everyone desires and perhaps actively seeks, and that so-called cultural hegemony that is incessantly denounced and rejected?

To sum up, it is apparent from the foregoing discussion that our present (or desired) management of cultural diversity is based on a conception of cultural diversity that falls to do full justice to the current reality and future prospects of that phenomenon, an incomplete or inaccurate assessment, of the transition it is currently undergoing, and a management strategy that does not appear to be maximally appropriate or optimal for addressing its actual situation.

This suggests some useful lines of action:

- Reviewing the concept of cultural diversity in order to gain a fuller and more accurate understanding of its current reality and future prospects, that achieve

a more comprehensive and more adequate assessment of the impacts of the transition now in progress and, even more importantly, establish criteria for determining what kind of cultural diversity is most desirable;

2. Developing more efficient and effective strategies or approaches to the management of cultural diversity; such strategies or approaches must satisfy requirements which need to be carefully defined by means of well-organized, collective scientific efforts. In particular, they should:
 - (i) provide guidance on how to distinguish between the positive and negative aspects of the contents or models of cultural diversity, and thus help to prevent misuse of the principle of cultural diversity;
 - (ii) serve to orient changes under way in cultural diversity in the direction of developing and enhancing its positive aspects and addressing and mitigating its negative aspects with a view to bringing it closer to an optimum form of cultural diversity;
 - (iii) take into account the full range and variety of factors constituting threats or challenges to cultural diversity and the importance of addressing all of these in a balanced manner by means of not only legal or cultural, but also political, economic, educational and linguistic policies and measures at both the local community level and the official country-wide level;
 - (iv) strike a balance between the tendency, and indeed right, of every living culture to seek global dissemination, and, on the other hand, the right of all other cultures to ensure a suitable climate which enables it and its institutions to grow;
 - (v) seek to balance the right to cultural differences and distinctiveness with the importance of strengthening common cultural denominators (intercultural similarities and congruence) at the global level.

Japan, the Arab Countries and Cultural Diversity

Bassam Tayara

Writer and Journalist, Lebanon

Whenever the author appears before a non-Japanese audience to talk about Japan, he feels obliged to point out how difficult it is to understand Japan, for a non-Japanese sometimes hear orientalists specializing in the Arab world express similar warnings about that culture. And it is possible to understand them, since any meeting and mingling of cultures and civilizations is subject to the same logic.

Speaking about Japan and the Arab world in a multinational and multicultural context may seem at first sight to make the task even more difficult.

However, that is not in fact the case, since within the precincts of UNESCO, by virtue of the Organization's universal mission, all the participants to the Symposium were concerned by anything that brought them into contact with another world, or rather with other worlds. It is then that they realize that they all share the same planet and that they actually live in a global "village".

This paper will discuss two important entities in the world community: Japan and the Arab world.

What can Japan bring to the Arab world in the field of culture and cultural diversity, and what can the Arab world learn from Japan in that same field?

The very word "culture" leads one to think of exchanges. Exchanges in turn imply diversity. And diversity suggests heterogeneity of cultures and therefore contacts with other cultures and the intermingling of ideas.

Any examination of culture raises the issue of acculturation, be it voluntary, as in the case of Japan, or involuntary, as in the case of many other countries. It also involves examining the collective imagination of a people and how it came into being, through direct or indirect contacts: direct, through the presence of other, foreign cultures – which opens up the old subject of colonization – or indirect, through the influence of intellectual products, i.e. literature, the cinema, television, art and, above all, the media.

There are also questions that need to be asked, for example, what does "cultural diversity" mean in the Arab world? What does the term mean in Japan?

The acceptance of cultural diversity requires the presence of certain economic, political and social structures and also supposes relative equality.

It seems that recognition of all these aspects, which should guide these discussions, is fundamental for a successful debate on cultural exchanges.

Japan can make a strong contribution in this field. The Arab countries can benefit greatly from this aspects of cultural diversity as practiced in Japan.

Globalization is often regarded as bringing about the intensification of exchanges. Yet ideas managed to circulate across frontiers before the advent of globalization. It may be the case that modernity and technological developments have created an impression of forced acceleration. They may have facilitated rapid access to information and helped to massively open up markets to goods. However, it is above all in the area of culture and cultural exchanges that globalization induces most fear among a whole range of countries. Societies feel themselves threatened

by what they believe, rightly or wrongly, to be a “monoculture” imposed on them by foreign powers, in this case, the West which, even though it consists of a number of countries, in fact shares a common bedrock of values and social ideas.

Culture is regarded as the leading vehicle in spreading such fears, and Japan can provide substantial help by showing that culture is neither synonymous with “monoculture” nor synonymous with cultural cannibalism.

Any discussion of culture takes place on quick sands – a shifting terrain made up of words of unstable meaning that lend themselves to differing interpretations. It seems impossible to give a conceptual definition of the terms relating to culture, especially when the cultural fields in question belong to civilizations as far apart geographically and historically as Japan and the Arab world. In fact, the meaning of the terms applied to culture derives from the functions assigned to them and the systems and societies in which they operate. And yet the comparison of experience and accomplishments may be beneficial to both entities – to both Japan and the Arab world – since there are similarities in the historical experience of the two peoples.

These similarities are particularly evident in their reaction to opening up to the outside world or to contact with the West.

Japan is regarded in the West as a society that shares Western values. Japan also attempts to convince itself of the truth of this idea, which is generally accepted by most countries in the world. The fact is, however, that Japan is not as Western as it might seem - or if it is, it is so in its own way, which gives the term “Westernization” a connotation that is different from its traditional, generally accepted meaning in daily use. The process of Westernization in Japan does not belong to the West! Hence the importance of the contribution that Japan itself can make, in general terms, in strengthening cultural diversity.

The Arabs are regarded as – and they strongly believe themselves to be – the most ardent opponents of those aspects of globalization that ravish and destroy culture. The reasons for this are many: historical reasons, since they feel themselves cheated by the turn that history took at the end of the colonial period, and which laid a burden on their industrial and economic development; and religious reasons, since most Arabs, the Muslim majority, see in this Western cultural hegemony a threat to their habits, customs and practices. Such feelings, coupled with chronic underdevelopment in the education and training system, reinforce their inability to create a modern competitive economy.

All these factors only increase the distrust felt by Arab societies, thereby creating a vicious circle affording support to all extremes. There too, Japan can offer its own experience, since it has, to some extent, gone through similar turmoil.

The torments experienced by Arab societies were suffered by Japan at the end of the nineteenth century when it was confronted by the Western powers knocking on its door: Japan managed to join the West, while taking scrupulous care to conserve its Japanese identity. And the view is increasingly voiced among those who study the Japanese historical experience that it is because of, rather than in spite of, this desire to conserve Japanese values that Japan has successfully achieved economic and industrial development and caught up with the West. This view sees cultural diversity, in the broad sense of the term, as a force that helps to strengthen “true globalization”.

That experience is not unique, but it is the most striking example. It is not transferable - times have changed and the balance of political, economic and cultural forces has changed - but it may provide some indication as to how a people can gain access to modernity without losing its soul and without diluting its values, while at the same time preserving its customs and social practices.

Japan and the Arab countries have many areas in common where they can make progress for the good of their societies, their peoples and mankind in general.

They may do this directly or through multinational organizations such as UNESCO. They may do so in various fields: the economy, of course, but also and above all, in cultural matters and, principally, in education and training.

However, the first area which needs attention is their knowledge of one another; since it is a paradox in this period of globalization that the knowledge that these two great civilizations have of one another does not extend beyond the clichés spread by the media in the wake of news reports where the interest in the event reported affects the way the information is received.

In order to be able to build up networks of cultural exchanges that are beneficial in the medium and long term are needs to get to know one another. As is often the case with the knowledge peoples have of one another in our global village, all Japanese think they know the Arabs and many Arabs think they know the Japanese. In neither case is that true, unless we are only talking about a very superficial degree of knowledge.

While there is a relatively large number of Arabists, orientalists and specialists of the Arab world and of Islam in Japan, in the Arab world there is hardly more than a handful of Japanese experts for the 22 Arab countries and they are spread very unevenly among no more than five or six countries. This striking imbalance in the quest for knowledge of the other conceals a weakness that is common to both sides: the indirect path that such studies have followed for various historical reasons.

The history of relations between Japan and the Arab-Islamic world shows that there were few opportunities for direct knowledge of one another and that even when such opportunities occurred, they always came about, until recently, through relations with the West. It was, in fact, through the West that Japan got to know the Arab world and that the Arab world got to know Japan.

However, things are beginning to change - which is all to the good. Both the Arab world and Japan have understood the importance of a fuller knowledge of the other in the promotion of cultural exchanges. However, it is necessary to go beyond that and to invest in studies on the ground, in exchanges of visits: not only tourist trips, but long-term exchanges which would enable both sides to explore their respective civilizations, and to get to know the different ways of life of the many regions which make up these two great population areas.

The Arabs need to become aware of cultural diversity as practiced in Japan; it needs to be studied and examined in depth. The way it operates in practice can help Arab societies to overcome the idea that cultural diversity is the starting point for the disintegration and dilution of a culture.

Cultural diversity in Japan serves the unity of Japan and of the Japanese people. It is in this context that Japanese society understands diversity and encourages it as the basis of its unity and as a means of strengthening its cohesion.

By coming into contact with the benefits of the cultural diversity existing in Japan, the Arab countries, most of whose people aspire to an ideal of “Arab unity”, may be able to find a new path towards a more genuine and less utopian unity, based on a kind of cultural diversity similar to that practised in Japan.

All this leads us to believe that cultural diversity and the way it actually operates require an initial period of learning and practice.

Development assistance has mainly taken the form of technical or academic training and the transfer of technology and know-how. But it has ignored the whole process of getting to know other cultures that lies outside books, studies and research. It's clear that investment needs to be increased in this area.

At a time of economic globalization when there is widespread fear of large financial and industrial structures, even though Japan has the second most powerful economy in the world, it does not - paradoxically enough - arouse fear in the area where its strength lies, i.e. economic power, since it is not seen as a Western power.

When coming to the subject of development assistance, one needs to cross the yellow lines demarcating the financial investments and measures required. At a time when budgetary rigour is all the rage, it needs to be said again and again, that to invest in a knowledge of other cultures and the opening up of societies to cultural diversity is an investment which brings in a long term “return” (as we say nowadays). Such investments have made a considerable contribution to bringing peoples together and strengthening peace in the world. But they also help to boost economic exchanges, which should also please all those whose attention is focused on markets and profitability.

Japan has already made great efforts in this direction. Its contribution to development assistance is among the highest in the world both in absolute terms and in relation to its GDP.

The fact is that development assistance, particularly when it is directed towards long-term growth sectors, may help to speed up a society's openness to the outside world.

Unlike the assistance and measures that only seek to encourage consumption within a society, healthy economic growth and sustainable development strengthen a society and make it less vulnerable to the siren voices that seek to persuade it to withdraw within itself. A society does not become open and modern because it is a consumer society; the case is rather that a developed and economically strong society, bold enough to open itself up to exchanges and cultural diversity, becomes a consumer society. Such was the case in Japan during the Edo period before the country opened up to the outside world. It was not an underdeveloped country, far from it: the economy was healthy and the society stable.

Obviously, at that time the framework of reference was based much more on cultural values than on scientific and commercial values. The gap between Japan (and in general terms, the East as a whole) and the West was not yet very wide. It was through greater emphasis on scientific, technological and industrial development and less on culture, together with the beginning of systematic colonization, that Japan, like all of the East, came to be seen in romantic terms and with disdain. It opened up to the outside world and succeeded because its society was prepared and ready to succeed. That is why it is important to strengthen Arab societies by means of long-term development assistance.

Furthermore, such assistance needs to be directed towards encouraging research on cultural diversity, on ways of “raising awareness” about it, “practising it” and above all “applying it”.

The author urges the Arab countries to direct more and more students and researchers towards the study of the Japanese language, culture and civilization. That can only begin at the local level. He urges them not to concentrate their efforts at learning solely on the purely technological or financial aspects, which, despite their respective importance, are not enough in themselves to open up the paths of knowledge. Furthermore, he urges the Arab world to seek out cultural exchanges at all levels in Japan, a country which, with them, forms part of what is generally known as “the Orient”.

Between Tolerance and Intolerance: How Can We Achieve Cultural Pluralism with Muslims?

Masanori Naito

Professor, Hitotsubashi University, Japan

The objective of this session is to find a key for the recognition of cultural diversity under globalization. Culture itself, however, does not lead to conflicts because it hardly possesses the power to impose changes upon others in individual and social life. If one likes it, one enjoys a different culture. If not, one keeps a distance from it and does not forget to add, "Please do not intervene in my preference". This attitude is the basis of tolerance for cultural diversity.

On the other hand, civilization has the power to change people and societies according to its norms and value systems. Therefore, if culture is related to civilization, diversity often faces difficult questions. The majority of Arabs are Muslim, and they are now confronting pressure from Western societies both in the Middle East and in Europe. Since the nineteenth century, as the power of Western civilization became predominant, non-Western societies both in Arabic countries and in Japan were under the pressure of Westernization. Western civilization flooded into Japan just after the Meiji Restoration. Most of the Japanese people thought that Westernization was a necessary condition for modernization and development. In fact, the two words, "internationalization" and "global standard" still put strong psychological pressures on the Japanese people to catch up with advanced civilization.

Today some cultural phenomena with an Islamic background are targets of condemnation from the West. The latest development of the veil issue in France and Germany is one clear example. Even in the United Kingdom, which adopted cultural pluralism, the former Archbishop of Canterbury recently criticized the Muslims because they have not restrained radicalism. In Europe after the events of 11 September 2001, tolerance for cultural diversity easily changed to intolerance despite a half century of co-existence with the Muslim immigrants.

Certainly, the tensions between European societies and the Muslim immigrants were heightened by the events of 11 September 2001. However, there was already a smouldering discontent among Western societies for those Muslims who do not accept Western values.

