

# J I S M O R

Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study  
of Monotheistic Religions



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Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions

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## CONTENTS

### Feature: Can Freedom of Expression and Religious Sanctity Co-Exist?

|                  |  |    |
|------------------|--|----|
| Katsuhiro Kohara | Opening Greetings  | 1  |
| Seiichi Kondo    | Terrorism and Liberal Democracy: Views from Historical and Civilizational Perspectives                   | 4  |
| Keisuke Kikuchi  | What's Wrong with the "Clash of Civilizations" Theory? : Reconsidering the <i>Charlie Hebdo</i> Shooting | 13 |
| Hirotsugu Aida   | Comment  | 25 |
|                  | Panel Discussion   | 29 |

### Article

|            |                                  |    |
|------------|----------------------------------|----|
| Uzi Rebhun | The Contemporary Jewish Diaspora | 40 |
|------------|----------------------------------|----|

Editor's Postscript

Guidelines for Submissions

## **Can Freedom of Expression and Religious Sanctity Co-Exist?**

### **Opening Greetings**

Katsuhiro Kohara

#### Open Symposium

“Can Freedom of Expression and Religious Sanctity Co-Exist? : Some Lessons Learned from the Attacks in Paris and Copenhagen”

Date and time: March 14, 2015 (Saturday) 1:00-3:30 PM

Place: Classroom #107, Ryoshinkan Bldg., Imadegawa Campus, Doshisha University

Lecturers: Seiichi Kondo (Former Secretary of the Agency for Cultural Affairs,  
UNESCO Ambassador, Ambassador to Denmark, Associate Professor,  
Doshisha University),  
Keisuke Kikuchi (Associate Professor, Graduate School for Global Studies,  
Doshisha University)

Commentator: Hirotsugu Aida (Columnist, Kyodo News)

Moderator: Katsuhiro Kohara (Professor, School of Theology, Doshisha University)

The Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR) has as its goal the comprehensive study of the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The individual research of each of these religions has a long history; and yet stimulating a dialogue between them is hardly a simple matter. We utilize an interdisciplinary approach involving the social issues that individuals living in monotheistic societies face, rather than just looking at each religion and its ideology. In other words, we seek to deal with this subject not only in theological and ideological terms, but also from the perspectives of a variety of disciplines including Area Studies, International Studies, Security Studies, Economics and History. The events that occur in monotheistic societies are conveyed daily in the form of news reports, but there are also aspects of monotheism that are nonetheless not well understood by Japanese society. One reason for this is that Japan has a very small number of followers of these religions: Christians, Muslims and Jews make up less than 1% of the Japanese population. Because we rarely come into contact with worshippers of these religions, it can be difficult to

grasp how these people really live. Consequently, we tend to stereotype individuals from these societies. An example can be seen in the deluge of reports on terrorist incidents, which results in Muslims being perceived as violent. We have decided to hold this lecture in an attempt to overcome such stereotypes and to gain a better understanding of the real circumstances behind these events.

On January 7, 2015, during an editorial meeting at the French weekly *Charlie Hebdo*, 11 people were shot and killed in an attack, including the editor-in-chief and caricaturist. Another shooting followed and, altogether, a total of 17 people were killed. Directly thereafter, large numbers gathered under the banner of freedom of expression, a highly esteemed value in France, and a parade and other events were held. Before the shock of this event could die down, ISIS carried out a hostage-taking event. An incident similar to the Paris attack took place on February 14, in Copenhagen, Denmark, at a discussion on Islam and freedom of expression. One person died and three police officers were injured. It turns out that an artist who had drawn a picture of the prophet Muhammad was at the meeting.

One pervading question in all of these events is whether, in protecting freedom of expression at all costs, these societies are consenting to there being no limits on freedom of expression. Naturally, a segment of the Muslim population was clearly opposed to the prophet Muhammad being caricatured. However, one could also voice the opinion that, "Terror aimed at freedom of expression is never to be condoned. And yet, we are definitely against the continued satirization of the prophet Muhammad." It is with the hope that we can somehow reconcile these competing points of view that we decided to hold this lecture.

Recall, this is not the first time that freedom of expression has come under attack. In 2005, *Jyllands-Posten*, a major Danish newspaper, published a caricature of the prophet Muhammad. Even though this image drew harsh rebuke, it was reprinted many times. Then, from 2005 to 2006, opposition boiled over to full-fledged, worldwide protests. The incidents that are the subject of this lecture occurred in Paris and Copenhagen, and it is hard to know whether they are the last such occurrences that we will witness.

Through this lecture, we hope to facilitate a multi-faceted view of freedom of expression and religious sanctity. It is hard to imagine that these events that have occurred in Europe would happen anytime soon in Japan. However, in recent years, even Japan has seen an escalation in arguments over freedom of expression. This is especially true of hate speech, which has gained much attention of late. We need to think long and hard about whether to allow hate speech based on freedom of expression, or to restrict

such language. In France, the calls for freedom of expression are loud and clear but such freedoms are not without their limits. In many European countries – not only France – one can be arrested for making anti-Semitic comments in a public place. It is my hope that this lecture will allow us all to think more deeply about the circumstances and issues surrounding freedom of speech.

## **Terrorism and Liberal Democracy: Views from Historical and Civilizational Perspectives**

Seiichi Kondo

Hello, my name is Seiichi Kondo. I worked in government for some 42 years in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The last three years there I served as Commissioner of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, where I was in charge of cultural policy and exchanges. I served as ambassador to the Paris-based UNESCO from 2006 to 2008, and then went to Copenhagen where I served as the Ambassador to Denmark for two years. Having served in these two countries where terrorist attacks have recently occurred, I would like to share with you my experiences in the hopes that it will provide you with some food for thought a fresh perspective concerning these attacks.

The series of incidents that we are looking at today cannot simply be categorized as terrorism carried out by religious fanatics or extremists; I can't help but feel that there are more complex and deep-seated problems involved. The first thing I'd like to mention is that the issues here have been around a long time, and need to be understood within the context of several hundred years' worth of history. The turning point in this long history would be the first wave of the modernization of Europe that occurred almost 400 years ago. With science and technology, and scholarship and ideology leading the way, modern civilization spread from Europe to the whole world. This produced the current set of values with their focus on democracy, free markets, respect for human rights and the rule of law. These would eventually come to be thought of as ubiquitous for all of mankind and worthy of protection. We have been taught – and this applies to myself as well – that these principles are beyond question.

Following the end of the Cold War, Francis Fukuyama wrote a book titled *The End of History*, which caused quite a buzz. According to Fukuyama, over the course of history, mankind, using trial and error, considered various methods of rule, but in the end, determined that liberal democracy – in other words, democracy with a market economy – was optimal. He went on to argue that, with the attainment of this form of rule, mankind had reached its final stage of development. Fukuyama went on to say that, since the aim of history is to create the most desirable society – a kind of final paradise – then history

ended as we reached this final stage. The two universal principles of liberal democracy and communism had been at loggerheads during the Cold War, but communism collapsed, leaving liberal democracy as the clear winner. As a result, everyone accepted liberal democracy as the prevailing orthodoxy. However, looking at the 20-25 years that have passed since, we see increasing doubts as to whether the liberal democracy that we believe in is really flawless. The reason for these doubts stems from the fact that several countries with liberal-democratic forms of government have experienced problems. An issue that one often hears about concerns widening income disparity. One of the tenets of liberal democracy is that people should be allowed to act freely, competing and otherwise operating to the best of their abilities, which will result in the most efficient use of limited resources, and will supposedly make everyone better off. The idea is that this structure, while it may involve income disparity, gives the poor a fair chance to improve their lot. This is the prototypical “American Dream” which holds that one will be successful if he or she simply works hard enough. This is the stuff of Disney and Hollywood movies, where the just always win and those who work hard are rewarded.