The pretension to "civilize" others is an essential element of Western civilization. Frustration was expressed in an overbearing manner in the United States of America, "Are you in the Civilized World, or are you in the Axis of Evil?" Needless to say, such an inquiry for identification really put cultural pluralism in danger.

In the early seventeenth century, the Tokugawa shogunate severely suppressed Christians and broke off all relations with the West except trading ties with the Netherlands. The Shogunate was obsessed with the Christian threats. In order to hunt out hidden Christians the rulers made wooden plates, called *Fumie*, with engravings of Jesus or the Holy Mother. The local officials would then call out villagers and order them to trample under foot the *Fumie*. Those who disobeyed were killed.

A strong fear of the rulers brought about brutal treatment against the Japanese Christians. To inquire one's identity with cultural origin, the *Fumie*, which was a symbol of intolerance, must be kept in mind.

Feeling threatened by different cultures conversely created an arrogant attitude, discrimination, and inhuman treatment of others. First of all, in order to recognize cultural diversity, an intrusive attitude of enlightening others should be abandoned. This attitude has its origins in progressivism, which burgeoned in the modernization process of the West. For others however, it was a tool for obedience and dependency on the paramount power of the modern West.

It should be noted that the Muslims' attitude towards the West is selective. They respect democratic systems and the welfare state of the West. On the other hand, when they face unfavourable phenomena according to Islam, they maintain a distance from the West, and wish to protect their families from them. This selective attitude is reasonable, but irritates Western societies.

For example, in the Netherlands, a journalist asked an imam (Islamic religious leader) about homosexuality, "What do you think about homosexuality?" The answer of the Muslim was very clear, "It is haram (forbidden) in Islam." A Muslim leader living in Amsterdam tried to explain their religious beliefs; however, the Dutch media criticized it for being homophobic, and concluded that Islam is an intolerant religion. In this case, "tolerance" of one socio-cultural group (homosexuals) is used for condemnation of another socio-cultural group (the Muslims).

In the past, homosexuals were also banned in the West by the Christian churches, but with secularization people became tolerant of them. In general, Western societies thought that secularization is a necessary process for modernization and progress. Yet, for Muslims, change in morals is not a necessary condition for progress. Therefore, if a Muslim does not accept some phenomena of the West, the indigenous Europeans usually show displeasure because they feel that their modernization path was denied. This frustration causes the desire to civilize others, brings about minor conflict in daily life, and finally leads to more serious clashes between civilizations.

Secularism was born in parallel with modernization in the West. It created the idea of "enlightenment" and the pretension of enlightening others who were considered to be living in outdated religious faiths. As a matter of fact, even in the West, there is a variation to what extent "separation between state and religion" was implemented. In France, the law of Separation between State and Church (*Loi concernant la séparation de l'Eglise et de l'Etat*) was enacted in 1905, and *laïcité* (secularism) was definitively institutionalized. Compared to France, Germany applied a less restrictive legal code for the visibility of culture in the public sphere. In the Netherlands, owing to the distinct cultural pillar system (*verzuiling*), everyone has the right to live according to their religious faith or other principles. In fact, Muslims in the Netherlands have more than thirty Islamic primary schools financed by the government.

Due to strict secular rule in France, the pretension of enlightenment is apparently observed. The headscarf of the Muslim women was forbidden in public spaces by law last February. According to the state principle of *laïcité*, showing a religious symbol in a public institution, including public schools, was violating the constitutional provision of neutrality. Many French intellectuals stated that the headscarf is a symbol of discrimination for the Muslim women, so they are driven

by a sense of duty to enlighten and civilize their Muslim neighbours. The report (*Le rapport de la commission Stasi sur la laïcité*) stressed that the headscarf was an indication of the Islamic threats that challenge universal values such as democracy and human rights.

The power of Western civilization discloses itself in this way. The principle of *laïcité* was assumed to be a universal task of civilization. It should be noted that such discourses disregarded diversity in the religious life of Muslims. When a Muslim woman is asked: "Why are you wearing a head scarf?", there's a great diversity in the answers. The answers range from obedience to the religious rule to the jealousy of a husband. Moreover, many Muslim ladies will ask: "Do you believe that women can be emancipated if they expose too much of their body? Is not exposing the body merchandising female sexuality?" Unfortunately, such questions have not been discussed.

Before having a dialogue, it is very necessary to reconsider such assumptions and prejudices. Islam-phobia is gaining strength. Even in Germany, several states implemented restrictions for the Muslims' headscarf. In the Netherlands liberals now criticize the establishment of Islamic cultural pillars. The present high tension between Islam and the West is a result of the intrusive attitude of Western civilization.

Finally, the author quotes a memorandum by Saigo Takamori. He was a prominent leader of the Meiji Restoration, during the dawn of modernization and Westernization in Japan. He was well aware of the power of the West. This memorandum was written in 1870, three years after the Restoration.

"One day, I discussed Western civilization with my friend. I told him, "The West is not civilized but is barbaric." My friend told me, "No, the West is civilized." I told him again, "The West is barbaric." My friend asked me, "Why do you think so?" I answered him, "If the West is civilized, then the West must show generosity to uncivilized countries. They must enlighten uncivilized people with affection. However, in reality, the Western attitude against uncivilized societies is brutal and inhuman. The West is concerned with uncivilized societies only for their own profit." So, I say, "The West must be barbaric." (*Saigo Nanshu Ikun*)

One hundred and thirty years ago, Saigo is describing the contradictory pretension of Western civilization. However, it is an irony that Saigo himself later insisted on the invasion of Korea. For the national interest of modern Japan, he did not hesitate to use military power that was introduced by Western countries. Colonialism was brought to Japan along with many other aspects of Western power.

The power of civilization is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, enlightenment was an important ideological basis for social and political development. On the other hand, it was used to create dependency on and exploitation by the West. Awareness of the power inherent in civilization should be a key to recognizing de facto cultural diversity, and avoiding further conflicts among civilizations.

Methodological Cosmopolitanism: How to Maintain Cultural Diversity despite Economic and Cultural Globalization?

Abstract of presentation by Hans-Georg Soeffner
Professor, University of Konstanz, Germany

Empires of earlier times were faced with the problem of wanting to establish and maintain an empire while at the same time preserving the cultural diversity of its various peoples, religious communities and traditions. By way of example, consider the Roman Empire or the empire of Kublai Kahn (1215-1294), the Mongolian ruler who ascended to the Chinese imperial throne in 1260. Confronted with the cultural and religious differences within his extensive empire and fully aware of the dangers of cultural differences and religious tensions, the Khan made his court into an ostentatious demonstration of the coexistence of different cultures. Scholars, merchants, politicians, and religious leaders from the various peoples of the empire were intentionally invited to partake in an early form of "intercultural discourse" to exchange ideas, and knowledge, as well as production techniques or administrative and economic skills. Today, it would be said that such a policy achieved a balance between political unity and cultural differences.

In terms of political integration, the Khan uncompromisingly linked a tightly run organization with willingness to compromise when it came to allowing the various peoples to participate in running the empire as part of the administrative staff. Nevertheless, he intervened strictly and ruthlessly at the slightest indication of religious or ethical fundamentalism. Although Kublai Khan's feudalistic dictatorial political model is irreconcilable with the ideals of modern civil society, it demonstrates that it is nonetheless possible to think in a cosmopolitan fashion, i.e. to understand and show due respect to "foreign" cultures as irreplaceable elements of a shared world.

The process of globalization we are presently witnessing and the threat to cultural variety it presents must be categorically distinguished from earlier globalization processes (voyages of discovery and campaigns of conquest, colonization and the related Christian proselytization). This new globalization does not manifest itself at all levels of human coexistence, as does the mixture of new nationalism, founding of nations, and religious fundamentalism referred to as the "clash of religions". Much indicates that these latter developments did not occur separately from other processes, but instead represent answers to this process of globalization that – in the West in particular – had lasting effects on people's everyday lives, especially through economics and the media. The worldwide migration movements contribute in their own way to the increasing improbability that states and societies can remain hermetically closed and homogeneous. Indeed, states and society, while retaining these characteristics, must consider their "unity" and insularity to be temporary exceptions. Therefore, throughout the world the preservation of the cultural autonomy of single peoples, which entails cultural diversity as an aspect of coexistence between all peoples, has become a central topic in the debate on globalization.

Thus, uncontrolled globalization and “Americanization,” which is partially political, but above all else economic, media and linguistic, represents a threat to state and societal structures. As cultural structures are relatively closed (in their religion, ideology or ethnic makeup), reactions arise from a perceived “threat” to national, religious and ethnic identities. Those reactions in turn threaten the coexistence of various groups of peoples and communities by emphasizing a “culture of difference”, to borrow Richard Sennett’s expression. For this reason, virtually all forms of fundamentalism observable in today’s central spheres of public life – in politics, religion and fictitious ethnic unity – create in their own way a cultural variety in negative form. Furthermore, Some cultural patterns of repression, disdain, persecution and so-called “holy wars” are by no means worthy of being preserved.

Of course, the proverbial Martian observer would have to note that the world has retained an incredible variety of traditional cultures and forms of cultural expression. However, at the same time, he would acknowledge with regret that the formerly dominant “Western” ethnocentrism has been replaced by a plethora of new ethnocentrisms, all of which are constituted by the depiction, rejection and devaluation of the “Other” as foreign and thus threatening to a posited “Self”. They may very well even purport this while sailing under the flag of “the preservation of cultural diversity” in the face of the threat of globalization. One is led to suspect that in many cases, people are not fighting for the preservation of their cultural autonomy because they seek to achieve a coexistence of different cultures within an overall culture. But rather, they do so because, content in their self-satisfied ethnocentricity, they want to isolate their own culture from any foreign influence whatsoever.

In search of current political models that both preserve cultural diversity and provide security for the structures of civil society, we encounter the still unfolding, intricate and of course exciting process of European unification. Indeed, this process is unique. States and nations have entered into a voluntary amalgamation not forced upon them by any imperial or dominant power. These states and nations share a nearly 2000-year-old history of political, religious and economic conflicts: struggles for power; bloody wars of religion, world wars, ideologically motivated genocide and mass murder. Much more than the vague ideas, fictions or better constructions of a European identity that prevail over these conflicts, it is the 1000-year-old history of war that represents the common element linking these peoples who feel or call themselves “European”.

However, it is this very history of violence that has led to the development of Europe’s civil society. In principle, supranational constitutions intend to protect the individual, secure freedom of belief and religion, overcome ethnic differences and codify the rights of minorities. The historical setbacks these constitutions have suffered under the various political systems are common knowledge. Nonetheless, the very history of these setbacks serves today’s Europeans, as the discussion concerning a shared European constitution has shown. For this discussion is conspicuously characterized by the exchange of shared histories, however rich in tension they may be.

Even the “headscarf debate”, at first glance a conflict over an “Islamic symbol”, has developed into a new fundamental debate on the democratic secular state. Indeed, the secular state derives its legitimacy from its equal treatment of all religions, while it requires in return that those religions submit themselves totally to the

inalienable constitutional right of religious freedom for all and that individual religions relinquish their claims to absolute truth as well as the attempt to convert religious power into political dominance. A “procedural and constitutional fundamentalism” can be delivered in the expanding European Union. However, this process not only lacks any kind of historical precedent or theoretical blueprint whatsoever, it is also very clear that it cannot be directly applied to other regions of the world.

Nevertheless, it is possible to develop concepts borrowed both from Kublai Khan’s model as well as from the European example. Those show us what successful coexistence among a diversity of cultures might be, and which conditions must be established to ensure that cultural diversity does not remain a mere theoretical maxim, but rather a definitive element of people’s thought throughout all cultures of the world. At the end of the eighteenth century, Immanuel Kant developed his “idea for a general history for the purpose of a world citizenship”. At the same time, Johann Gottfried Herder not only emphasized that each religion is “equally near to God”, but also that “every culture has its intrinsic value” that prevents us from ranking individual cultures as higher or lower than others. Neither of them was by any means referring to isolated single cultures. For them, the coexistence of different cultures and their ability to “learn from one another” was of much greater significance. They sought the unity of humanity in spite of the great differences between cultures. Behind this goal was the idea that every citizen could be a citizen of the world, a true cosmopolitan. Cultures were not merely meant to tolerate or endure each other; but rather to acknowledge each other’s intrinsic value. A culture of mutual acknowledgement, or to quote Hans-Georg Gadamer, “a culture of an ongoing mutual hermeneutic dialogue” was to be added to the “culture of difference”.

It is not hard to recognise that this idea, still valid today, does not represent “small change”, i.e. the exclusive conservation or retrospective rediscovery of religious or national folklore and myths in the service of the “collective identity”, which a society has constructed with great effort to fence off its boundaries from other cultures. Today’s globalization implies that such a collective inclusion by means of exclusion of others from this “self” is no longer possible. What was earlier the search for contact undertaken in voyages of exploration has – as said above – today become a compulsion to contact, be it peaceful or warlike. To the extent that we do not wish to become hermits, we cannot escape one another. The media networks extending over the entire world ensure that we cannot avoid perceiving one another, however warped that perception may be.

However, our perceptions and unavoidable contacts do not necessarily make us cosmopolitan. Although certain individuals may be able to transform themselves into cosmopolitans through great acts of goodwill, the opportunities and the prerequisite of making the majority of people into world citizens are lacking. Thus, we must try to develop a *methodological cosmopolitanism*. This involves interfacing the idea of world citizenship in a methodological and systematic fashion with those existing structures capable of providing the citizens of the world not with a “world state”, but instead with shared forums for exchange – even in cases of conflict.

As a sociologist, the author values the individual human being but does not overestimate the strength of the individual. Therefore, he places his trust in institutions and organizations intended to support us at junctures where we would otherwise be helpless. Through the course of human history, the great centres of education,

the schools and academies and universities have always played and continue to play a central role not only in the development of individual cultures, but also in cultural exchange and the development of human knowledge. From a practical perspective, this has meant a permanent exchange of students, university instructors and research; and beyond that mutual knowledge about our respective cultures, traditions, systems of belief and ways of life.