In connection to my current teaching position at Doshisha University, I had the opportunity to participate in a symposium held in Paris in October of last year (2014) on the topic “What is Happiness?” Unlike other discussions on this subject, this event consisted of a gathering of economists who attempted to analyze happiness. Happiness is usually considered as a subjective phenomenon and thus something that cannot be analyzed in a scientific manner, so, until recently, the world’s scientific community had not taken up this issue in any meaningful way. However, with the spread of democracy, much attention has been given to whether individual citizens are happy or not. As a result, the political and business worlds have also decided they need to pay attention to happiness, and economists too have begun to look into this phenomenon. Happiness is difficult to deal with directly in terms of economics and sociology, and thus a variety of approaches was applied to this subject. One of these is the question of the relationship between people’s feelings of happiness and the size population of the area where they live. In other words, are people happier in large heavily populated or small sparsely populated areas? Another question was: “What is the relationship between level of income and happiness?” What are the effects of increasing or decreasing income on levels of happiness? Analyzing these questions in detail and from a variety of angles, the researchers carried out international comparisons by looking mainly at four countries: Japan, the U.S., France, and the UK. One of the questions considered was “What is the relationship between degree of happiness and economic disparity?” Conclusions showed

that the Japanese and French were highly attentive to such disparities, but Americans were almost completely oblivious to such disparities. According to these results, Americans found almost no relationship between happiness and [economic] disparity.

However, one of the issues that the Obama administration is currently concerned about is widening income disparity. Young people have even led demonstrations on Wall Street against this growing gap. Until recently, disparity was tolerated as a product of the free market system – the idea being that, as long as it is possible for the poor to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, this system must be allowed. In other words, with competition, there are winners and losers, so naturally there will be some disparity; being free to move up or down the economic ladder was considered the key virtue. This highlighted Americans' trust in the "American Dream." However, there has been a change in recent years as many find that no matter how hard they work, their fortunes do not improve. Increasing number of Americans have seemingly come to believe that the American Dream is nothing more than a false idea. There is growing concern that the hereto-trusted liberal democracy model – which produces income disparity as a byproduct – is deeply flawed.

So then, just how did liberal democracy come about? Modernization began around the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Following world wars and the Great Depression, modernism and modern rationalism, which included such concepts as democracy, a free market economy, respect for human rights and the rule of law, were recognized as the most attractive – or at least the less bad – systems in the U.S. and Europe, and subsequently these systems gradually expanded. So, creating this as a principle, Europe moved to action, achieving in economic development by way of the Industrial Revolution. With this, Europe gained confidence. A kind of doctrine of European supremacy – where Europe came to believe that it was leading mankind and had created the best possible system – began to take hold. That is to say, this led to a kind of racial discrimination wherein Europeans spread their way of thinking to other regions. This condescending attitude on the part of Europe seems to have been thinly veiled. I worked in Europe for all together 13 years. Never during this time did I faced anything like this directly; but, gleaned from their behavior, I couldn't help but feel that my counterparts felt a sense of European supremacy. It took a concrete form of colonialism. Europeans created colonies in Africa, the Middle East and Asia and exploited these areas to create a higher standard of living for themselves. They even participated in the slave trade. Before long they began to realize that this was wrong and gradually began to change their ways. However, it is undeniable that racial discrimination remains. Of course, Europeans do not show this discrimination overtly, as



this would undoubtedly be seen as uncivilized. However, while they may reason with each other by saying that “civilized persons do not discriminate,” occasionally their real feelings do come out unexpectedly. Colonialism has truly left a giant scar.

The Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru probably said it best: “History is written by conquerors.” Japan too has its own “Official History,” written from the point of view of those in power of the political authorities. However, there are also the defeated to consider. History may be written by the winners, but the losers have memories that are not recorded in the history books. These memories have nonetheless been passed down. Textbooks contain the history of the victors, told in a manner that shows them in the best light. While the downtrodden nature of the defeated is not recorded in these histories, it is conveyed from one generation to the next by word of mouth. These are the recollections of history that serve to stoke up resentment and that no doubt remain to some extent amongst those from the parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia that experienced European colonial rule. And then there is also China. China’s recent development has come with a certain arrogance that is accompanied by the slogan the “Chinese Dream.” China at one time boasted the largest GDP in the world, but, after the Opium Wars, it was thoroughly humiliated at the hands of Europe. The country has just recently attained the status of the world’s second largest economy; and it seems that the Chinese have regained their influence in the world and are now challenging the domination of the U.S.. This can certainly be thought of as one way to vindicate the humiliation suffered some 150 years ago.

Japan was also torn from national isolation some 150 years ago with the onslaught of the Meiji Restoration; and, following the War, the country emphasized economic growth as it sought to become a member of the West as exemplified by the U.S.. Ethnically and geographically, the Japanese are not Westerners but they were formally accepted into the international order as Western allies. However, countries that attempted to join later met with resistance. The OECD – which I have worked for – is an international economic organization located in Paris. Made up initially of sixteen developed countries, OECD membership soon increased to twenty nations. Initially, however, the composition of the organization was centered on the U.S. and Europe. Then, in 1964, the year of the Tokyo Olympics, Japan was granted membership. In the 1990s, South Korea and Mexico joined. At the time, there emerged worldwide acknowledgement that, it is a good thing if countries besides the U.S. and Europe develop their economies enough, and are granted membership to the OECD to become a member of the West. There by gaining world recognition. Japan, South Korea and

Mexico were delighted to be able to join. It seemed as though their efforts had been rewarded: they had become a member of the world's leading economic group, and felt like honor students who made the grade.

However, recently the BRICs, made up of Brazil, Russia, India, and China, have gained much attention. None of these countries have made any effort to join the OECD. For them, the OECD will always be a bastion of colonialism; so no matter how much their world status rises they could not join in good conscience. Instead, they put their efforts into forging another way forward, separate from that of Europe and the U.S.. Over the last 400 years, Europe has been the focal point for the advances and modernization that would eventually spread to the rest of the world. The world is by no means a monolith, however. There are both countries that lead these efforts as well as those that consider themselves to be stepping-stones in these endeavors. This distinction has a tendency to be overlooked. It was believed that all the countries aimed to improve their affluence by achieving economic growth, making a beeline for the U.S. and Europe; but, it does not seem to be the case.

There is an international organization called UNESCO in Paris. A UN agency, UNESCO is in charge of education, science, culture, and communications. It does not, however, concern itself with politics or economics. As these arenas tend to give rise to confrontation, the agency was formed right after the end of the Second World War, to concern itself with fostering culture and education in support of humanity in an effort to encourage peace. UNESCO was the first organization that Japan was invited to join following the war. Because its goal is to promote peace, even former enemies and non-UN countries were welcome. Participation is granted solely for the purposes of pursuing peace. UNESCO therefore enjoys a very good reputation in Japan. I served as ambassador at the Japanese government's UNESCO mission for two years. UNESCO takes a position that culture transcends political, economic, and ethnic conflict; values cultural diversity; and advocates striving to reach a mutual understanding in discussions. Should some incident occur, however, developing countries' resentment of the colonial past soon becomes apparent. It is the same relationship as that between the Arab countries and Israel. I've heard that, at the UN headquarters in New York, the relationship between developing and developed countries is chilly, but I was surprised to find that this is also the case at UNESCO.

An example of this can be seen in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, which was established in 1972. Pursuing the UNESCO ideal of peace, this convention seeks to protect the treasures of cultural and

natural heritage in a wide variety of countries. The Convention was created with the conviction that we could transcend national borders, different political systems, and economic status in an effort to protect cultural treasures deemed irreplaceable for mankind. The Convention lists those things deemed treasures, which absolutely cannot be lost. If the country in question is poor, economic aid is provided to protect the heritage site there. Developing countries also have many archaeological sites. Numerous such sites exist in the Middle East and Iraq, as well as in Egypt. That this treaty protects these sites is a truly remarkable accomplishment. The Convention makes provision for the World Heritage Committee to implement this idea, but recently the resentment of developing countries towards the developed has come to the fore. For UNESCO sites are overwhelmingly located in advanced nations. Japan has 17 such sites, while European countries such as Italy and France have more than 40. On the other hand, the number of these sites in developing countries is just low and does not seem to increase. Developing countries increasingly complain “that developed countries arbitrarily create standards and make interpretations based on their own sense of values without paying due attention to our position.” Recently the Committee has become highly politicized.