Along with the great centres of education, markets have always led to a successful cultural exchange and to mutual acknowledgement of economic achievement at times when there has been fair and regulated competition. There have always been reoccurring zones of contact in which such an exchange has largely been “fair”. Today, however, despite the presence of a great technological potential, we are all very far from not only fair, but also far from more or less justly regulated economic competition in the world market. An important field where much could be accomplished for gaining just world markets would be international politics, which could achieve much more than what the World Bank is able to provide today. It is also not enough to indicate that the community of states has at least been able to construct institutions such as the United Nations, UNESCO and the International Court of Justice. Not one of these institutions is as strong as it ought to be, just as various forms of fundamentalism or national egoism are permanently being counteracted by the efforts of international NGOs .

As a result, the concept of methodological cosmopolitanism cannot be exported “from the top down”, i.e. from the still weak world organizations into the individual nations or states. Instead, the decisive factor is the ability of the individual states to support those of their internal institutions that can operate with the paradoxical truth that the cultural, religious and ethnic differences that exist between people represent the only thing that is truly universal to humanity. Furthermore, human progress- should any such thing exist- does not stem from the standardization of our way of life, of knowledge and of skills, but rather from a potential that finds expression in these differences, from the mutually differing cultural laboratories of humanity.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the “target groups” for methodological individualism must be the respective national educational systems – extending from pre-school to the universities - but also the “publicly funded and regulated media”. In order not to end on a too pessimistic note, something that appears to be positive must be pointed out. The traditional allies of a world citizenry through which the culture of differences has always found a venue of expression have been and remain the arts: painting, music, literature and theatre. One should learn from them not only because they are valuable in and of themselves, but also because they have been able to conquer a permanent place in the everyday lives of people worldwide. It is this capacity that determines the immense value of the arts to society and humanity.

Session 3

New Avenues
to Promote
Intercultural Dialogue

Introduction

This is the record of Session 3 of the symposium, which was entitled “New Avenues to Promote Intercultural Dialogue” and casts light on some prospects for the future. It had been seen in previous sessions how Arab and Japanese cultures have come into contact with each other; and each of them with other cultures; now it was time to analyse these remarkable experiences, to ask questions about them and to draw theoretical and practical lessons from this dialogue, so unusual and so far from the well-trodden paths of East-West relations whose parameters have changed profoundly since 1990.

Dialogue is indeed a perilous enterprise, a real struggle with oneself to accept what is different; proper epistemological reflection, as we see here, emphasizes the notion of “culture” as a process, a flux of two-way borrowings. Every culture is constantly evolving; and cultural identity cannot therefore be understood in terms of fixed content, but rather as an open field for various forms of identification. All human beings in the course of their lives identify with this or that component of their culture; and depending on the individual’s desires and aspirations, the component identified with will change over time – it never remains the same. Seen in this light, cultural identity is a positive response to all the versions of fundamentalism, self-obsession and intolerance current throughout today’s world.

Cultures, then, constitute an inexhaustible resource for individuals; and it is only individuals who can take part in dialogue.

From a literary point of view, dialogue is “interculturalism”, the whole ensemble of metaphors, images, fancies and tales which form the imaginative bridges between people of different cultures – ancient bridges now, thanks to the travellers, geographers and historians who have had tales to tell of distant lands.

From the practical point of view, the dialogue between Japan and the Arab world takes the form of economic cooperation over oil, various industries and agriculture. It also involves technology transfer and technical support.

Our views of dialogue in the future, however, must go a great deal further; for it is the preservation of world peace that is at stake. That is why we must firmly emphasize the human aspect of development; we must never stop paying attention to the defence of human rights and the rights of women. Dialogue, in its many guises, presupposes mutual knowledge (and recognition) within the framework of a programme of education for peace.

The UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity and its accompanying Plans of Action must be the platform around which it will be possible to mobilize for dialogue and for peace.

Cultural Diversity and Dialogue: An Interface

Katérina Stenou

Director of the Division of Cultural Policies
and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO,
Moderator for the session 3

Summary

Planning a major forum for dialogue requires us to go far beyond the spiritual aspect often glimpsed in relations between East and West, or the merely economic aspects which appear to characterize any dialogue between North and South. The Arab-Japanese dialogue remains free of these obvious patterns: its concrete manifestations are relatively modest, yet the manner of it is immensely rich in unparalleled points of similarity. It is also an exception to the familiar models in that this is a dialogue conducted in a voluntary search for modernity, in the sense of critical openness to what other cultures have to offer.

The novel views outlined here draw support from the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, a platform on which we can now start to develop a Theory of Dialogue, beginning with the requisite etymological look at the word itself. "Dialogue", from Plato's standpoint, is conceived of as a "perilous enterprise", a means of searching together for truth. This discussion must not be restricted to a small coterie of experts; and it is fortunate, therefore, that this symposium has provided an opportunity for senior figures from all areas of public life to take part in the debate.

At a time when intolerance and fundamentalism are on the counter-attack in many regions of the world, there is every reason to mobilize on a massive scale in defence of dialogue and our creative diversity.

UNESCO has given an excellent compass to guide in this task: the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, unanimously adopted by the General Conference very shortly after the events of 11 September 2001. This Declaration aims, by preserving cultural diversity as a living and therefore renewable treasure, to counter the one-sided or fundamentalist polemics which stigmatize anyone "different" as an outsider and hence a potential enemy.

This brings us straight to the heart of the matter: Cultural diversity guarantees mutual enrichment to the future benefit of all humanity because, even more than a source of innovation, creativity and exchange, it is the raw material for dialogue. Cultural diversity is not an unchanging stock that we need to simply conserve, as some unreflecting people may think; rather, it is the setting for an everlasting dialogue conducive to the forging of links among all forms of cultural expression. It is the recognition of this everyday dialogue as a fundamental principle, which we must uphold and preserve.

Far from dividing individuals, societies and peoples, cultural diversity unites them by enabling them to share a stock of immemorial heritage, present experience and promises for the future. It is this common stock, to which each contributes and from which each can draw that will ensure that development is universal and sustainable.

In other words, cultural diversity is the very root of the human aptitude for development: individuals think by associating images, find their identities by comparing

ways of living; we make decisions by choosing among different options; and grow by rebuilding our confidence, constantly renewed, thanks to dialogue.

UNESCO has not yet finished drawing all the logical conclusions from this Declaration, hailed by many as equal in importance to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. UNESCO, has now been asked to prepare a binding international instrument guaranteeing a place for all the world's cultures and freedom of expression for each. The point of this exercise, for UNESCO, is not to identify, isolate and preserve each culture, but on the contrary to strengthen a living intercultural dialogue, which is the only way to avoid the emergence of ghettos, to counter the abuse of identities, and accordingly to prevent conflict.

There is an urgent need to plan a great forum devoted to dialogue among cultures. Such a space must not only recognize the historical foundations of each culture but also provide for an up-to-date analysis of individual and group aspirations. This is the fullest justification for turning more and more often to cultural resources in order to mitigate deficiencies of democracy or to deal with social evils: culture, all too often press-ganged for ethnic, religious or other partisan purposes and then blamed as a cause of conflict, must become an agent for peace in the willing construction of an ongoing dialogue.

Indeed, we have been hearing these incantatory remarks for a long time, and by repeating them, we run the risk of weakening the credibility of the cause they uphold. But the present context requires a series of urgent measures at both the regional and international levels. This symposium demonstrates that, for the first time, the issue is not limited to a small number of representatives from civil society or researchers, but will be dealt with at the highest levels by those responsible for national cultural policies. This offers hope that in each country the dialogue will nourish all institutions, be they in the fields of education, research, publishing, audiovisual, museums or media, to mention but a few of the concerned domains.

The two main objectives are:

- 1• Firstly, to demonstrate the beneficial effects of cultural diversity through the recognition of borrowings, the appreciation of the value of exchange and the way differences interact; for in much written and oral discussion of cultural diversity it is presented – implicitly, at least – as a necessary evil, or a constraint to which people must bow and for which governments must find the least objectionable solution. One needs to steer the discussion away from such characterizations.

However; even when diversity does manage to be presented as a positive thing – an enrichment, or a factor in development – it is for the most part in terms too vague, too lacking in demonstrations or illustrations. This is a serious omission, and weakens the case considerably. It is important to demonstrate, with the requisite proofs and examples, that cultural diversity does constitute a source of enrichment for society; and we need to portray a whole range of ways of seeing the world, of illuminations, of creative philosophies and sensibilities which afford each of us choices of how to live this life, as individual and in groups.

- 2• Secondly, the principle of "learning to live together" without conflicts of loyalty due to membership of different cultures: there is an urgent need nowadays

to move beyond the celebration of diversity to the construction of pluralism. Pluralism is not just the recognition of a plurality of objects and concepts; it also recognizes the dynamic role of individuals belonging to a plurality of groups in the construction of a cohesive and interdependent society. "Living together" puts citizens on a footing of equality and respect for differences: equality is indispensable if people are to converse, understand one another and work side by side, but differences remain an essential stimulus for and manifestation of individuality. There is an urgent need to develop a positive view of pluralism, in order to foster regulating and stabilizing mechanisms that can take the strain of tense situations.

At the conclusion of these two sessions, after having examined the manner in which two cultures entered into dialogue with one another but also with other cultures – and with itself – we can now examine the theoretical and practical lessons derived from these unique experiments. We have chartered new territories by refusing to resort to the usual ongoing debate on East-West dialogue – dialogue too often reduced to its spiritual dimension – and, on North-South dialogue, which is often limited to its economic scope.

The dialogue between Japan and the Arab World has avoided these ready-made approaches because its concrete manifestations are relatively modest; however, its applications are, on the contrary, immensely rich in unexplored connections. Moreover, this dialogue also eludes proven models since this dialogue is carried out in a deliberate search for modernity, understood as a critical openness to the contributions of other cultures.

The original impetus of this Symposium is one part of the optimists' response to apocalyptic prophecies of a "clash of civilizations" as the unavoidable consequence of an alleged impossibility of any dialogue among cultures.

This optimistic response is itself part and parcel of the thinking enshrined in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which, far from regarding such diversity as a threat, declares that it is to be the inexhaustible source of humanity's renewal.

Now it is necessary to examine the key concept, "dialogue", so that by understanding it better one may be sure of a more rigorous and broader application of the attitudes and behaviour it entails.

"Dialogos" is a Greek compound widely mistranslated and wrongly understood because of a confusion between "dyo" and "dia". It does not mean a conversation between two people or two groups, but an acceptance, by two participants or more, that they will compare and contrast their respective arguments to the very end. Dialogue is accordingly a perilous enterprise, for it implies a risk that either participant may find his or her argument transformed, and thus their very identity put to the test. The prefix "dia-" is equivalent to the Latin "trans-", connoting a considerable shift in space, time, substance or thought. With Plato, who established the rules of dialogue as a means of a shared search for truth, the term came into its full meaning, acquired its contours and its boundaries; thus dialogue, as an instrument for assessing the validity of an argument, may also be an one-person exercise: one can conduct a dialogue with oneself, without this being a sterile monologue. Dialogue is not designed to lead to a definitive conclusion. It retains, even when this is not apparent, a latent conversational quality; and this shines through in its written form. That keeps

it alive, and it becomes accordingly a constantly-renewed means of re-initiating the thinking process, of questioning certainties, and of progressing from discovery to discovery.

For this reason the greatest care must be taken over the technique of dialogue, meaning not “rhetoric”, but the techniques that have been delineated by intercultural communication specialists: the task is to define and then develop the skills that make it possible to engage in and support a dialogue with a very wide range of participants, from the most widely separated cultural horizons as well as the closest. These techniques must combine “logos” and “mythos”, that is, on the one hand, the rational domain, and, on the other, the intuitive and poetic dimensions of human thought. Plato does not regard myths as a cultural given, something that is necessarily static: they are there to facilitate the re-appropriation of a discussion, and may be reinterpreted at any time by an alert and nimble participant. Both approaches, the rational (logos) and the poetic (myths) are indispensable in the search for truth; and dialogue, understood in this way, is a transgression and a transcending – but it is also an upsetting, an aggression.

Perverse misuse of language stems from self-satisfaction, which may have a great variety of origins, from intellectual laziness to the desire for domination. Refusing to engage in dialogue and finding refuge in the cosy comfort of one’s own beliefs and certainties, or reassurance in one’s identity – what do these reveal (besides mere passivity), but the fear of change? Again, those in power may refuse to engage in dialogue, displaying the certainty of pride: why put our opinions to the test, since they are right? Or, even if not right, they are still the final answer which will always prevail, whether by force or by propaganda: the position taken by Callicles in Plato’s *Gorgias* has been echoed by many of the dictators that populate our history.

This etymological detour and dive into the past was a necessary preliminary for an epistemology of dialogue that meets the needs of our present world. Today, when certain cultural fundamentalisms are reappearing with all their venom and when at the same time globalization is creating the conditions for a general levelling down (homogenization and distortion), it is only dialogue, in the real and full sense of the term, that can work against misunderstanding and hatred, and preserve cultural diversity as the indispensable active ingredient of development.

The question is not to create an artificial discipline of dialogue from scratch, but rather to look in every domain (artistic, scientific, philosophical, linguistic, religious, etc.) for the building blocks of intercultural communication. For while there are certain universal languages (as mathematics is, absolutely, or as music is, relatively), there are others that require their decipherment tables, if shared meanings are to be brought out. Beyond the much-travelled artistic motifs, the migratory myths and epics, the shared symbols (all well explored now within UNESCO’s “Roads of Dialogue” programme), are new territories to work on; it is necessary to look at relations linking cultures, which are believed to have nothing at all in common. Cultural incompatibility will never withstand dialogue; for if it can admit the appeal to reason and at the same time embrace the creative faculties, then it can resolve all difficulties of communication.

Another Culture of Dialogue

Toshiaki Kozakaï

Associate Professor, Laboratory of Social Psychology,
University of Paris VIII, France

Summary

Cultures never stop evolving. Perhaps all culture is composed of elements borrowed from other cultures. It is indeed impossible to separate out what belongs specifically to a given culture, in the sense of being purified of all foreign influence. Culture has no specific, immutable content: one may imagine, then, that national tradition and cultural identity are fictions that have been developed collectively as a historical process. Cultural identity is a movement, a process of identification. This means that minority identities are not fated to disappear: they may have a clandestine, underground influence – even a decisive one – on the majority identity. Their influences are reciprocal, and there is no contradiction between cultural openness and a settled identity.

Cultural Openness and Preservation of Identity: Sworn Enemies?

How can cultural exchange be promoted without oppressing the minority identity? Globalization is making cultural exchange more and more intense; but globalization could also threaten the preservation of identity. So how is it possible to reconcile cultural exchange, which means opening oneself to the outside world, with diversity, which implies the opposite, a defensive closing-off in terms of identity?

Faced with this dilemma, our habitual way of proceeding would be to look for a balance (sometimes a tricky one) between these two apparently contradictory tendencies. That is the thrust of yesterday's speakers' very worthwhile and highly relevant ideas. The author proposes to consider this question from another angle: instead of looking for a compromise solution so that dialogue and difference, change and identity can coexist, he will try to show that there is no real contradiction between cultural openness and a settled identity; and that bringing cultures closer together and defending minority identities are not opposing but rather complementary agendas.

Culture and its Ontological Status

The author offers a small epistemological comment about the concept of "culture". When someone wants to engage in fruitful reflection about diversity and intercultural dialogue, it is sometimes useful to go back a little and start with a still more basic question: what is culture?¹

1. For an epistemological reflection on collective phenomenon, see T. Kozakaï, « Où est la mémoire collective ? Réflexion sur le statut ontologique du phénomène collectif », in S. Laurens et N. Roussiau, *La mémoire sociale. Identités et représentations sociales*, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2000, p. 73-82.

Let us begin with a commonplace observation: cultures never stop evolving. As historians have shown, "ancestral tradition" is often the product of (more or less artificial) invention, and, is moreover, a great deal less ancient than people think². Moreover, elements that are regarded as of the very essence in our culture are frequently of foreign origin. Christianity is without question the kernel of modern Western cultures; yet it was originally a foreign creed, born in the oriental desert, from where it has almost totally disappeared today and where Islam now flourishes. Foreign tourists visiting Japan admire Kyoto's ancient temples; but what is taken to be a Japanese tradition is in fact composed of copies of Chinese and Korean styles. Views and values of foreign origin thus become accepted and even ingrained at the very core of cultures.

Indeed it is impossible to separate out the "proper" components of a culture, in the sense of content purified of all foreign influence; it is like peeling an onion: remove every last layer, and nothing remains. Ernest Renan, in a famous lecture at the Sorbonne at the end of the nineteenth century, declared: "Historical forgetfulness, I would even go so far as to say historical error, is an essential factor in building a nation; and for this reason the progress of historiography often poses a danger to nationhood"³. National tradition and cultural identity are in reality social fictions, developed collectively in a historical process. All cultures evolve, slowly but surely; they are bound to change even in their very essence; so how could they possibly be defined by any specific or immutable content?

How is it, then, that various cultures keep their identities despite this endless evolution? Imagine a small wooden boat, which every morning we drag down to the sea to go fishing. As the years go by, there is wear and tear on the boat: it gets damaged now and then, pounded against rocks; so from time to time we have to replace the damaged bits with new ones. Sooner or later, all the material will have been replaced, and no part of the original boat remains. Now the crucial question will be asked, is it still the same boat? We certainly have the feeling that it is, as we use it every day; but it does not keep its identity just because it still has the same shape, for what if, instead of repairing the boat bit by bit, we destroyed it all at once and then proceeded to rebuild it with new materials? In that case we should surely feel that this was a copy, another boat, even if we had kept to the original shape by meticulously following the blueprints. Yet whether we replace every last plank at one go or gradually over a hundred years makes no logical difference to the fact that each part of the boat has been renewed. Yet from the psychological point of view the two situations are quite different: the feeling that an identity has been maintained stems from the fact that the alterations are gradual and imperceptible. It's an optical illusion.

Here is the secret of cultural identity. It should not be thought of in terms of content, but as a movement or process of identification. Our cultural identity – French, Arab, Japanese – is nothing but that with which we identify and that with which others identify us. Identity is an empty box into which one can theoretically put any content. We need to shift from thinking in terms of identity towards thinking in terms of identification.

2. E. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

3. E. Renan, "Qu'est-ce qu'une nation", in *Discours et conférences*, Paris, Pocket, 1992 (1^{er} édition, 1887), p. 41.

The important question is not whether we ought to maintain tradition or let it evolve by accepting other people's values, whether we ought or ought not to change. The real problem arises when people are forced to become what they do not want to be, or are prevented from becoming what they do want to be. It is possible therefore to say, a priori or in the absolute, "We must maintain cultural diversity", or the reverse, "We have to roll all the world's cultures into one". The reification of culture must be avoided: cultures are not things to be preserved like works of art in a museum or endangered species; and culture must not be regarded as an object, but considered from the point of view of subjects, the actual men and women, the social agents involved.

Voluntary Acculturation⁴

Must the disappearance of minority cultures be accepted? That is not at all what the author is advocating. But the intensification of cultural exchanges does not necessarily lead to the absorption of minorities into the majority mould, nor to a standardization of cultures. Studies in social psychology show compelling examples where a minority with no power, authority or prestige can nevertheless influence a majority even where it is stronger and more popular⁵. The author does not have the time to go into theoretical details here, so he offers just one anecdote to illustrate the way in which minorities can introduce change:

One morning, the geneticist Albert Jacquard relates, when I had for no obvious reason formulated an idea in my mind which really was quite a good one, and seemed to me particularly original, I was feeling "very bright"; and that afternoon, I couldn't resist the pleasure of revealing this new truth to some colleagues at the end of a work meeting; but instead of the compliments I expected, one of them replied with an irreverent smile. "Don't you find my idea interesting?"; I asked. "Oh yes indeed; but the whole thing is there in my thesis." I had been one of his examiners, eighteen months earlier; and I got my copy of his thesis down from my shelves there and then, we quickly found the passage, which set out "my idea" almost word for word; and there, in the margin, I had commented "no, wrong".⁶

In the very act of rejecting the suggestion by his student (a junior or "minority" source of information), this researcher had already been caught in a mechanism of subterranean influence. The effect of that influence surfaced only long afterwards, and by then the researcher had already forgotten the origin of the information. The "minority" idea is so perfectly accommodated that even its external provenance is forgotten; there is the illusion that the discovery is one's own. This is the hidden way in which a minority exercises its influence, like a time bomb or a virus which awakes after a period of latency.

4. On this theme, see T. Kozakai, *Les Japonais sont-ils des Occidentaux ?*, *Sociologie d'une acculturation volontaire*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1991; T. Kozakai, *L'Étranger, l'identité. Essai sur l'intégration culturelle*, Paris, Payot & Rivages, 2000 (traduction italienne : *Lo straniero, l'identità. Saggio sull'inerazione culturale*, Roma, Borla, 2002).

5. S. Moscovici, *Social Influence and Social Change*, London, Academic Press, 1976 (tr. fr., S. Moscovici, *Psychologie des minorités actives*, Paris, PUF, 1979).

6. A. Jacquard, *Au péril de la science ?*, Paris, Seuil, 1982, p. 88-89.

What is even more important for the present thesis is that not only do the influences between majority and minority work in both directions, but that the idea adopted at the conclusion of a confrontation between two parties is sometimes an entirely new one, quite distinct from either of their original positions. Minorities, by going against common sense, oblige us to look at reality in another light, in a qualitatively different way. A new way of seeing the world can come into being through a re-examination, in dialogue, of our customary view.

The point is not to engage in moral exhortation here, nor in ideologically wishful thinking; this is an objective finding, proved again and again by scientific studies. The minority inevitably influences the majority, whether we like it or not. The author is perfectly aware of the danger of cultural domination; but there is sometimes a risk, in wanting to unmask it at any cost, of blinding oneself to something else. The indignation felt in the presence of an injustice should not prevent us from recognizing the real strength of minorities.

Conclusion

The ideas expressed may be summarized in two points:

On the one hand, a cultural identity is not a specific content, but rather a container whose content is endlessly changing. Staying faithful to oneself and evolving by admitting foreign values are by no means incompatible: indeed, it is possible to change while remaining the same, and it is equally possible to undergo a crisis of identity while hanging on to the same cultural content. The dilemma is therefore a false one. It is not the culture that must be saved, but the actual women and men that must be considered.

Secondly, the cultural exchange that is becoming more and more intense with globalization is by no means synonymous with standardization. Although every day and in every part of the world people are conforming and submitting, nevertheless, differentiation, revolt and questioning of the established order are also part of human life. We should trust in the strength of the minority.

Epistemology of Intercultural Dialogue

Transcript of intervention by Ghassan Salamé
Former Minister of Culture of Lebanon

Summary

Dialogue, as understood by Plato, is a “perilous enterprise”, yet everyone ought to accept the transformations that come from contact with others. For dialogue does not take place between cultures or civilizations: only between people, or – to stretch a point – between groups or states. In the last fifteen years, culture has invaded our field of discussion; but the need now is for an epistemological shift in the debate, since culture is a major factor in development, in inclination for war or peace, and in the process of self-identification and identification by others.

At a time of globalization, one should beware of all those who set themselves up as “cultural interpreters” or “gatekeepers”, making culture their all-purpose tool. Human relations rely on mutual respect and tolerance; but we must get beyond respect and tolerance, to dialogue, in which each of us struggles with him- or herself for the sake of that acceptance of otherness which is indispensable both to inner peace and to peace in the world.

Culture seems to have invaded the arena of discussion in the last ten or fifteen years. This is both good news and bad: good news, because it gives cultural matters a higher standing; and bad news, because culture has been used, regardless of its true relevance or irrelevance, to explain a whole series of phenomena. The development came, indeed, at an appropriate time: for the international system has over the last ten or fifteen years undergone a threefold transition which badly needed a cultural paradigm by which it might identify itself, or seek to find itself in the gloom. It was a sort of transition from a situation where ideology was the basic factor in international alignments to something different: and human kind was looking for a new criterion of alignment. Culture stepped in to play this functional role, in the sense that, with the massacres in Central Africa and the fighting in the Balkans and Central Asia, the point was reached where it seemed the world was moving from a phase where “I’m with you because we think alike”, to another phase, where “I’m with you because we are alike – we have the same colour skin, the same length nose, the same language, the same religion or the same confession”. Now there are new alignments, no longer the alignments of reason rooted in the philosophy of the Enlightenment where closeness or distance was based on ideas, but the predetermined alignments inherited at birth.

The second transition concerns a kind of dread of worldwide conflict – a world war which for fifty years remained a “cold” war between two blocs – shifting from a “virtual” war which weighed on the international system but never actually took place to the reality of a hundred or perhaps even a hundred and fifty local wars which were not in the least virtual but utterly real, and which needed to be explained in terms of something other than ideological or strategic alignments that claimed to be universal. Identity and culture were used to explain this transition as well.

The third transition is a shift from a mainly bipolar system to one, which cannot be defined in terms of the number of principal players. Is it unipolar? That would fit very well with all the talk about the risk of homogenization and standardization – the cultural concomitant of unipolarity. Or is it, on the contrary, multipolar, as the current explosion of identities would seem to convey? There was a need for a sort of taking root, culturally, in a geopolitical reality that was still uncertain.

Because of this threefold transition, culture has invaded all public discourse, and is now to be met everywhere. Culture was used (long before Samuel P. Huntington) by Immanuel Wallerstein when he introduced the concept of “geoculture”, according to which the international system’s rules of peace and war were now marked by competing geocultures. Wallerstein was, to put it briefly, a thinker of the left; Huntington, on the right, took up the same idea with his now notorious concept of the “clash of civilizations”. But culture has been sighted much further afield: it explains why, in the thinking of Lee Kwan Yew and others, Asian societies do not need to promote values of individualism, nor human rights as understood by the West. Culture is also used to explain the relationship between Islam and the West. It will hopefully be at the centre of thinking within the World Trade Organization about the commercial as opposed to the intrinsic value of cultural products in an age of globalization (that is, whether their commercial value is essential, or merely incidental). Culture explains ideas; and ideas explain the way groups, states, and other communities behave. A whole thesis has been developed along these lines by Albert Yee, John Ikenberry and others, concerning the value of ideas rather than interests as the principal explanatory factors in the behaviour of states and communities. It is said of the Iraq war (that of 2003, at least) that it is a war of ideas. The relative success of a given company, a given cooperative or given businesses is to be explained by the internal culture of the enterprise and also by the culture of those in charge of it. And culture will even appear where least expected: to explain why certain countries are very rich and others have remained poor. A few years ago there was a great stir over the appearance of David Landes’s book, according to which: “if we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes all the difference”.

Culture, then, has got itself everywhere; and this, is both very good news for those who are institutionally or personally concerned with culture, but at the same time bad news, because of course there is a kind of excessive exploitation strangely reminiscent of the overuse of “ecology” in the 1980s and 1990s, when there was a point at which everything – the international order, wealth, wars and poverty – was explained by people’s relationship with the environment, by ecological thinking.

There has been a retreat from that position; and the author expects, or at least hopes, that the same will be true of culture. For culture must be given a role other than that of the *summa causa* which explains anything and everything. Culture is important, but not because the ideologies which crumbled at the end of the last century must be replaced by an ideologizing of culture, the transformation – to borrow Mr Kozakaï’s metaphor – of the *camera bianca* into a *camera oscura*.

So now, after this decade or decade and a half during which culture has been over-exploited, it is time to reconsider the epistemological position and assert the importance of culture in just those domains where it is thought to be it is effective.

Culture is indeed a major factor in development, in inclination towards war or peace, and in the process of self-identification and identification by others; but

in none of these cases are cultures (or civilizations) to be regarded as international protagonists: cultures are epistemologically unfit for such a position – and civilizations even more so. This is why one should always be most circumspect in speaking of a “clash of civilizations” or even of a “dialogue” between them. Take the title of today’s meeting: is there really such a thing as intercultural dialogue? Are those in fact the right words? We cannot say that cultures conduct dialogues. Cultures are not protagonists in making war or peace, nor is it they that engage in dialogue.