Publicly, both developing and developed countries work together equally on these problem-solving issues, but internally resentment over Western European dominance remains. Even after developing countries gained independence from Western European colonialism, this dynamic has continued in various forms and the sense of victimization remains strong. The ranks of the developing countries include the Islamic countries and China. Japan was never a colony. It was occupied by the U.S. military for several years, but that was a result of defeat in the war and thus inevitable. Japan has never been subjugated. My experiences in Europe lead me to believe that the Japanese are blessed never to have known such historical and emotional resentment. The developing countries yearn for economic development and the material abundance of modern civilizations, but once a certain degree of economic development is achieved, historical resentment rises to the surface.

As anyone who has lived in Europe knows, racism is alive and well, leading to barriers in the workplace and at school. The inability to find employment and the sense of estrangement and victimization that young people feel get easily mixed up with “history.” This leads to anti-UK and France sentiments. When incidents occur in this environment things can rapidly get out of control. The current series of terrorist events is in no way similar to the Aum Shinrikyo religious fanaticism of several years ago, which was an isolated event; one can’t help but sense it is part of a very long historical trend.

This is not the history as recorded by the winners; it is a different, oppositional history that losers feel and this is what feeds these occasional outbursts.

One other thing I'd like to address is the extreme materialism of liberal democracy that has developed in Western Europe over the last 400 years. Advances in science and technology produced the Industrial Revolution, which in turn gave birth to a materialistic civilization. A unique corollary to this was that religion and spirituality seem to have been dismissed as unnecessary. When I say that Japanese culture and European culture are different, I mean that the Japanese put a great deal of emphasis on spirituality – with spirituality being the sense of whether one has substantial inner strength and is fulfilled, whether one is kind to others, and so on – as opposed to emphasizing material wealth and economic value. I often remark that Westerners tend to be materialistic and scientific; but when I use the word “spirituality” they seem puzzled. Westerners seem to think this connotes something religious and immediately become suspicious. Buddhism highly values the mental aspects and therefore they find it menacing. The concept of *mu* in Buddhism translates roughly into English as “nothing,” or “void,” and this word seems to produce a vague sense of fear in the Westerner. Accordingly, as they continue on the path of materialism, Westerners don't like Buddhism. As a result, secularism and anti-spirituality spread and a prejudice against religion beyond what is reasonable is produced. These are the circumstances under which recent terrorist incident occurred. For Europeans, there is a strong attraction to the “freedom”, as exemplified in part of “freedom of expression” so they use “freedom of expression” as a kind of weapon to express a sense of secularism, as can be seen their ignoring the feelings of Muslims and producing comics that make a mockery of Muhammad. It seems to have become commonplace to mock God indiscriminately.

One final note on Eurocentric liberal democracy: It is now apparent that the structure that Francis Fukuyama presented as “the terminus” is not very functional. In a word, it presents a moral dilemma. With a free market economy and democracy, we are taught that individual freedom and the fulfillment of individual desires is just. This ideology holds that with open competition, resources are utilized most efficiently, and everyone becomes better and happy. Under this doctrine, Japanese and world economies prospered. However, freedom comes with obligations, and the moral support needed was missing, leaving us with too much privilege and [unanswered] freedom, which I feel has resulted in the fragmentation of society. In international finance, institutional investors leverage huge sums of money in an effort to exercise their clout. This has resulted in business failures and has had gigantic effects on the real economy. This is a result of

freedom going too far. Going to whatever lengths one wishes to fulfill one's desires is going too far and constitutes a neglect of morals and ethics. This has resulted in the rich getting richer while the poor get poorer as qualitative issues worsen. The system of liberal democracy that characterized this final destination as a paradise has not really been effectively realized. There is too much emphasis placed on freedom with morality largely ignored. Such freedom has largely proven to be a negative for society as a whole. Think of the liberal democratic structure as a car: A Toyota Lexus will always just be a mechanism; how it operates is totally up to the driver. If the driver is licensed, follows the rules of the road and displays the proper etiquette, the Lexus will perform grandly. However, if the driver is drunk or on drugs, the Lexus will more than likely be involved in an accident. The same can be said of the liberal democratic structure. The structure may be splendid, but it is not being properly utilized. As a result, there is mistrust of the liberal democratic structure itself, leading, I believe, to a cynical state that produces feelings of despair.

Why do some young people in the developed countries end up going to the IS (Islamic State)? Simply out of curiosity? Until recently, they thought of the liberal democracy that we have inherited as a truly marvelous thing, but what with widening income disparity increasing crime, they fear they were wrong. They cannot find work; faced with the reality of their situation, they sink into despair. Thinking that, in a place with a totally different value system, they might find some purpose in life, they are increasingly flocking to the IS. I think they may also want to challenge convention, although, as I have never actually interviewed any of these young people, I can't be sure.

The violence and terror of Islamist extremists, of course, cannot be tolerated. However, simply condemning these acts will not make them go away. Behind these acts, there is a whole slew of problems, some of our making, with the structure of liberal democratic principles that we have created. And Europe, which has a bit of a checkered past itself, is at the root of the problem. I feel strongly that, without talking about these issues, there is no way we can have a dialogue on this incident.

So the question now is how best to proceed. I believe that Japan has an important role to fulfill when it comes to this issue. When you think about it, monotheism can be thought of as universalism. Similar to the unwavering belief that some might have in a single God, there is confidence in Europe that their system of democracy should be applied universally. The Japanese are believers in relativism; their thinking is that "I have my own way of doing things, but I will not impose this on others." Without this relativistic way of thinking, I believe it is not possible for people of different cultures

and with different interpretations of the past to coexist. This being the case, I feel strongly that Japan has a vital role to play regarding this issue. Thank you very much for allowing me to express my opinions on this matter of critical importance.

## **What's Wrong with the "Clash of Civilizations" Theory? : Reconsidering the *Charlie Hebdo* Shooting**

Keisuke Kikuchi

On January 7, 2015, a weekly newspaper in Paris was attacked by radical Islamists, resulting in the deaths of ten people in the editorial department and two police officers. This was the bloodiest terrorism incident in France in the half-century that had passed since the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962). On the evening of the same day, many Parisians gathered to mourn, arguing that "Satire is a French tradition, and the attack on *Charlie Hebdo* constituted an attack on French culture." Buoyed by public opinion, the government strengthened measures designed to protect public order and also dispatched the aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle to the Persian Gulf as it embarked on a military effort aimed at suppressing Al Qaeda and ISIS.

The target of this attack, *Charlie Hebdo*, is a satirical publication that enjoys great popularity in France. As a result, the immediate reaction following this event was that it was "an attack on freedom of expression." Moreover, as "freedom of expression" constitutes the foundation of Western political culture, this incident was broadly interpreted as a collision between European culture and Islam. But is this perception really valid? Could it be that the standoff between Europe, where freedom of expression is taken as an absolute truth, and Islam, which does not tolerate blasphemy against its religious beliefs, is mere fallacy and was concocted merely to conceal the "Islamophobia" that serves as a backdrop to this incident? I will examine the tone of the recent *Charlie Hebdo* content below; and I invite the reader to carefully consider the issue of "liberal Europe vs. Islam" and the circumstances surrounding the rise in anti-Islamic fervor currently gripping much of Europe.

### **A Change of Tenor at *Charlie Hebdo***

*Charlie Hebdo* is a satirical newspaper born out of the civil unrest of May 1968. As foreshadowed by the fact that Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* and similar works would go on to become bestsellers, the civil unrest of May had two diametrically opposed aspects. The first was the new left's radical opposition to the capitalist order and

lifestyle. The second was a new revolutionary opposition to Christian family norms in Europe. *Charlie Hebdo* was launched in 1970, a time of upheaval and unrest in France. With its extreme brand of political satire that disregarded taboo, *Charlie Hebdo* was popular with the generation of '68. In particular, the weekly's unique brand of satire seemingly never missed a chance to poke fun at successive generations of French presidents, the Pope, Le Pen and other illustrious figures. Especially noteworthy was the clearly confrontational attitude taken towards the Catholic Church over its staunch opposition to abortion in the 1970s, which often resulted in the Pope being lampooned. In 1972, the National Front was born and soon developed a platform revolving around a rejection of immigration. Offering grotesque caricatures of National Front party leader Jean-Marie Le Pen, *Charlie Hebdo* was quick to sound the alarm on the far right's rise to power. *Charlie Hebdo*, then, was born out of 1960s counterculture; and it is important to note that it can by no means be considered a right-wing publication.

However, with the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, unusual changes could be seen in the tone and tenor of the weekly's content. One of the most profound changes was the switch from a pro-Palestinian position to a pro-America and pro-Israel point of view. Another was a newfound ridicule aimed at radical Islam, the prophet Muhammad, and the veils donned by Muslim women. These trends are thought to be the obvious result of the influence of editor-in-chief Philippe Val in the editorial department, as well as the ushering in of Caroline Fourest, renowned for being in the vanguard of the Islamophobia movement<sup>1</sup>.

These changes could be personified as "the caricature of Muhammed." In September of 2005, the largest Danish daily, *Jyllands-Posten*, published 12 caricatures of the Islamic prophet. Included was an image of Muhammad appearing as a terrorist, leading to criticism from within Denmark as well as from abroad. Objections were especially strong in the Middle East, where the Danish embassies were besieged by protests, and some countries even experienced extremist uprisings.

At first, the major media in Europe set forth a policy of not publishing such caricatures. However, in direct opposition to this mood of self-restraint, there was one publication that quickly reproduced this caricature: France's *Charlie Hebdo*. Gracing the front cover of a February 2006 special edition was the headline "Muhammad overwhelmed by fundamentalists," which appeared with a sobbing Muhammad who laments, "It is hard to be loved by idiots". This invited a backlash from Muslim organizations, which considered it insulting. Moreover, the following month, Philippe Val, Caroline Fourest and other public figures including Salman Rushdie, Taslima



Nasreen and Bernard-Henri Levy published “Together Facing the New Totalitarianism.” This treatise argues that the doctrine of radical Islam amounts to a new form of totalitarianism comparable to Nazism and Stalinism and that it constitutes a threat to democracy.

Moreover, with the arrival of the Arab Spring, in Tunisia the Ben Ali regime collapsed, with moderate Islamic parties gaining power. In response to this a special edition of *Charlie Hebdo*, titled “Sharia Hebdo,” was published in November 2011. The drawing on the cover depicted Muhammad with the caption, “100 lashes if you don’t die laughing!”. This black joke was based on the Western stereotype of Islamic (Sharia) law as being barbaric. Following the publication of this special issue, late one night someone hurled a Molotov cocktail into the company’s building and the editorial offices were completely destroyed. However, the editorial department declared that they “would not bow down to the threats of Islamists,” and the cover of the following week’s issue featured a drawing of a Muslim man and Charlie French-kissing, accompanied by the passage “love is stronger than hate.”

There are many more such examples of caricatures of “Charlie” that basically serve to troll Muhammad. For instance, another illustration that came out at the same time as a low-budget American movie was depicting the prophet Muhammad as a sex-crazed pedophile shows Muhammad stretched out naked on a bed accompanied by the headline “The Movie That Set the Muslim World Ablaze.” Facing the camera with his rear end in the air, the Prophet asks, “My ass? So you like my ass?”. This serves as a parody of a scene from Godard’s *Contempt*, in which the French sex symbol of the time, Brigitte Bardot, utters this line. This form of humor, which no Muslim could appreciate and which regularly includes sexual innuendo designed to shock, is a staple of *Charlie Hebdo*.

### **Just What is the Purpose of Satire?**

Within France there were repeated protests over these offensive covers but the editorial department of *Charlie Hebdo* consistently pushed back using the argument that: “Ever since the people’s revolution, political satire has been a tradition in France, and this magazine seeks to continue this tradition. Furthermore, we poke fun not only at Islam, but also at Christianity, Judaism and other religions and authorities. Therefore, this magazine is not by any means discriminatory.” However, the issue at hand requires the questioning of key contexts including who and what is involved. This is because even illustrations that could, at first glance, appear humorous might, depending on the writer’s

position and the context in which they are published, take on a totally different meaning. For example, at a time and place where Christian family values are strong and abortion and same-sex relations are forbidden, any form of satire aimed at the Pope might be interpreted as having a liberal meaning. Conversely, when the situation is such that a minority group is being persecuted, and some member of that group is depicted in a grotesque fashion and scorned, naturally there are discriminatory nuances. Anti-Semitic caricatures that were published during the Nazi occupation certainly epitomize this. In short, poking fun at someone in power by caricaturizing him or her is one thing; but when this same scorn is aimed at the socially vulnerable, it may be perceived as simply discriminatory. This is why, ever since 9/11, the caricatures of Muhammad have invited such a strong backlash.

Following the 9/11 terrorism incidents of 2001, the Central Asia and the Middle East became the setting of armed interventions in the form of the aerial bombing of Afghanistan and the Iraq War, with countless numbers of men and women caught up in this and myriad lives lost. Moreover, seen as potential terrorists, many Muslims in the U.S. and Europe have been subjected to routine discrimination and violence. Given these circumstances, when the mass media disseminates stereotypes equating Muslims with fundamentalism, quite naturally there is an increase in anti-Muslim sentiment. What's more, this is doubly true when the creator of the offending illustrations is a caricaturist who touts a relationship with *Dansk Folkeparti*, a far-right political party that adheres to an anti-Islam line of rhetoric.

In February 2006, at the time *Charlie Hebdo* began reproducing the caricatures in question, French Muslim groups brought forth litigation seeking to prohibit the sale of the magazine. At least two of the caricatures contained discriminatory images portraying Muslims as terrorists. However, France's mainstream media immediately responded by unfurling a campaign advocating "freedom of expression" and a number of politicians – including the Minister of the Interior of the time, Nicolas Sarkozy – publicly declared support for *Charlie Hebdo*. Besieged by the opposition, the Muslim groups serving as plaintiffs in the case eventually withdrew their lawsuit. Thereafter, the *Charlie* cartoonists upped the ante, becoming ever more provocative in their portrayals.

An example of this can be seen in April of last year [2014] when Boko Haram, an African Islamist terrorist group, kidnapped a group of schoolgirls and *Charlie Hebdo* responded by adorning their covers with a caricature accompanied by the headline "Boko Haram's Sex Slaves are Angry", and featuring veiled, pregnant women being kidnapped by the armed group and shrieking, "Don't touch our welfare allocations!" The

implication is that the victims of sexual violence at the hands of Boko Haram would develop a parasitic dependence on the French social security system, becoming so-called “welfare sisters.” After the January [2015] terrorism incident, when doubts began to be voiced regarding the tone of *Charlie Hebdo*, an explanation was offered that, “French satire might be difficult to understand for the uninitiated reader but *Charlie Hebdo* is offering a critique of Islamic fundamentalists. It is not the intention of the magazine to fan the flames of hatred towards ordinary Muslims.” However, a close examination of “Boko Haram’s Sex Slaves are Angry” and other caricatures clearly reveals that the targets of *Charlie*’s attacks are not solely Islamic fundamentalists.

Based on the circumstances described above, one can’t help but question whether *Charlie Hebdo* is truly continuing the tradition of poking fun at those in power. Rather it seems that, following 9/11, the magazine has simply been taking advantage of the anti-Islamic sentiment sweeping Europe by targeting a weak group – Muslims – in an effort to prop up sales. In recent years, with the spread of the Internet, France, like most other countries, has seen books and other traditional media fall out of favor, resulting in countless newspapers going bankrupt and causing all manner of hardship for those in print media.<sup>2</sup> *Charlie Hebdo* itself has not been immune from this turn of events, with circulation dropping precipitously in recent times. However, the February 2006 special issue featuring the reproduction of the Danish caricature resulted in sales of some 400,000 copies of the magazine. Following the Boko Haram kidnapping, the post-9/11 French press saw the threat of Islam as a way to prop up lagging sales, similar to how Japanese weeklies have used the threat of North Korea as a driver of revenue. By presenting this material in a humorous, satirical manner, *Charlie Hebdo* has managed to prop up its sagging circulation.

### **The Double Standard Surrounding “Freedom of Speech”**

We began by taking a brief look back at the change of tenor at *Charlie Hebdo* that has occurred over the last several years. Now, based on this discussion, I’d like to examine how the terrorist attacks of January of this year were received. As I indicated at the beginning of this lecture, because this attack was on a satirical publication that was in some ways representative of France, the immediate reaction was that it was an attack on *freedom of expression*. Moreover, because *freedom of expression* is a cornerstone of Western political culture, the incident was interpreted as *a collision between Islam and European culture*. In other words, the idea was that, Europe was unconditionally committed to freedom of expression, and the Muslim world could not tolerate the

desecration of its religion. It follows, then, that the underlying events of this terrorist event would be interpreted as a “clash of cultures” between liberal Europe and Islam.