A culture is a kind of storehouse for people to draw on; and it is people who do – or do not – engage in dialogue, with other people. By “people” we mean individuals – and here it is what has already been said about the possibility of one-person inner dialogue – but this also includes dialogues of two or more individuals, communities or, perhaps, states insofar as they are organized communities. The idea of Islam, for example, conducting a dialogue with the West, or the West with Shintoism, is unacceptable because the view of civilizations as international agents is epistemologically indefensible – a “category mistake”. They are storehouses, more or less richly stocked; they are not themselves protagonists. That is the first observation.

Culture is certainly an ingredient in and a constraint upon individual or collective behaviour, but it is not a static constraint or ingredient: it is forever being constructed and deconstructed, and in the watches of the night each of us rearranges the various ingredients of what we think of as our identity – which is our culture. We give importance to the fact of being a man or a woman, a doctor or a professor, black, white, yellow or brown, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, or heaven knows what, or the fact that we speak such-and-such a language, and so on; and these different ingredients are being constantly rearranged. Only very rarely does an individual or a community take a complex combination of ingredients like these (which will by definition be composite) and preserve it unaltered for a whole lifetime.

Some people feel that their most important identity was their language. Then come ideas, and so on. If they now consider religion as the most important identifier; and in ten years’ time it will be their gender, or their profession, which will play a part in their self-identification. Identity, then, is a process of endless construction and reconstruction: it is a constraint, which is very hard to pin down over time, and one must avoid pinning down artificially.

There is, indeed, a kind of “cultural entrepreneur”: they are numerous. Cultural entrepreneurs – and this is why they are very dangerous – take one ingredient of your collective or individual identification and elevate it to predominance over all the rest; they decide – they, not you, by an exercise of authority – that what defines you is that you are Serb or Croat, Muslim or Christian, Hutu or Tutsi; and they do it for short-term objectives, of peace or war – usually war. Doubt their choice, and you become a traitor to the group, an apostate, slacker or coward.

This is how it comes about that the process of civil strife during these last fifteen years has been distinguished by an extraordinary activity on the part of these cultural entrepreneurs, most of whom are warmongers. Time and again, they will press-gang some component of your identity, for projects, which are seldom cultural.

There is also another category of people over-exploiting culture: “gatekeepers”. They stand at the gates and announce “our identity must be kept as it is; we have no need of foreign influences”; all those who speak of “cultural imperialism” or the

pernicious influence of foreigners. Watch out for these “gatekeepers”. What they want, for the most part, is to imprison communities and individuals; but it is their camouflage in the colouring or costume of culture, which makes them so very dangerous. The author has long had a deep-seated dread of those who are always talking of purity: purity of race, purity of culture, purity of art. It is not necessary to be an advocate for miscegenation, but one must recognize that it has been a reality down the ages; and has been a blessing, too, from the cultural point of view.

What dialogue can do in this situation?

Between groups, there can be many kinds of positive interaction. The most enduring form of relationship between people belonging to different cultures (rather than to relationships between cultures) is respect. Respect is a very good thing; it means you recognize the other person’s otherness. You recognize that they are different, and you respect them despite that difference.

But respect is not enough to settle relationships between groups belonging to different cultures, because it establishes a form of Cold War: “I respect you and I require you to respect me, even though my nose is shorter than yours” (or longer). Inherent in the idea of respect is this notion: “you do not trespass” (you do not cross the boundary). There is a boundary, recognized by both parties. Neither seeks to change the other; there is mutual respect. You establish the boundary, and you say, “neither of us is going to move against the other; we are going to respect each other’s otherness”.

One step further than respect lays *tolerance*. Tolerance institutes, not a Cold War; but a relationship, which is worse: a power relationship. In any case of tolerance there is a stronger and a weaker party; and the idea is that the stronger is magnanimous enough to recognize, and not utterly crush, the weaker, whose identity, of culture, language, etc., is not annihilated but tolerated. The price of this toleration is a heavy one, for the power relationship means that the weaker must recognize the power of the stronger or more powerful, must recognize that the relationship between them is based on power and is not one of respect but one of tolerance. So while the author regards respect as insufficient because it institutes a Cold War; he finds tolerance still worse in such a setting. In intercultural relations, it is necessary to get beyond both of these.

Dialogue is a more promising candidate; still inadequate, it goes without saying, but a great deal more promising. It is generally presented as an alternative to fighting: you make war or you engage in dialogue. You take up a position of animosity (individual or collective), or you show a readiness for dialogue. Dialogue is not an alternative to fighting but a kind of fight: to fight is to struggle with someone else, and what you are really doing in a dialogue is struggling against yourself. This is not the externalization of a struggle, but its internalization: you fight yourself.

You fight yourself, firstly, to make yourself see the necessity of accepting the reality of the other person’s otherness. That, you have to accept. Next, you struggle to make yourself admit, to yourself, the legitimacy of the other person’s otherness. Their difference does nothing to diminish their legitimacy: “They are Christian, I am Muslim; they are black and I am white”, and so on; and, in spite of all that, one recognizes not only their otherness, but also its legitimacy, which is an extremely hard struggle in a great many cases. Coming back once more to Plato’s metaphor of the “perilous enterprise”: you are fighting yourself to make yourself accept the other

person's otherness; you are fighting yourself to make yourself accept the legitimacy of that otherness. Worse still, in a dialogue you run the risk of being changed by contact with the other. For, of course, anyone who supposes that they are taking part in a dialogue purely in order to change the other person's mind, and not on any account to have their own mind changed, is just an instructor; for it is not a dialogue, but a form of power relationship that they are – quite hypocritically – seeking to establish; it leads nowhere.

In a dialogue, you have to take three steps: you must accept otherness; you must accept its legitimacy, and, last of all, you have to struggle against yourself to make yourself accept that you might yourself, as a result of the dialogue, have your mind changed by your contact with the other person. And so the author's conclusion is a simple one: he does not like respect; he detests tolerance; he favours dialogue, but does not regard it as an alternative to fighting. On the contrary, it is a kind of fight.

Of course, dialogue is not the only way individuals or groups interact; but it is one which is indispensable for inner peace, and for peace in the world.

A Real Dialogue for Peace

Hisae Nakanishi

Professor and Dean of the Graduate School of International
Development, Nagoya University, Japan

Summary

In the context of the debate on the “exportation” of Western-style democracy to the Middle East, it is instructive for Japan and the Arab world to exchange views on the important role culture can play in the social and economic development of non-Western societies. Two particular points are noteworthy in the history of relations between Japan and the Arab world: since the 1973 oil crisis, Japan principle economic partners have been the oil-producing countries; these relations have also involved technical aid and technology transfers. Since 11 September 2001, the human dimension of this dialogue has taken precedence over political and economic considerations. Unfortunately, the media conveys a negative view of the Arab world, particularly regarding religion and the social status of women. Dialogue on human issues presupposes a better knowledge of each others culture, which will certainly require suitable educational initiatives, and in particular a programme of peace education.

In the overall theme of dialogue among civilizations, no other subject is as significant and timely as the current dialogue between the Arab world and Japan largely owing to the fact that such dialogue has not been emphasized enough by Japanese policymakers. In addition, such dialogue is particularly timely since the US declaration of the Greater Middle East Project in February 2004, which raises the question as to whether the Western model of democracy can be implemented in the Middle East. It is within this context that the Arab world and Japan--both being non-Western societies--can exchange viewpoints about the possible roles to be played by social and cultural values in the socio-economic development of non-Western societies.

The author identifies two phases in the dialogue between the Arab world and Japan in recent years. The first phase extends from the 1973 oil crisis to the events of 11 September 2001. This period was characterized by Japan's reliance on the oil of the Arab states as well as Japanese investment and assistance in building the economic infrastructure of the oil rich states. Thus, Japan's relationship with the Arab world was mainly economically motivated and limited to only the oil-producing countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman. As the price of oil fluctuated, particularly in the 1990s, the oil producing countries suffered economic setbacks. In the 1990s, these countries also experienced rapid population growth. Consequently, the Arab world faced a harsh reality that required the creation of a large number of jobs, particularly for young people, and the development of value-added industries. In this context, Japan continues playing a role in providing technical assistance to the Arab world in constructing processing-industries, in the transfer of high technology for the promotion of intensive agriculture, and in securing water resources.

The second phase is the post-September 11 period. The terrorist attack on prominent US sites (World Trade Center and the Pentagon) brought about many tragic consequences for the Arab and the Islamic world. There is no doubt that this gave rise to misconceptions and prejudices against the Arab and the Islamic world. Particularly serious is the on-going war in Palestine: the situation for Palestinian people has been devastating politically, economically, socially, and psychologically. It would seem that there is no way of turning back.

One positive impact of the September 11 events is the rapidly increasing interest of the Japanese people in the Arab and the Islamic world. For a majority of the Japanese people today, the Arab world is not only associated with oil and camels but with Islam as a religion, worldview, culture, life style, and political, economic, and social values. The Japanese hostage incident in Falluja, Iraq caused concern among the perception of Japan and Japanese people among Arabs. This indicates an interesting shift in the dimension of the dialogue between the Arab world and Japan: from a government-to-government dimension, to a more human-to-human dimension. This transition is very positive as a real dialogue is only possible through human relationships rather than state-to-state diplomacy.

However, the presence of distorted images about both the Arab world and Islam are widespread in the Japanese media and in the mind of Japanese people. One of the most persistent misunderstandings concerns Muslim women. Unfortunately, many Japanese people still believe that Muslim women are all severely oppressed under their veils. This kind of misconception results from the influence of Western media, which makes the Japanese people unaware of the diversity in the lives of Muslim women. Moreover, it is regretful that the history of the Islamic world has not been adequately taught in Japan's social science curriculum, even in higher education. Thus, Japanese people possess little knowledge about the period of the Islamic Renaissance in which science and education flourished and when the rational thinking and philosophy of the Arab world impacted the Scientific Revolution in Europe. It is the task of Middle Eastern and Arabic specialists in Japan to provide first-hand information about the Arab world. This includes the promotion of additional college courses through which Japanese students can understand how much humankind has unconsciously inherited from Islamic science, which is often mistakenly referred to as Western and Japanese scientific technologies.

Today, about 78,000 foreigners studying in Japanese academic institutions, yet it is unfortunate that these statistics show that only 7 percent of these students are from the Middle East. In order to promote human-to-human dialogue between the Arab world and Japan, both the Arab world and Japan should invest more in social and human capital. Both sides should promote the tourist industry in the Arab world and increase mutual academic exchange among young students and scholars. These efforts are crucial for enhancing cultural and day-to-day understanding.

The current world political situation appears to be the embodiment of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations". It is true that his theory has been criticized in many academic circles. However, the collapse of the peace process in Palestine, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the US Greater Middle East Project makes one wonder if Huntington's claim represents not only an academic theory, but also a real political scenario.

Under these circumstances, Japan should play a role in constructing better understanding between the Arab Islamic world and the Western world. Japan maintained its unique Japanese spirit (known as “*wakon-yosai*”) when it adopted Western knowledge and technology. Thus, the Japanese way of adopting modernization--as opposed to pure Westernization, in political and socio-economic development, and in particular in women’s emancipation – can be one of the models for the Arab world.

In this regard, the following two projects are suggested: 1) Japan’s initiative in constructing the Universal Peace Education programme with the cooperation of the UNESCO Secretariat and 2) the adoption of the Japanese model for the empowerment of women by the Arab world.

Following UNESCO’s Agenda for Peace, one of the most substantial tasks that all societies should perform – be it in the Arab world, Europe, or Japan--is the promotion of “Peace Education for All.” There is a universal conception for peace and education that goes beyond differences in cultural values, religion, and political regimes. There is a saying in Saudi Arabia that ignorance is an incurable illness. One can interpret this as a proverb indicating that ignorance of others (in different civilizations) is an incurable disease for peace.

Japan experienced the atomic bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, yet it rapidly recovered in the post-war period. Japan has also been providing substantial assistance to the construction of social and human capital in Palestine and has recently aided reconciliation programs between Israelis and Arabs, particularly for those who have lost family members as a result of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, if Japan can take the initiative in the preparation and distribution of textbooks for Universal Peace Education in partnership with other countries, including Arab and European representatives, the process of such a project would constitute true dialogue for peace.

Regarding the development of human capital in the Arab world, the empowerment of women is crucial. In discussions on the emancipation or empowerment of women, a Western model is usually referred to. Western-style feminism remains a dominant discourse and strategy when the relationship between gender and development is examined by development professionals. As long as the bottom line of feminism in the West is gender equality, it is bound to collide with some Islamic concepts of equity between men and women.

It goes without saying that there is a feminist movement in the Arab world, and demands for equal rights and women’s suffrage have become more prevalent. Not all concepts of equal rights will be easily accepted in many Arab Islamic societies, as some of these societies may follow rigid interpretations of Islam regarding women’s roles and rights. All Arab societies should not follow a Western type of feminism. Japanese society did not necessarily follow the Western model. As Japan achieved rapid economic development, women’s participation in education increased, and women gradually became increasingly emancipated in society. This evolving mode of emancipation – not necessarily a revolutionary one – has been founded on Japanese cultural values.

The Arab world and Japan share patriarchy as a central common social value. The role of women as wife and mother is highly respected and accorded considerable social recognition. For example, in Japan’s taxation system, a special allowance is

provided to a husband who has a wife as a dependent. Women in Japanese society today are polarized between those women who are career-oriented and demand equal rights, and those who find their role as wife and mother to be central in their life. Thus, the Western brand of feminism has not been widely accepted by a majority of Japanese women. Nevertheless, it is certain that the legal and social status of Japanese women has improved, having become greatly emancipated since the Second World War. Universal education for women was actually one of the most decisive factors in explaining the improvement of the woman's role in Japanese society. As mentioned above, the Japanese approach to the empowerment of women can be presented as a model for women in the Arab world.