And yet, is this interpretation really appropriate? It would seem that “freedom of expression” is not an absolute in Europe. If *freedom of expression* were really inviolable, then certainly any and all statements – everything from anti-Semitic remarks to historical revisionism – would be recognized. This is because, whether we approve of such content or not, *freedom of expression* would be treated as an inalienable right. However, in actuality, there are no European countries that approve of such statements in the name of “freedom of expression.” Rather, such utterances are strictly controlled as hate speech in post-war Europe, which endured the Holocaust.

For example, French laws banning groups that advocate racism were established in 1972; the opinion at the time was that discriminatory statements were not free speech, but rather “criminal acts” subject to legal action. Then, in 1990, the Gayssot Act was established, which penalized the denial that the gas chambers of Auschwitz existed as “negationism.” These two laws came into existence against the backdrop of the anti-racism activities of the post-war years and the controversial historical revisionism of the 1970s.

Conversely, however, there are also other laws that were created entirely as national initiatives. An example can be seen in the enactment in 2003 of acts making desecration of the national flag/anthem a crime. Any individual found guilty of this crime must pay a fine of 7,500 Euros and may also serve up to six months in prison. This law was created as a result of mayhem that broke out at a friendly soccer match. In November 2001, an international goodwill soccer match was played between Algeria and France in Paris, the first such match between the two countries since the Algerian War of Independence. During the singing of the national anthem directly before the match, some young second-generation immigrants crowding the stadium started booing, drowning out *La Marseillaise*. In retaliation, this law was enacted under the auspices of the then Minister of the Interior, Nicolas Sarkozy.

Then, with the intent of maintaining public order, in 2014, France approved a measure making the glorification of terrorism a crime. Under this statute, glorification or affirmation of terrorism is punishable by a fine of 75,000 Euros and up to five years in prison, while circulating such content on the Internet is punishable by a fine of 100,000 Euros and up to seven years in prison. Since the attacks of January 2015, this law has been applied widely, with a variety of negative outcomes, such as students being arrested for making what are perceived as pro-terrorist comments at school. (In a two-week

period following the incident, there were 400 such arrests, with more than 180 individuals prosecuted.)

Our first conclusion moving forward, then, is that the cultural argument that the incident represents a clash between “Europe and Islam” is questionable at best. Further, in Europe *freedom of expression* is by no means unconditional; for a clear line exists between acceptable and unacceptable speech. Instead, the issue is that speech not normally sanctioned is allowed for specific groups. Put another way, there is seemingly a *double standard*. The fact that Muslim teens who boo the French national anthem are treated harshly, while *Charlie Hebdo*’s Muslim bashing has been justified under the mantle of “freedom of expression” is an extreme example of this. Thus, we cannot simply say that these caricatures represent a difference in cultural communication between Europe and the Muslim world. Such a reading is not only based on a misinterpretation of the reality of Europe but also amounts to concealing the Islamophobia that acts as a backdrop to the incident.

### **The Circumstances Surrounding the Rise in Islamophobia**

The next question at issue that I’d like to consider is the situation surrounding the rise of Islamophobia in Europe in recent years. Following the 9/11 attacks, anti-Islamic sentiment rose not only in the U.S., but also in Europe. The headscarf controversy in France in 2003, and the caricature incident in Denmark in 2005 are two examples of this trend, with each leading to an unequivocal escalation of this state of affairs. In May of last year [2014], in the European Parliament, populist parties calling for the curtailing of immigration started to gain traction in a number of EU countries, and in three in particular – France, the UK and Denmark – they rose to the top of their political power structures, causing quite a sensation. Then, in December, an organization called PEGIDA appeared on the scene, proclaiming its opposition to “the ‘Islamification’ of Europe” by holding mass rallies every Monday in major cities such as Dresden. With its history of the Holocaust, in post-war Germany racism is the taboo to end all taboos, so the appearance of such large-scale calls for the expulsion of foreigners was a truly remarkable occurrence. With anti-Islamic sentiment permeating so widely, one can’t help but wonder why so many ordinary citizens – not Neo-Nazis – are attracted to this type of movement.

One of the answers to this question is to see the roots of the problem in the religious antagonism between Islam and Christianity since the Crusades. I cannot dismiss this perception as mere nonsense. However, because such a culturally-based argument

amounts to objectifying “European culture” and “Islam” dichotomy and poses the risk of obscuring class, gender, ethnicity and other socio-micropolitical relations behind the twin veils of “culture” and “religion,” I think it would be best to tread carefully here.

One example representative of this is most certainly Samuel P. Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” theory. A former Harvard professor and director of the Center for International Affairs, Huntington was an American intellectual appointed to a conservative think tank during the Cold War. In 1993, he published an article titled “Clash of Civilizations” in which he argued that, following the collapse of the former Soviet Union, international disputes would henceforth take the form of conflicts between different cultures. Huntington characterized the West as holding such values as individualism, liberalism, democracy, human rights, the rule of law, and the separation of church and state, and positioned Islam as the cultural antithesis to these. The problem with this theory, however, was that while Huntington attempted to define the West by such concepts, they did not actually take root until at least the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> or possibly even the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the anthropologist David Graber points out, prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, “even if they could at some level conceive of such notions, the overwhelming number of Westerners would certainly not have accepted them.”<sup>3</sup>

Above all, for Huntington, the important point was that *democracy* was an ideal unique to the West, and that it would largely be impossible to expand it to other cultures. However, the proactive endorsement of *democracy* by the ruling elite of the West is also a recent historical development. For the elite were initially disgusted by the idea of “rule by the masses,” equating it with “mob rule.” Historical moments such as socialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the all-out wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were necessary for such elite class domination to crumble. Ignoring all of this historical detail and seeking to characterize the true nature of Western democracy as one of liberal democracy, Huntington’s arguments have proven anachronistic, while also reproducing a typically Orientalist discourse which builds Europe in opposition to Islam.

However, even if we advocate for the relativity of cultural values and call for a “dialogue between cultures” in opposition to the “Clash of Civilizations” theory, this would simply be interpreted as hypostatization of culture and civilization, and then we would find ourselves in danger of repeating the same fallacy as Huntington. These types of arguments, at their best, might very well amount to little more than a virtuous form of cultural relativism. If there is one mistake, these can easily switch to a religious fundamentalism or a cultural nationalism. The idea of “Overcoming Modernity” and the “Japanese Asianism” as espoused by the former Kyoto School were similarly of this

type.

It thus seems more relevant to analyze such political events from social sciences rather than explain from the cultural differences. As such, pursuant to gaining an understanding of the increasing Islamophobia in present-day Europe, it is important to foreground the following three points. First, class disparities have increased as a result of globalization. Second, against a backdrop of employment anxiety, there is an increased call for limiting immigration. Third, the immigration issue has become increasingly politicized, corresponding with the rise of the far right.

### **Politicians and the Media Create a Scapegoat**

From 1945 to 1975, post-war Europe experienced a period of rapid economic growth. Then the oil crisis of the 1970s ushered in a period of sluggish economic performance; and, confronted with chronic recession, there was a call led by the New Right administrations of Margaret Thatcher and others to reconsider the welfare state. Specifically, this resulted in the privatization of utilities and mass deregulation, as well as reductions in corporate and individual taxes and social welfare outlays. This spurred a restoration of capital profitability rates and increased dividend payments to investors while wages and social security payments gradually declined. Furthermore, with EU market consolidation and a monetary union, market competition was strengthened, leading to rapid deterioration in the hiring environment.

This further resulted in the rise of far-right political parties across Europe, with this trend first appearing in France. After World War II, it was widely believed that the far right had largely collapsed, but defeat in the Algerian War and the depression that followed the oil crisis helped breathe new life into the movement and it returned to the center stage of politics in France. The far right argued, “Unemployment is on the rise because immigrants are stealing jobs.” They went on to call for the deportation of three million Arab laborers in an effort to solve the nation’s unemployment problems.

For a long time after Jean-Marie Le Pen’s National Front came into existence in 1972, it failed to garner even 1% of the national vote. Then, beginning in the mid-1980s, it suddenly started to attract a larger share of the vote, and in seemingly the blink of an eye, it became the third largest political party in France. The turning point in all of this was the Socialist Party’s adoption of neo-liberalism in 1983. Pledging to rebuild the welfare state, François Mitterrand won the presidential election of 1981. In his third year, however, he abandoned the nationalization of key industries and Keynesian economic policies, siding with Thatcher and deciding there was no choice but to shrink the public

sector. Ever since, the National Front has increasingly attracted blue-collar workers and those disappointed by the major parties, and has seen its fortunes greatly improve on the election front. Given this state of affairs, the National Front managed to pick up 11 parliamentary seats, creating a sensation at the 1984 European Parliament, where it became symbolic of the changing political map in France.

Since the latter half of the 1980s, the three interdependent frameworks of conservatism, reform, and the far right have taken hold, with fierce battles between political parties unfolding at the ballot box. Put another way, while both conservatism and reforms have propelled neo-liberalism on the economic policy front, on the election strategy front, the “immigration problem” has been mobilized as an issue with attempts being made to take back votes from the far right. This is sometimes referred to as the “‘ethnification’ of the election campaign.”<sup>4</sup> With each French election thereafter, the themes of increasing crackdowns on illegal immigration, intensifying efforts to strengthen public order, and the crisis of national identity were taken up by TV discussion programs and in other forums. There are countless examples of this phenomenon, including the first headscarf controversy of 1989, the 1993 revisions to the Nationality Act, the enactment of a provision banning headscarves in 2004, the establishment of a Minister for Immigration, Integration & National Identity in 2007, the national identity controversy of 2009, and the controversy surrounding the banning of burkas in 2011.

It is important to understand these political developments in light of the circumstances surrounding the recent increase in Islamophobia in Europe. Basically, my point of view is that rather than citing the history of religious conflict between Judeo-Christian culture and Islam since the Crusades, the major factors behind the stunning successes enjoyed by populist parties in last year’s European parliamentary elections reveal more complex origins: one, the European debt crisis that followed the collapse of Lehman Brothers; two, the austerity plans that resulted from this crisis; and three, the creation of a scapegoat by politicians and the media.<sup>5</sup>

## **A New Form of Racism**

Viewed in this light, I think we need to understand that the recent increases in Islamophobia in Europe cannot be considered totally unrelated to what is currently transpiring in Japan. Since the Koizumi administration took power, Japan has also seen the implementation of structural reforms such as deregulation of the labor market and the like. As a result, there has been an increase in the non-regular employment rate, with



class disparities growing ever wider and resulting in greater insecurity. However, in an effort to divert citizens' attention from these realities, the government and media have chosen to focus on the threat of North Korea, the Senkaku Islands controversy, the Takeshima dispute, and other territorial clashes in an effort to foment nationalistic sentiment. In response to this trend, at the grassroots level, groups such as the *Citizens Group That Will Not Tolerate Special Privileges for Koreans in Japan* have sprung up. These groups often instigate demonstrations aimed at ostracizing minority groups living in Japan. Tessa Morris-Suzuki penned an academic paper titled "The Globalization of Racism," which argued that the same phenomenon that has gripped Europe since the 1980s is now appearing in Japan.<sup>6</sup>

However, if anything is different, it is that in present-day Europe, Islamophobic statements are not necessarily considered a form of hate speech. As has already been pointed out, following World War II, a variety of laws designed to restrict hate speech were passed in Europe. Accordingly, it became difficult to utter obviously discriminatory remarks aimed at Muslims without running the risk of punishment. At this juncture, then, a new form of xenophobia that emphasized the cultural differences between Europe and Islam was born. An example of this can be seen with the "headscarf controversy," where, in the name of secular ideals and gender equality, young Muslim schoolgirls were banned from wearing the hijab in French public schools. There is also the "Islam bashing" that was justified in the name of "freedom of expression" at the time of the Danish caricature incident. As such, this is not some sort of dated ideology arguing the relative superiority or inferiority of a particular race, but rather the feature of a new type of racism that justifies discrimination and exclusion in the name of the liberal values of "separation of church and state" and "freedom of expression."<sup>7</sup>

After this latest terrorist incident, some 1.5 million people gathered in Paris the Sunday following the attacks (Jan. 11, 2015) to participate in a demonstration. Nationwide, some 3.7 million citizens attended similar gatherings. Many of the participants carried placards with the message "I am Charlie," casting a somber mood over the events. The demonstration against terrorism was to be expected. However, the question of whether or not to identify with the victims is a different issue altogether. This is all the more controversial as *Charlie Hebdo* has been one of the French media outlets most responsible for fanning the flames of Islamophobia following the events of 9/11. If the victims of the current incident had been members of Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front, I wonder whether the demonstrators would have carried placards with the words "I am Le Pen." However, when it comes to the question of Islam, many people utter the

words “I am Charlie” without thinking twice. That is what I think makes contemporary racism so frightening. As I stated earlier, the racism of today does not use the vocabulary of race; rather, it invokes authority in the name of such principles as “separation of church and state” and “freedom of expression.” Without an understanding of this point, we are in danger of taking seriously the argument that there is a clash of civilizations between Europe and Islam, and it becomes impossible for us to grasp the racist conditions gripping present-day Europe.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Providing an up-close look at the change of tenor at *Charlie Hebdo*, Olivier Cyran, who worked as a journalist at the weekly from 1992 to 2001, published the following essay in 2013. Olivier Cyran, “Is *Charlie Hebdo* racist?” (Translations by: Takeshi Kasagi, Yuichiro Kashida, Jun Sunose), *Contemporary Philosophy* March 2015 special edition, included in the general feature “The *Charlie Hebdo* Attack & the Shock of ISIS Hostage-Taking Incidents,” pp. 148-171.
- <sup>2</sup> Regarding the state of the French print media with the spread of the Internet, see the following interview of former *Le Monde* editor-in-chief and current *MediaPart* representative Edwy Plenel: “How to Revive Critical Media – An Interview with the Editor-in-Chief of *MediaPart*, France’s Internet Newspaper” (“Labor Net,” November 14, 2014 Interviewed by: Keisuke Kikuchi, Yoshiya Goto) (<http://www.labornetjp.org/news/2014/1114kikuti>)
- <sup>3</sup> David Graber, *La démocratie aux marges*, Editions Le bord de l’eau, 2014, p.26.
- <sup>4</sup> Alec G. Hargreaves, « De la victoire de la gauche à la percée de l’extrême droite: l’ethnisation du jeu électoral français », *Histoire @ Politique*, no.16 (2012), pp. 154-165.
- <sup>5</sup> Keisuke Kikuchi, “Europe at the Crossroads – the Far Right’s Gains in EU Parliamentary Elections,” in *Journal of Global Studies* (Doshisha University), Issue No. 5, March 2015, pp. 99-118.
- <sup>6</sup> Tessa Morris-Suzuki, “The Globalization of Racism”, compiled by Satoshi Ukai, Hyoduk Lee, et al., included in *An Introduction to Racism Studies* (Ibunsha, 2012).
- <sup>7</sup> For more on France’s headscarf controversy, refer to the following: Keisuke Kikuchi, “The Scarf Issue Explained” in Masanori Naito & Yayo Okano, *Global Justice* (Minervashobo, 2013), pp. 168-178.

## Comment

Hirotsugu Aida

Thank you very much, Kondo-sensei and Kikuchi-sensei. Yours were great presentations and I think we can all agree that we learned a lot, though they have raised a couple of questions.

According to Kondo-sensei, the point at issue is modernity that began 400 years ago – some 200 years if we count it from the Industrial Revolution – involving Western Europe, the U.S. and others. That argument was somewhat dichotomist. The story must be more complicated. First of all, we have the question of how to deal with religion, for example. The thinking on this subject is quite different in the U.S. and Europe. In the U.S., religion still has a place in the modern public sphere, as is evident by the use of the Bible at the Presidential Inauguration. In the case of France, we need to be cognizant of the issue of *laïcité*, a form of secularism particular to France, where, in contrast to the U.S., it is necessary to exclude religion from the public sphere. Another point to consider is the resentment over the colonization, felt by those colonized against the colonizers in our modern age. However, even inside the first modernizers such as Europe and the U.S., a variety of questions were raised about modernity, creating a myriad of complexities. There are the issues of Romanticism and in Japan it took the form of a famous symposium titled “Overcoming Modernity.” Even today, controversies persist over modernity. This fact itself is seemingly characteristic of modern times. It seems that one important feature of modernity is that it continues to remake itself, correct itself, with recurrence of events such as one we face now. It is one important feature of this modernity.