Geographically, the Arab world and Japan are far apart: they are separated by some 10,000 kilometres. The dialogue between the two was once based solely on economics. Now, that dialogue has entered a new phase. It is now possible to cooperate with each other not only from the perspective of cultural and academic exchange, but in the promotion of peace education and in the empowerment of women. These reflect vital concerns for the social and cultural development of our two worlds and, more generally, for worldwide peaceful coexistence.

Arab-Japanese Dialogue

H.E. Mr Suhail K. Shuhaiber

Ambassador of Kuwait to Tunisia

Summary

The Japanese model never fails to fascinate anyone who tries to understand it. How can the Arab world draw lessons from this experience, so as to achieve its own growth and development aims? The Japanese embarked on their new era by assimilating modern ideas and fundamental changes in their social values. They were aware that there could be no separation between the values and the ideas, but that they would truly, from that time on, form just one whole. It would not be enough, to establish dialogue between these two worlds, that a few experts should meet from time to time. UNESCO could add comparative scientific analysis projects to its existing programmes; it could encourage the use of the new ICTs to aid the wider diffusion of the two cultures, through interactive TV programmes and the setting up of websites. Likewise the translation of intellectual works from one language to the other, as well as the strengthening of links among various NGOs, could be supported by UNESCO. What is needed is a "cultural agreement", in order to sustain worldwide solidarity.

This symposium has given the author an opportunity to recall his personal experience of Japan, a country where he lived and served as ambassador for a long time, and one he found fascinating partly because of its ancestral civilization and partly for its model of development. Like many Arab intellectuals and academics, he was keen to know what lessons could be drawn from that model in order to achieve our growth and development objectives in the Arab world.

This essential question, which is being discussed today, is not a historical one but one that seeks to illuminate prospects for the future.

During the last decade, economics has for the most part been devoted to the phenomenon of globalization. Mutually contradictory definitions of this have been put forward: the one factor common to all of them has been the emergence of a new world economic order as a result of the new information and communication technologies.

Opinions differed just as widely on the phenomenon's cultural repercussions; would it generate a particular system of values or civilization in all societies? What kind of system would that be? Was it something to be produced according to Western ways, or was it a technical and economic phenomenon that applied to all cultures and civilizations indiscriminately?

It is accepted that globalization is principally an economic and technical phenomenon; but the actual situations it produces sometimes create connections which, on a global scale, acquire clear characteristics of civilization.

Against this background there have in recent years been many initiatives by international organizations such as UNESCO, in various cultural and social fields around the world.

Following the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo and the Beijing

World Conference on Women, international law has been evolving rapidly, not least as it affects cultural and social life. For instance, a country's cultural peculiarities have ceased to be admissible as grounds for allowing any instance of racial or religious discrimination in that country, or any form of domination over women outlawed by the International Declaration of Human Rights, which has been ratified by the great majority of the world's countries regardless of religious, national or historical considerations.

This development has joined forces with another which has an equally high profile: cultural diversity, one form of representation of the plurality of human society and of human culture in general.

To attempt to suppress these real developments in any way is to deny the fundamental meaningfulness of dialogue between civilizations; for a culture which proclaims itself the "one and only" focuses exclusively on itself, while dialogue inevitably entails the recognition of differences and multiplicity.

UNESCO is well aware of this, and has long supported rights related to cultural diversity; indeed, it devotes a considerable portion of its activities and programmes to such rights.

That is the thinking behind today's Arab-Japanese dialogue, which seeks to inaugurate communication between two great civilizations, which have both given so much to humanity.

There is also a specific question often asked in Arab intellectual circles: could the Japanese experience be turned to a useful account, given that the corresponding Arab cultural experience at the start of the twentieth century ground to a halt after a short-lived renaissance?

The Arab world has likewise been influenced by a suggestion that Japan achieved its current level of development by combining its "oriental traditions" with "Western modernization". What the author should dearly like to know, in that case, is how to track down the formula that enables such an experiment to succeed – and whether, if such a formula in fact exists, it might be "transplanted" to an Arab context.

This is not so easy to do: for the reasons that might explain the success of the Japanese experience are complex, and cannot be reduced to the combination of modern and traditional factors. The Japanese renaissance was in fact a long historical progression, to which various factors contributed before Japan arrived at the economic, social and cultural position that it enjoys today. The Japanese embarked on their new era by assimilating modern ideas and fundamental changes in their social values. They were aware that there could be no separation between the values and the ideas, but that they would truly, from that time on, form just one whole.

It is not easy to understand Japanese culture from the specific point of view of the Arab world. The differences are significant and cannot be ignored. It would not be enough to have a group of experts meeting periodically; this would not suffice to establish the dialogue we are embarking on here. It is a long business, which needs to be consolidated by many actions, including cultural and educational projects on the part of international organizations such as UNESCO. The author takes this opportunity of paying tribute to UNESCO's sustained efforts to promote measures that promise to produce enhanced interaction among different cultures.

He suggests the following recommendations:

- 1 • In the first place, he recommends the preparing of an exhaustive programme of scientific analysis of the two cultural experiences, the Arab and the Japanese, showing their history, referring to factors in success or reasons for setbacks, and indicating the future prospects of the two situations, their similarities and the differences between them.
This initiative could be incorporated into UNESCO's existing programmes, or it might even be made into a separate programme within the Organization, with a view to providing Arab and Japanese researchers with answers to their main questions.
- 2 • Interactions between the Arab and Japanese cultural environments should be enhanced, for the existing links are still fragile. This could be done by setting up Japanese Studies courses at Arab universities and Arab Studies courses at Japanese ones. UNESCO could give such projects the benefit of its experience and provide coordination.
- 3 • Discussion forums and bilateral scientific conferences should be organized, to study ways of meeting common cultural challenges while maintaining everyone's particular characteristics and cultural identity.
- 4 • The new information and communication technologies could be used to spread the two cultures and encourage dialogue through interactive TV programmes and the setting up of websites. UNESCO could contribute to these projects with its own multilingual communication site.
- 5 • Projects for translation from one language to the other should be encouraged, so as to lay a firmer foundation for cultural interaction: present efforts in this field are still inadequate. An Arab-Japanese Translation Fund might be set up under UNESCO management, to fund translation activities and provide assistance to publishers in both languages.
- 6 • The links between the two civil societies and their associations should be reinforced, since we know they could play a major role in strengthening cultural interaction. UNESCO should also pay particular attention to women's associations, youth groups and other NGOs.
- 7 • There should be enhanced coordination for the promotion of cultural dialogue, resulting in a "cultural agreement" that would help maintain worldwide solidarity and the right of nations to protect and safeguard their cultural values in the current process of globalization.

UNESCO is definitely capable of playing an important part within this ambitious approach, for it is well known to have spared no effort in recent years to encourage cultural diversity and dialogue among peoples.

These ideas hopefully, will contribute to a broadening and deepening of the Arab-Japanese dialogue that is under way. It is expected to see that dialogue well-established and producing results for the benefit of both cultures and of all nations, and in this way contributing to solidarity and peace among peoples.

Literary Intercultural Connections: From the Tale of the Coconut Tree to the Shadow of the Haiku

Waciny Laredj

Researcher and Writer, Sorbonne University,
Central Faculty of Algiers, Algeria

Summary

Literary intercultural connections form one of the best ways of building bridges among different cultures: for literature needs no passport to cross even closed borders. Looking through Arabic literature from the past to the present, we can find traces, in travellers' tales, accounts by historians and geographers, and even in contemporary poetry, of a fruitful dialogue referring to this complex relationship between Japan and the Arab world. Many of the tales which today wander through our collective imagination come from India, or distant China, or Japan, and we cannot really know where what belongs to others ends and what is ours begins. Every day we recycle them for our own purposes without bothering about their origins; it is the intellectual equilibrium they bring us that gives such satisfying comfort.

For a long time, Japan remained "a country beyond the imaginable", land of legends and fantasy – like that of the coconut tree whose fruit resembles a woman's body. More recently it has given the Arab world the art of the Haiku, a secular poetry that is both simple and condensed, shorn of all metaphor.

In a seriously unbalanced world, what can literature still do? Is it possible to conduct a positive two-way exchange between cultures when everyone has been deafened to the right words, the fruitful words? When guns and injustices are tearing apart our endlessly upset world, what is there which can cross the closed-off borders but culture – for the most part, literature? Needing no passport, refusing to bow down to the new requirements of a digital world which suspects each of us of carrying inherent self-destruct problems, the only trace that literature leaves behind it, at the borders of the real world, is that of a feeling and fertile imagination.

Perhaps literature is less fortunate, at first sight, than other disciplines which have had the luck to be highlighted in today's intercultural relations where economic considerations carry all before them. Individuals never stop being harassed by political power; with all its forms of domination and manipulation; it takes over their whole being; it turns them into one-dimensional people. Yet no one, among those who try to bandage the wounds that have been inflicted, can deny the role of culture, even though its parameters need redefining constantly. No, one must not, as the Portuguese writer Jose Saramago¹ put it so magnificently, "leave this world in the hands of the merchants of war and religion, or let them decide its end or purpose". Culture is the most effective means of healing the wounds caused by human civilization running at different speeds. Culture throws out bridges when

1. Khaleej culturel, n°7225, March 1999, p. 2.

everything else is cut off and the continents stop listening to one another in mutual fear or simply ignorance.

Arabic literature has references to a complex relationship established with Japan in ancient times. First, the name signifying a distance more than a place: "Bilad Al Wak-wak", or the Land Beyond the Imaginable. Travel literature teaches a great deal on this subject: it tells stories of a country where imagination and historical or geographical fiction mingle without boundaries. Many of the tales which today wander through our collective imagination come from India, or distant China, or Japan, and it is not possible to really know where what belongs to others ends and what is ours begins. Every day everyone recycles them for their own purposes without bothering about their origins; it is the intellectual equilibrium they bring us that is so satisfying.

This connection between cultures was built up over time in the literary domain. It showed itself in a number of phases; the author intends to speak of just two, which express a cultural need that has proved huge, in extent and in duration.

The Travellers' and Historians' Land of Fantasy

A number of Arab travellers crossed the sea to China and the islands of Japan, and have left detailed narratives of their voyages. These books are, of course, full of legends in which there may be little authenticity of geographical or historical detail, but their importance is immeasurable: they provide a bridge from which we may understand the present and envisage a possible future. There are legends, a museum of the imagination where there is little trace of their origins, whether in east Asia or indeed in the Arab world. All these Arab travellers agree that Japan is "the Islands that lie to the east of China", or "the China of China", as the great Ibn Battuta called it. Or "the country of the Wak-wak" as many Arab travellers, geographers and historians named it, among them Ibn Hawqal, Yakut al-Hamawi, al-Biruni, al-Qazwini.

- In the tenth century, the great China specialist Abuzayd Hassan Sayrafi assembled and edited the travel notes of Suliman Attajir (the Merchant) (851) as *Akhbar Assine wa l'Hind*², containing the first detailed description of Japan "This is a country where no stranger has ever set foot. It is rare to see anyone leave it who has managed to enter, such is the purity of its air, the sweetness of its water, the quality of its soils and the abundance of its wealth". "The inhabitants are very peaceable. They are most attached to the kings of China, and there is an endless stream of gifts between them".
- Al-Massoudi (d. 957): Another great Arab geographer and storyteller. He described the Japan of his time, the composition of its archipelago of more than 2,000 islands – all inhabited – the languages spoken there, and the country's wealth, customs, and religions, as well as the nature of its crafts (Hiraf). It was also the land of silk, olives and gold – and of men with no occupation other than work, and a highly traditional respect for their city and its laws.

2. Youcef Charuni, "The 'Akhbar Assine wa l'Hind' of Suliman Tager and Abuzayd Hassan Sayrafi", Dar al-Masrya al-Lubnanya, 2000.

- Ibn Battuta, the greatest traveller of his age, who says of Japan “*the land of gold, where the kings forbid their subjects to export goods from the country*”. Marco Polo’s thirteenth-century discovery of Japan (or “Zpanyu”, which became “Japan” in English and “Yaban” in Arabic) tells a similar story of a land covered in gold, and was a major source of ideas for Christopher Columbus, before he lost his way in the jungle of the Americas.

Al-Massoudi retells many curious stories which come from Japan, including, for example, the one about the coconut tree: “*The land of the Waq-waq is for the most part inhabited by women without men, and is governed by a woman. In this country there grows a tree, similar to a palm, which bears a fruit in the shape of a woman’s trunk and thighs, hanging by hair; when the wind blows, they fall and die*”. Ibn Battuta also describes such a tree, with the same conceit and similar imagery: “*This is a strange, outlandish tree: it looks like a palm; indeed there is virtually no difference between the two, except that this one bears a round fruit like a human head, with eyes, a mouth, and something like a brain within; also hair, while it is still green. Some say there was a wise man of India, the very close and respected confidant of a king, whose vizier disliked this intimate relationship. One day the sage told the king that if the head of this vizier were cut off and buried, a magnificent palm tree would grow from it which would bear an aphrodisiac fruit that could calm not only his subjects but also those of other nations. The king gave the order, and the vizier’s head was cut off. As it was being buried, the guru placed inside the skull the remains of a date, which later grew into a coconut tree*”.³ Many of these fantastic tales remind us of the Thousand and One Nights, whose origins are almost beyond recovery apart from a few scraps in the writings of historians and travellers to India, China and Japan from the ninth century onwards.

Beyond the detail of these stories told between the ninth century and the fourteenth, it is possible to see a connection with another side of oriental culture, where tales and fantasies mingle. The legend of the coconut tree is nothing other than an expression of the unending desire to go beyond what is visible in a culture or a complex world, to give a voice to its traditions and symbols. It is possible to understand and assimilate a people’s culture only if one grasps the spirit that drives it, the soul that nourishes it and the heart in which it flowers. And while the spirit that gives life to a people’s cultural principles is shaped by that people’s own genius, it also draws on a primordial well-spring of images. Memory links the present to the past, and the past to the future.