Following the incident in question, some 3-4 million French citizens participated in demonstrations and rallies with what was widely interpreted as a showing of solidarity with the *Charlie Hebdo* victims. I believe that this interpretation is open to question. Amongst those gathered had different opinions. When they say that “*Je suis Charlie*,” there were a variety of meanings. Some probably agreed simply with this expression, but for many others, it meant freedom of expression marks a fundamental value that is strongly connected to the high esteem in which we hold freedom. I can’t help but be fully

cognizant that this will also be important for countries that are still on the road towards modernization.

You discussed universalism of modernity, but the problem with *laïcité* is the fact that it is not universal. The case is the same with the religiosity of the U.S.. A look at journalism from around the world shows us that there was a variety of responses to France's reaction to the incident. Multiculturalism is one aspect of modernism and countries with multicultural systems such as the U.S., Canada, Australia and other countries that model themselves after the U.S. found themselves bewildered by French reaction even as their worries regarding freedom of expression, speech, and modernity itself deepened. This became abundantly clear as a result of the incident at hand.

I would like to raise yet another question. There are limits placed on *freedom of expression/speech* by a variety of reasons. For those that work in this area, the assumption is that suppression of freedom of expression/speech by terror and violence is never to be allowed. However, in reality, freedom of expression is hemmed in by a variety of other considerations. Originally, [individual] freedom was only recognized to the extent that it did not infringe on others' freedoms. I believe that is a foundational principle that dates back to the time when modern liberalism took root. In other words, individual freedoms were restricted by others' freedoms and were therefore restricted by various other frameworks.

One of these was *public order and morality*. An example of this is when somebody [as a prank] shouts, "fire!" here and now. This would obviously cause turmoil. Should this be protected as freedom of speech? There are also issues of public order, libel, and legal restrictions to deal with here, as well as the issue of hate speech. In Europe, the law against anti-Semitic speech acts as a check on freedom of speech. In the case of France, this also raises issues such as religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, disabilities, and gender, with all language that is slanderous and/or fans the flames of hate in these areas prohibited. The U.S. has taken a stern view of these French laws, [taking the position that] enactment of such laws is really not the best way to further present-day freedom of expression. While it is accepted that freedom of speech is limited by a variety of peripheral considerations, the question before us now is what shape should future forms of *freedom of expression* take?

Voluntary self-regulation is exercised under certain circumstances, which became a big problem for the U.S. media during the Iraq War. You Takeuchi, a sociologist at Kyoto University, notes that Japan is often referred to as a society "with a general public that forces self-restraint." This is a phenomenon that is readily apparent in modern society. It

is not only in our own. In the case of the U.S., this is not a legal problem but rather one of “political correctness.” In France, the questions of how the issue of *laïcité* works to balance religion and freedom of expression is a big problem. This seriously restricts *freedom of expression*. *Freedom of expression* is one of the absolute values in modern age. Still, without confirming the boundaries involved, we cannot know how we should maintain the tense relationship that exists between these rival concepts. This is especially true for those who work in journalism. By making these boundaries vague and arbitrary, one can sense a buildup in pressure if you are in this business. If there is not a constant state of tension (in pushing towards expanding the freedom) we may feel a great sense of fear. This is a big problem when it comes to freedom of speech.

At the forefront of this incident is the issue of *laïcité*. What will become of the relationship between *separation of church and state* and *freedom of expression*? The two revolutions of modern times remain the French Revolution and American Revolution of Independence, but the French idea of separation of church and state is totally different from that prevalent in the U.S.. In France, the separation of church and state involves the desire not to allow the church to get involved in government. Conversely, in the U.S., there is a desire not to allow the government to get involved in religious matters; the thinking in the U.S. is that people should be able to worship freely and that churches and other places of worship should be free to go about their business and, therefore, government should not interfere in these areas. This is a reverse take on separation of church and state. There may be some fundamental controversies that erupt between countries with a similar outlook to that of the U.S. and France over this incident. This is an aspect of *laïcité* that is strongly connected to secularism. In the U.S., this is so much the case that atheists struggle to have their rights recognized, which would be unthinkable in France. So then, what should we make of these two kinds of separation of church and state that have taken center stage as a result of this incident?

Another matter that I believe needs to be revisited is whether these depictions of Muhammad amount to an attack on religion. There is the idea that true religious believers do not pay attention to criticisms of their religion. We would seem to thus need to determine whether these involve religion. One can, to a certain extent, get a feeling for the immediate connection between the incident and religion. I believe we need to revisit the question of whether the offending images violated religious dignity or not. The questions of whether a newspaper should carry a given illustration or not, or whether the media should report something or not carry with them far-reaching implications. As expected, we ought to determine whether this is really the case; this is yet another

important role of journalism. I am very skeptical of the decision not to report, publish or reprint such things.

In Japan, most newspapers chose not to carry the illustration from *Charlie Hebdo* without even discussing the matter. My current thinking is that these publications should clearly state to readers why they decided not to carry this illustration.

I look forward to hearing all of your opinions on this matter. That ends my comments.

## Panel Discussion

Panelists: Seiichi Kondo

Keisuke Kikuchi

Hirotsugu Aida

Moderator: Katsuhiko Kohara

**Kohara** Thank you very much. Now that we've heard from our two speakers, I think we can all agree that they had some very interesting things to share. There are many keywords to consider when it comes to the overall situation Europe finds itself in according to Kondo-sensei. The question has been raised as to whether liberal democracy and its principles can be carried out on their own moving forward. As pointed out by Kondo-sensei, "Europeans won't say this to your face but in Europe, the doctrine of European supremacy is alive and well. Historically, this was embodied by colonialism and it seems that within the tradition of colonialism, religion was met negatively." One of the issues with which we need to come to grips is that the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen were not isolated, unexpected incidents; rather they have their roots in a very long history. Kondo-sensei goes on to address how Japan can offer assistance regarding this distinctively European tradition and issue.

Kikuchi-sensei provided us with an easy-to-understand explanation of France's unique circumstances, conditions, and history, touching upon the journalistic content of *Charlie Hebdo*, and providing commentary on the rising anti-immigration sentiment that is spreading across Europe – not just France – as personified by the German group PEGIDA, which calls for the expulsion of immigrants. With its history of anti-Semitism, Germany finds it hard to openly call for an end to immigration. However, cracks have appeared recently in this façade, and it is apparent that this is not a problem only for France.

Especially interesting was how the voicing of discrimination had changed. We can refer to this as the changing face of racism. In days past, the basis of discrimination was racial difference. However, today *cultural difference* – in this case, the idea that there is a substantial difference between European and Islamic culture – serves as the basis for opposing immigration. This development has not been sufficiently discussed in Japan so

its identification is of great importance. In France, *freedom of expression* is restricted in various guises making it difficult to openly discuss racism. However, in pointing out the liberal traditions of Western Europe; the doctrines of liberal democracy, secularism and gender equality; and in trying to figure out how Islam fits into all of this, Kikuchi-sensei noted that he found an increase in feelings of hatred and rejection of Islam.

Responding to our two guests, Mr. Hirotsugu Aida of the Kyodo News provided many useful comments and also posed many questions. Based on Mr. Aida's concerns, the differences between American and European culture cannot be dismissed. I think this is important. As was pointed out, the separation of church and state is also treated differently in France than in the U.S.. There are also big differences within Europe itself. In France, the "burqa ban" prohibits women from wearing headscarves in public places, while in Germany there are no such prohibitions. U.S. President Obama made comments very critical of this law at the time of its passage. Even in Europe, opinions were divided on the headscarf controversy. The U.S. also had a different take on the matter. However, if the argument becomes one of the separation between church and state, then the discussion begins to lose its focus, so I think we should concentrate on the circumstances in Europe.