Haiku Poetry, Gracefulness in Words

Much has changed today, but Japan is still a land of great fantasies for the modern world: not so long ago, people believed that every Japanese face concealed a “karate fiend”, a Samurai warrior or an anti-American kamikaze. Moreover, in Algeria anyone with superhuman abilities or the faculty of exercising some silent and intelligent power is referred to as “Japanese”. Nowadays the means of communication enable to see this country with all its contradictions, torn between East and West. The bridges found by our ancestors, long cut off by wars, gave no continuity in the

3. Al-Massoudi, Mourouj ad-dahab, vol 1., p. 237.

knowledge of each other; but this time it is the strangers who have come, with a full arsenal of technology and literature and even their own understanding of what it is to live in a world of gradually crumbling traditional values. A pattern is contradictory (or nearly so): on the one hand, limitless strength, economic and other forms of power; and on the other, a passivity, a defensive attitude, paralysis. This is the contemporary challenge, an assault that brings in its train a total overturning of values, conditions and age-old habits of life and thought. This is the starting-point for making different views mutually comprehensible and putting a fragmented, shattered humanity back together.

Arabs are highly defensive of their poetry; they were startled by a new poetic form, both simple and complex: the *Haiku*, a wholly secular poem in which metaphor has no place. Haiku is a form of poetry, which, in leaving its natural surroundings, loses its essence; yet, on this occasion, legend has been replaced by the fascination of a present pain.

Just a couple of words about this literary genre, untranslatable in its simple but very condensed aspect; it has survived down the years, withstanding all changes of fortune that have threatened to turn it into an extension of something else, rather than its own separate reality.

The Haiku is the shortest poetic form in the world. It is composed of three phrases, of five, seven and five syllables. Its origins lie with Tanka, which itself seems to have its roots in song, and is closely connected with nature and the tumult of the seasons. It is composed of five lines, 5-7-5-7-7. The first section (5-7-5, called "Hokku") must be concerned with nature, while the second evokes a specific feeling or emotion. Tanka developed at the imperial court from the ninth century to the eleventh, as a favourite pastime for aristocrats. They would explore their poetic abilities, one giving out an initial part which another had to finish; a third poet then provided a new 5-7-5 Hokku, which brought forth another 7-7 phrase, and so on, in chains, or "Renga". Renga embraced popular diction. These practices recall the Algerian Bocalas, a sort of riddling quatrain; the Haiku complies in part with the same procedure, for an urbane society in need of entertainment. It is amazing that the caesura at the end of each line of a Haiku is called the "kireji", while in Arabic "al Kharjed" is the term for the same function in Andalusian poetry (and for the division of words). In the seventeenth century, Renga developed further with the emergence of a new middle class under the Tokugawa Shoguns, and the main emphasis was on the hokku, which took on a life of its own and eventually became the Haiku. Under Chinese influence, Matsuo Basho gave the Haiku its finished form and its own essence: sincerity, lightness, objectivity, tenderness, solitude, unadorned beauty and a proper balance between the principles of eternity and living motion: the act of describing life without the slightest prop of philosophy. Before it ebbed during the Edo period (1600-1868) when Japan turned inwards on its own traditions, Haiku expressed solitude and dismay in the hands of the three great master poets: Basho, Yosa Buson, and Kobayashi Issa, who wrote:

Since we must die,
Let us practise our dying
In the shade of flowers.

With the Meiji Restoration (1867) and the opening of Japan to a new world, the Haiku became a form for expressing this new freedom, and finally left behind its association with the Renga. Observation of nature now became the essence of the poem, together with exploring the mystery of human existence and a subjective approach to nature. In 1940, the Government put a stop to this great anti-traditionalist freedom by gaoling Saito Sanki, Hirahata Seito and a number of other haiku poets for endangering the security of the State. After the war the Haiku spread beyond Japan, becoming a poetry without nationality or borders, drawing its material from everyday life while still keeping its simplicity and its capacity to express the absolute, "listening to the invisible spasms of a humanity forever trying to find its bearings".⁴

This is also the viewpoint of a new Arabic poetry which turns its back on the classical forms of traditionalism and sets itself instead to listen to all the novel, universalist voices, to the new breeze arriving from far, far away and bringing with it the warmth of a sunbeam breaking through stormcloud, the scent of the ocean and the taste of seaweed, coming from a land our ancestors called "The country of the Wak-wak", and even imitating those little poems which look like nothing at all but speak the great hidden truths of a humanity searching for meaning – without, it must be said, knowing the rules of Haiku too well. An imitation, a whiff, the slightest of breaths, but in the open air.

The great Arab discovery of Haiku – writing them, translating them – was in the 1980s. In 1981, the Syrian specialist review *al Adb al Ajnabya* (Foreign Literature) published some Haiku translated by Adnane Baghjatai under the title "Cherry Blossom" (*Azhar al Karaz*). Shaker Metleq published some translations of Haiku in the same review in 1983. In 1984, it⁵ published Dr. Husâm al Khatîb's translation (via English) of Huowi Murakami's *History of Japanese literature*. The Iraqi review *Thaqafa* (Culture) published some translations (via Russian) of poems by Basho in 1985. In 1991, Shaker Metleq (again) published, through the Union of Arabic Writers, an anthology of Haiku poetry entitled *Chi'r mina al Yaban 'ala namat al Haiku wa Tanka* (Anthology of Japanese poetry, Haiku and Tanka). The most successful work so far is the translation by Mohammed al As'ad of Kenneth Yasuda's book *The Japanese Haiku: Its Essential Nature, History, and Possibilities in English*, under the title: *Wâhida ba'da ukhra tatafattahu azhâr al barqûq*. (One after other bloom the buds of...), published in Kuwait (1999) in the prestigious *al Ma'rifa* list (*Silsilat al Ma'rifa*). It is very easy now to understand why the Haiku phenomenon appeared in Syria and Iraq before spreading to other countries in the Maghreb and the Mashriq. Traces of haiku are very evident in the poetry of the great Saadi Youssef, or Adonis, or the Moroccan Mohammed Bennis, or of Zineb Laouedj (written in the United States), or of Shrûq Amine from Kuwait (in English), or others such as Abdul Latif Khattab, who wrote *Haiku, sahârî al junûn* (Haiku, the deserts of madness) using the structure of haiku by Issa, Shintuku, Basho and others. One thing is certain: the rigidity of Arabic poetic form was very swiftly jostled, even shattered, by this new discipline, which gave a new direction and meaning to Arabic poetry, disturbing its vision far more than did "Modernity", which has remained attached to, or even stuck in, a highly reductionist agenda. Can

4. *Haiku, Anthologie du poème court japonais*. Choix et traduction de Corinne Atlan et Zéno Bianu, NRF, Gallimard, 2002, p. 207-212 [Haiku, an anthology of the short Japanese poetry form. Selected and translated by ...].

5. N° 34, for 1984.

it really be that Arab poets had to struggle so long, and won through at last in the 1940s, only for the corpus of Arabic poetry to be penetrated by this foreign body? To dream to quite another rhythm from that of the caravans moving through infinite deserts? Adonis and Unsi al-Hajj, with others, revolutionized poetry and pushed freedom far indeed; but the haiku-writers have pushed it to a veritable paroxysm, in order to speak of the silence of great crashes, human death, forgetting, the raging of forbidden love, with full but simple words; things the political rant-poems could only touch upon for years, never managing to describe the pain and the irreplaceable loss of the meaning of things. This influence caused the classical versification rulebook to be thrown away; it opened the door to a new breeze which has shaken the bonds of the traditional forms and all their stagnant metaphors. The decomposition of the poem has also become the decomposition of meaning, which in the end joins the confused mass of Haiku, representing a shattered world where motion replaces composition, where energy of form and colour replaces the illusion of an external reality, where the amorphous replaces the conventional and where anguish and the abyss undermine the very foundations of comfortable everyday life.

Here is the great desert,
Which burns us,
dear friends,
The days like a murderous lightning-stroke,
It is indeed man who kills the human in man.
Abdul Latif Khattab (UAE)⁶

“Who are they?”
Said one of them,
“I need all the watering-places to wash away my sins
And all the earth
To make my prayer”.
Farag al ‘Achcha (Libya)⁷

We walk against the wind,
We cross our arms
We take turns, one body after another;
But the winter of this town soaks up our warmth.
Aïcha al Maghrabi (Libya)⁸

O my dear husband,
You who have lived in my house these twenty years,
Why do you not speak to me?
One day I shall go wandering,
Leaving behind me my white words on these walls.
Hamda Khamîs (Bahrein)⁹

6. Journal al Bayân Koweit, n° 37, for 2001.

7. *Ila fatîma kayfamâ ittafaq* (Just for Fatima), Dar al ‘Arđh. Limassol, 1993, p. 49.

8. *Cardboard Princess* (Amîratu al Waraq), publ. al Jamahirya linnachr, Tripoli, p. 39.

9. *Adhdâd* (Opposites), General Union of Arabic Writers, Amman 1994, p. 68.

Who prays in the temple of the sun?
Spring grass
Whirlpool in silent water;
Was it you who trembled
For fear of wasting one heartbeat?
Saadi Youssef (Iraq)¹⁰

Something woke me from my waking day,
I tried to sleep,
In order to discover
That the silence is only heavy
when it stops making any sound.
Burhân Shawî (Iraq)¹¹

Two wanderers pass each other by
They scarcely look
And go on down their road,
Each pushing before him
The shadow of the other.
Abdul Latif Laâbi (Morocco)¹²

It hurts, don't lean too hard
I may forget you soon,
Flowers can only bear the plucking of a bee,
In a man's hand the wings of a butterfly
Soon forget their beating and their colours.
Zineb Laouedj (Algeria)¹³

10. *Kaçaid Paris wa chajar Itdka* (Poèmes de Paris et Arbres d'Itak), al Kamel verlag, Cologne 1992, p. 89.

11. *Dhaw'un Aswad* (Black Light), Germany 1997, p. 42.

12. *Autumn promises*, Éditions de la différence, Paris 2003, p. 54.

13. *Le Chant de la dernière colombe*, [the Last Dove's Song], Livre poche, Alger 2004, p. 5.

“The Brush and the Word: A Dialogue between Two Calligraphers”

One of the symposium’s highlights featured a silent yet eloquent dialogue through art between two master calligraphers, Hassan Massoudy (Iraq) and Shingai Tanaka (Japan), before an attentive audience.

Two master calligraphers presented their differing perceptions of diversity, respect for others and intercultural humanism. They conversed in brushstrokes that succeeded better than words to illustrate the common heritage uniting Arabic and Japanese cultures and, at the same time, to reassert their individuality.

Calligraphy, meaning “beautiful writing” or “the way of writing” (*Shodo*, in Japanese), is fundamental to the cultural wealth of the Arab world and Japan. Rooted in the history of those two cultures, it is widely regarded as a supreme expression of the artistic and intellectual spirit.



*"An act for one human being by another
is nobler than coral or pearls."*

In a few strokes of the *calame* (sharpened reed), the Arabic calligrapher Master Hassan Massoudy captured the meeting of past and present, of Oriental art and Western art, of tradition and modernity. Through light yet dignified outlines and the transparency of coloured inks, Master Massoudy presented his perception of intercultural humanism.

He calligraphed Japanese haiku poetry, then lines by writers from around the globe and sayings of popular wisdom, finishing with a calligraphic text expressing better than any other the value of dialogue: "An act for one human being by another is nobler than coral or pearls." (Ibn Al Habbab, 8th century)

Born in the holy city of Najaf in 1944, Master Hassan Massoudy spent his childhood and youth in Iraq.

He grew up in a traditional society marked not only by the strictness of religion and the intense heat of the desert, but also by collective rejoicing at high festivals and a community spirit. As a boy, in a city where pictures were forbidden, he channelled his passion for painting into calligraphy, putting all of his energy into obtaining paper and pigments. As a student in Baghdad in the early 1960s, he found himself caught up in the political upheavals. After several spells in prison, the young painter left Iraq for France in 1969, a free but deeply troubled man.

For more than 30 years, Master Massoudy has been acquainting his host country with the art of Arabic letters through magnificent works that feature a blend of Oriental and Western cultures. From his training as a calligrapher he has retained the integrity of the craftsman making or inventing his own tools, and preparing his own inks with pigments and binding agents.

Simple yet sophisticated, traditional yet contemporary, figurative yet abstract, the art of these master calligraphers has enhanced the potential for dialogue between the Arab world and Japan.



The Japanese calligrapher Master Shingai Tanaka subscribes to the Oriental and Zen Buddhist tradition whereby the act of creating a sign is a channel for the spirit.

After deep meditation, Master Tanaka produced, in a single inspired line, the ideogram “Tomo” [friend, friendship], shaped from two hands coming together. Next, rings of myriad-coloured beings appeared alongside “Tomo” in black Indian ink on a piece of silk laid out on the bare ground. Master Tanaka sees this creation as a wellspring of hope that all human beings, regardless of their roots or their culture, may be friends while showing respect for cultural diversity.

Born in Tottori (Japan) in 1942, Master Shingai Tanaka studied “*Sho*” or Japanese calligraphy under Master Goshin Yasui. In 1980, he set up the Bokushin Calligraphy School and, as Executive Director of the Kyoto Calligraphers’ Association, actively sought to promote Japanese calligraphy. In 1987, out of a desire to raise the world’s awareness of this cultural asset, he began teaching calligraphy to foreign students and artists.

Master Tanaka equates creating a work of *Sho* with proving that life is worth living. Imbued with Zen philosophy, the work reveals a view of existence restored to the bosom of Nature, the fount of all our being. Crucial to the work’s creation is therefore the motif – the sign through which meaning is expressed.

Master Tanaka divides his time between Lyon (France) and Kyoto (Japan), where he is a cultural adviser to the mayor. He exhibits worldwide and has received numerous artistic awards from the Japanese Government.

Calligraphy – or, as Master Massoudy puts it, “bodyspeak” – constitutes a rich medium for dialogue capable of transcending languages, borders and cultures.

Closing Addresses

Closing Address

Mr Seiichi Kondo

Former Under Secretary-General of OECD

Director-General, Cultural Affairs

Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,

Japan

Many experts have analysed dialogue by looking at some key concepts such as: culture and identity, modernity, modernization, colonization and its impact, globalization and its impact, etc. These are all essentially important concepts to further explore when we engage in a dialogue. However, we do not need to seek for consensus on these concepts; rather we should explore our own thoughts behind these concepts.

The comparison of the experiences of Japan and Egypt in the nineteenth century was very interesting and useful in that it focuses attention on the previously mentioned concepts. The analysis of how Japan was able to successfully modernize while maintaining its traditional value systems suggests that further case studies could be useful in a future dialogue.

However, one thing is clear, we cannot transfer modernity or ability to modernize itself from one country to another.

The real keyword for the dialogue among civilizations is “tolerance”. In order to engage in a real, genuine dialogue we have to be tolerant; we need to trust others. If we fear others we cannot engage in a dialogue. This concerns the issue of history. As Prime Minister Nehru said, “History is written by winners and conquerors.”

Thus, several questions arise:

- Do we need to rewrite history?
- Can we forget about history?
- Can we forget the past and still have a bright future?
- Can we abandon a strong sense of mission, or as Professor Naito said, “progressivism” or “universalism”, for the sake of respect for diversity?
- Can we be ready to change during and after the dialogue?

Those are the questions we have to keep asking in future dialogues. Human nature also needs to be taken into account during a dialogue. Human beings are shaped by their locality; therefore, politics is also locally defined. On the other hand, economy, technology and information are global which lead to competition, which produces winners and losers. Politicians feel tempted to create outside enemies to enhance internal or domestic cohesion and to divert people’s attention from domestic problems. Generally, people also accept diversity only when there is a common enemy. Therefore, how can we ensure that we can reach genuine cosmopolitanism?

To conclude, let us consider a few points on possible paths of action for the future. Many analysts mentioned the importance of education, but it is important to consider who writes the textbooks and the synopsis.

The idea that an exchange of students will promote respect for cultural diversity is certainly true. The earlier we undertake international experiences in our

lives, the better. The Japanese Government has traditionally organized a big ship for youth programmes. Three hundred young students from 30-40 different countries are sent on a voyage for 40 days. This really promotes mutual understanding, and this kind of physical environment can be helpful.

In addition, cultural events and cultural exchanges can be very useful. Artistic expression can express more than words. We tend to depend on words only, and words are useful in delivering logical messages in a way, but sometimes we feel the limit of the capacity of our words. Therefore, using artistic expression and cultural tools to promote mutual understanding is recommended.

Dialogue is not an end but a process. It is about seeking the truth, and therefore, we should plan to continue this kind of dialogue. Probably we can invite parties from outside. We had the pleasure of having a professor from Germany with us at the dialogue. We may be able to benefit from the presence of people other than Japanese and Arab people in a future dialogue.

The real question is, as Mr Salamé said, "Are we ready to change?"

Dialogue is not a means to try to convince someone. Dialogue is an action, and both sides have to be ready to change. So this is the important concept to keep in mind when we continue the dialogue in the future.

I propose that the artwork of Mr Tanaka and Mr Massoudy be the symbol of flexible dialogue. We are not talking about standardization or uniforms but this art symbolizes readiness to change and readiness to make a commitment to genuine dialogue. I solemnly declare that the Japanese Government will continue to support the continuation of this dialogue in UNESCO.

Closing Address

H.E. Mr Abdulrazzak Meshari Al-Nafisi
Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Kuwait to
UNESCO
President of the Consultative Committee for the
“Arabia Plan”

At the conclusion of the Symposium on the Arab-Japanese Dialogue, allow me, in my own capacity and on behalf of the Consultative Committee for the Arabia Plan, to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all those who have contributed to and helped to enrich this well-focused dialogue – intellectuals and thinkers from two civilizations which are linked by eastern values and characterized by a tremendous fund of creative cultural heritage.

I should also like to offer heartfelt thanks and gratitude to Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO, for his support for this meeting and for the activities of the “Arabia Plan”. Thanks also go to the organizers for their unstinting efforts in preparing so well for this meeting, and in particular to Mr Mounir Bouchenaki, Assistant Director-General for Culture, Mrs Katerina Stenou and her team, H.E. Mr Teichi Sato, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO, and his colleagues in the Japanese delegation and the Japan Institute, H.E. Mr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of Oman to UNESCO and Chairperson of the Arab group, and the members of the Consultative Committee for the “Arabia Plan”.

This dialogue is exemplary, embodying, as it does, one of the priorities of UNESCO, and supporting the desired objective of strengthening cultural diversity and the dialogue among cultures. In order for diversity to remain productive and creative, it must be based on encounter and dialogue with the Other, and interaction with the culture of the Other with a view to advancing human civilization.

In this connection, we do not need to be reminded once again and in detail of the importance of the dialogue among cultures for the enrichment of human civilization, which in turn is the result of the historical accumulation of interactions between various cultures over the ages.

However, in the contemporary world, which is characterized by continuous transformation and change, the establishment of dialogue between cultures has become an imperative necessity in order to combat terrorism and fanaticism in all their various forms, to eliminate poverty and illiteracy, to inculcate the values of tolerance and respect for human rights, and to safeguard freedom of expression.

This is why the results of dialogues among cultures must not remain within the confines of international organizations, academic institutions and cultural forums. Rather, they must go beyond them and permeate civil society institutions, educational curricula and the various information media worldwide.

Against the backdrop of the contemporary age, which is based on the ongoing information technology revolution and the accelerating knowledge explosion, we are bound to stress the importance of harnessing the new communication technologies,

including computer and satellite networks, for communicating the outcomes of such dialogues to our societies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is little doubt that the results we have arrived at, which are set forth in the final document, prompt us to envisage the holding of further cultural dialogues in the future, which should address specific issues of joint interest to UNESCO and its Member States. We therefore suggest the holding of dialogues on various topics, such as water; empowerment of women, the establishment of knowledge societies, and education for all.

Clearly, the success of our meeting is conditional on implementation of the important recommendations we have arrived at, which should help to bring our two cultures closer together, and thus be mutually beneficial.

Thank you for attending; I wish you every success and good luck.

Final communiqué

General Presentation

An international symposium entitled “*Cultural Diversity and Globalization: The Arab-Japanese Experience, a Cross-Regional Dialogue*” took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on 6 and 7 May 2004, arising from the desire to lay the foundations for a structured dialogue between Japan and the Arab World.

Organized by UNESCO’s Culture Sector (Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue), the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO, the Arab Group to UNESCO and with the assistance of the Japan Foundation, this symposium was inaugurated by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO and Mrs Atsuko Toyama, former Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and Advisor to the Japanese Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, H.E. Mr Musa Bin Jaafar Bin Hassan, Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Sultanate of Oman to UNESCO, President of the Arab Group to UNESCO, and H.E. Mr Teiichi Sato, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Delegate of Japan to UNESCO

On 7 May, a Japanese and an Iraqi artist gave a demonstration of calligraphy, a traditional art form that holds a privileged place in the cultural heritage of Japan and the Arab World.

The participants welcomed this innovative approach, which broke with traditional ones, and they renewed their support for the UNESCO “*Arabia Plan*” and stressed the need to develop inter-regional cooperation between the Arab World and Japan in UNESCO’s various fields of competence and particularly in regard to the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, which is considered a prerequisite for dialogue and development.

A panel of international experts from Japan, the Arab World and Europe gathered to explore three major themes: (1) the comparison of the **modernization** processes in Japan and certain Arab countries and the lessons to be learned from these experiences; (2) the stakes involved in the preservation of **cultural diversity** in the era of globalization; (3) and the elaboration of an epistemology of **intercultural dialogue** that can contribute to the elaboration of methodological tools for the implementation of cultural policies within a framework of international cooperation.

- I • The symposium's agenda was structured in this way for the purpose of exploring the notion of "openness" as an overriding principle encouraging people to come together. It is precisely **modernization** as a process allowing people to open up to other cultures – a process that has been accelerated by globalization – that has shaped similar and divergent developments in Japan and the Arab World. In this context, modernization was analyzed as a process of "borrowings" from other cultures. The modus operandi of this process – success, failures or conflicts – were examined with a view to highlighting exogenous and endogenous limitations, tangible and intangible obstacles and the role of different geo-political contexts.

- II • The respect for **cultural diversity**, threatened by globalization, follows logically from the reflection on the modernization process. Modernization can be studied from its historical manifestations, and particularly since the nineteenth century, yet the notion of cultural diversity forcefully erupted on the contemporary scene creating a sort of "cultural panic", which creates a favourable environment for "returning to one's roots" and the proliferation of all forms of fundamentalism. However, cultural diversity can *also* be seen as an opportunity for a fertile dialogue and unprecedented access to the world's cultural richness. The participants stressed the fact that the cultural diversity is a precious value that cannot be preserved without the authority of international institutions, which require the support of all nations.

- III • To realize this objective, it has become necessary to envisage a vast programme of **intercultural dialogue**. This project must take into account not only the historical roots of each culture but also an up-to-date analysis of the aspirations of individuals and groups. Dialogue, by its very nature, cannot lead to definitive conclusions but must continually stimulate the thought process among "dialoguers". Furthermore, dialogue challenges truths, fosters self-criticism and reveals unimagined wealth. The means used to implement dialogue must be clearly identified in order to create a long-lasting tool for the enhancement of communication and teamwork. However it is equally important to understand

how dialogue, in its perverted forms, can lead to arrogance born of cultural security, the desire to dominate, contrived exchanges masking intellectual laziness and false forms of dialogue. In this respect, the participants considered it imperative to recognize common threads in each discipline to facilitate the creation of a general epistemology of dialogue.

The discussions from these three sessions will appear in the proceedings of the symposium.

Recommendations

In order to promote such inter-regional cooperation, participants made the following recommendations to governments, UNESCO, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. These recommendations are to be implemented in the short, medium and long term:

- Promote fair partnerships with a view to creating networks for cooperation and exchanges in the fields of science and culture.

1 This can be achieved by establishing genuine research policies at the national level and creating research institutes dedicated primarily to studies on Japan in the Arab World and on the Arab World in Japan.
- Promote more extensive mutual understanding by establishing inter-regional contacts between cultural and academic institutions, libraries, schools, the media, etc. Encourage exchanges between

2 students, teachers and between professionals in the fields of culture and media. Develop studies on Japanese language, culture and civilization in the Arab countries and vice versa. Promote field studies.
- Break with the system of assisting the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge and rather encourage the building of research networks among outstanding research teams. Such networks can more effectively foster the creation of national

3 scientific traditions, which are indispensable for the establishment of a dynamic, self-generating and veritable modernization process. To reach this goal, encourage the use of national scientific languages to make the scientific disciplines more relevant to researchers from different countries. Contribute to the elaboration of specialized glossaries.
- Encourage Japanese to Arabic and Arabic to Japanese translations, particularly via the creation of a translation institution that deals with scientific literature and culture. The institution should

4 receive specific funding to be managed by UNESCO. In addition the Organization was requested to provide substantial financial assistance by the creation of UNESCO Chairs on Arab and Japanese studies.

Strengthen links between the NGOs working in Japan and the Arab World, particularly by continuing the activities undertaken by UNESCO in order to enrich our understanding of the modernization and globalization process and the preservation of cultural diversity in Japan and in the Arab world, according to the principles of the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity.

5

Establish a genuine dialogue that extends beyond mere respect and tolerance so that it leads to interaction capable of informing and enriching the identities of those involved. With this objective in mind, seek in each field (arts, science, philosophy, linguistics, religion etc.) those aspects that could provide a structure for intercultural communication, without transforming it into a new and distinct form of dialogue, but by endowing it with a coherent methodology.

6

Undertake a comparative study on the theme of public/civic vs. private space and the participation of individuals who claim to be of diverse cultural backgrounds in the Arab countries and in Japan.

7

Study the status and condition of women in Japan and in the Arab countries by undertaking additional case studies in order to avoid stereotypes.

8

Consider the example of the Arab-Japanese experience as a model for possible dialogue between cultures that are not in direct contact but share common experiences, in order to establish a methodological framework for future studies on intercultural dialogue.

9

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Calligraphies of the word “dialogue” in Japanese (Shingai Tanaka) and in Arabic (Hassan Massoudy)

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Layout and realization

Soledad Munoz Gouet
solemg@free.fr

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Director;
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UNESCO, 1, rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15 – France
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The respect for cultural diversity, challenged by globalization at present, is a direct consequence of the reflection on the process of modernization. This process can be studied from its historical manifestations, and particularly since the nineteenth century. Cultural diversity, which enables us to consider modernization in a new light, has forcefully erupted on the contemporary scene generating a sort of “cultural panic”, conducive to “returning to one’s roots” at the risk of proliferating various forms of fundamentalism. However, cultural diversity can also be seen as an opportunity for fertile dialogue and unprecedented access to the world’s cultural richness. To take full advantage of this richness, it has become necessary to make a firm commitment in favour of intercultural dialogue. Such dialogue must take into account not only the historical roots of each culture but also an updated analysis of the past and present aspirations of individuals and groups.

Conceived to promote dialogue between the Arab world and Japan, the symposium on “*Cultural Diversity and Globalization: the Arab-Japanese Experience, a Cross-Regional Dialogue*”, provided a framework for fruitful exchanges in order to highlight the shared experiences between two regions apparently worlds apart culturally and geographically but historically comparable.

Thus, the principal objective of the symposium was to identify modernization in terms of openness towards other cultures and as a unifying process bringing together people from two distinctive cultures. Indeed, it was this modernization process that shaped fundamental evolutions – sometimes convergent, sometimes divergent – in Japan as well as in the Arab world.

In both cases, modernization has been analysed as a process of “critical receptiveness” towards inputs from different cultures. The *modus operandi* of this process – success, failures or conflicts – were examined with a view to highlighting exogenous and endogenous limitations and to identifying material and symbolic obstacles.

Division of Cultural Policies and International Dialogue

1, rue Miollis 75732 Paris Cedex 15

Tel : 33 (0) 1 45 68 42 77

Fax : 33 (0) 1 45 68 55 97

www.unesco.org/culture