The last point touched upon included a sensitive issue that I believe may be controversial. Most certainly many Japanese newspapers voluntarily refrain from using caricatures. However, Tokyo Newspaper, Chunichi Newspaper and other publications sometimes used caricatures after careful discussions were carried out in-house. But after receiving criticism from readers, these newspapers soon withdrew these images and offered apologies. So then, how should we look at these series of events? From Mr. Aida's point of view, there was no need to refrain from publishing these controversial caricatures. Even though this is a point on which opinions will differ, I believe it needs to be addressed.

First, however, let's have our two guests respond to the questions posed by Mr. Aida and then we can proceed to our discussion.

**Kondo** The difference between the U.S. on the one hand, and France as well as the rest of Europe is just that, I believe. Japanese newspapers almost never published such caricatures. When they did, they invited criticism and were soon retracted. Whether this is desirable or not is difficult to say. The current issue, however, in the end, involves ethnic confrontations rooted in history. On the one hand, France ostracizes its immigrant population under the pretext that "those who are opposed to Western values must leave."



On the other hand, Muslims believe that their god and prophet is being desecrated and that this constitutes a criminal act, and so they revolt. Extremists then pray upon this indignation to orchestrate attacks. Both sides have their well-defined public stances but the root of the problem lies in ethnic confrontation. The Japanese media needs to explain clearly the history of mankind with which ethnicity and religion are so intricately entwined and then decide whether to publish such illustrations. Personally, I feel that they could have published such pictures with due explanation of the background of the attacks. If not just Muslims but also average Japanese feel the same negative emotion, I feel there is really no choice but not to run such content, while providing some sort of explanation. It very well might be permissible if the media take the same position as they do with other content involving crude sexual depictions, or those that may offend or harm children – in which case they show self-restraint and refrain from dissemination. I can't help but feel this might be best. This should be done freely based on the various media's characteristics and policies. The last things we want to see is the publications getting together and deciding whether or not to publish said content at all.

**Kikuchi** The question of just how far *freedom of speech* should be regulated is a difficult one indeed. France has a long history of anti-Semitism that dates back to the Dreyfus incident. During the Nazi occupation, the Vichy administration cooperated with the Germans, and during this period, the French police hunted down huge numbers of Jews, with roughly 75,000 of them being sent to the gas chambers. After the war, anti-Semitism remained to some extent, with historical revisionism and the like repeatedly creating a sensation. It is important to recognize the existence of details like this when considering the legal controls that have been placed on statements denying the existence of the gas chambers.

However, the question of whether these restrictions on freedom of speech should be expanded or not has led to a big split in opinion. This is due to the fact that, once you pronounce a certain subject to be taboo, unintended consequences inevitably follow. An example of this can be seen recently in France where the sociologist Edgar Morin and several other intellectuals were sued on suspicion of anti-Semitism. In almost every case, the speech in question amounts to no more than criticism of Israel's policy of occupation of Palestine. The lawsuit was dismissed but, wilting under pressure from Zionist groups, the media abandoned the subject, making a point not to criticize Israel.

Meanwhile, there are cases where the regulation of speech is abused by nations. An example can be seen in Japan where the pros and cons of regulations to restrict hate

speech are being discussed. The concern here is that anti-nuclear demonstrations held before the Prime Minister's residence and protesters demonstrating against the construction of U.S. military bases would have their activities curtailed if such restrictions should actually come into existence. The reporting on Islam by *Charlie Hebdo* probably includes discriminatory nuances; and ideally this should not invite lawsuits but, rather, be condemned in the court of public opinion. However, directly after the terrorist attack that is the subject of our discussion, some 8 million copies of the issue commemorating the victims were sold. This leads me to believe that such public commendation will not be forthcoming.

The expression "separation of church and state" has gained currency of late, so I'd like to take this opportunity to talk about it further. In 2004, France established the Law on Religious Symbols, which prohibits the wearing of the hijab in public schools. The separation of church and state is a principle that the republic of France adheres to and the wearing of religious symbols in public schools amounts to a violation of the principle of *laïcité*, which establishes secularism in education. After the creation of this law, Muslim girls were made to remove their headscarves in public schools and, should they resist, they were to be expelled. With the passage of the "burqa ban" in 2010, the prohibition on veils for Muslim women and girls was expanded from public schools to society at large.

*Laïcité* (secularism) was originally born out of the power struggle between royalists and republicans following the French Revolution. Until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, churches traditionally provided education for the masses. In France, this instruction consisted of Catholic priests gathering the children of peasants for Sunday school, where they would teach them the scriptures of the Bible. However, the Catholic Church was supported by the royalists at that time, and thus did not recognize the revolutionary administration as the legitimate authority. So the political leadership of the republican faction established a public school system, seeking to wipe out the political clout of the church by introducing free and compulsory education, thereby enshrining into law the principle of *laïcité* and instituting religiously neutral formal education.

Seen in this light, then, the principle of *laïcité* was born out of a power struggle that followed the French Revolution; but, by making formal education non-religious, it also fulfilled the role of securing religious liberty for minority groups including Protestants and Jews. In reality, the revisions of 1882 and 1886 that established *laïcité* in the public schools were restricted to secularism on three fronts: the teacher, the curriculum and the classroom. That is to say, educators were not to be made up of clergy, and the curriculum had to incorporate a diverse sense of values and worldview, beginning with evolutionary

theory. What's more, classes were carried out in non-religious environments as opposed to those of churches and other religious facilities. Accordingly, educators – i.e., the government – were always the ones demanding *religious neutrality*, and there were never any problems regarding which religion the children in the classroom identified with. That was the original spirit of *laïcité*.

Looking back on the sequence of events described above, I think it is clear that the Law on Religious Symbols, which was established in 2004, deviates tremendously from the spirit of *laïcité*. For, in 1989, when the first headscarf controversy arose, Socialist Party Minister of Education Lionel Jospin requested that France's Administrative Court provide a legal judgment on the matter, and was told that expelling students who wore headscarves would be "illegal." The only exception that would be recognized would be if the students in question were deemed to be participating in religious activities. In other words, the children wearing headscarves were not deemed to be likely to infringe on other students' religious freedoms by encouraging others to join a religious group; the act of wearing a headscarf to school itself was an act of *religious freedom*; and children could not be expelled from school solely based on this.

Then, when the second headscarf controversy occurred in 1994, the Minister of Education at the time, François Bayrou, issued a directive stating "wearing religiously symbolic clothes (for show) at school amounts to a religious act," and attempted to expel the girls wearing the headscarves. However, once again, the Administrative Court ruled that "the wearing of a headscarf cannot immediately be construed as a religious act," and in effect annulled the Ministry of Education's directive. By way of these twin Administrative Court rulings, it became obvious that headscarves could not be prohibited based on the one hundred year tradition of *laïcité*. Thus, when the third headscarf controversy occurred in 2003-2004, the government moved to finally settle this dispute by enacting a new law – the Law on Religious Symbols – effectively ending the controversy that had dragged on for a quarter century. Since then, religious neutrality has been demanded not only of teachers but also of pupils. Now a belief in so-called secularism has become a condition for setting foot in France's public schools.

**Kohara** *Laïcité* has a long history, but I think you've done a great job of covering the main points. Looking back, we can see that *laïcité* was established as a result of a desire for national religious neutrality in order to protect religious minorities, but the interpretation has changed to simply "excluding religiosity." I wonder if we can interpret this to mean that today the French have largely forgotten the historical details behind

*laïcité*. Would this mean that *laïcité* remains as a principle, but that its interpretation has changed over time?

**Kikuchi** I think you've hit the nail on the head. Looking at the interpretation of *laïcité* over the last 100 years, there were no particular problems with Muslim girls wearing headscarves to school. Originally, *freedom of expression* and *religious dignity* were compatible in Europe, as can be seen by the traditions of *laïcité* and *religious liberty* being compatible in France. However, against the backdrop of rising Islamophobia, the traditional interpretation of *laïcité* has been turned on its head, moving from *guaranteeing religious liberties* to *excluding religion* altogether. Two years ago, when the philosopher Pierre Tevanian visited Doshisha University, he referred to this as "a conservative revolution in the interpretation of *laïcité*." If it is true that the Middle East is seeing a rise in Islamic fundamentalism, then one can also say that French public opinion has been hijacked by "*laïcité* fundamentalism."

**Kohara** While many questions remain, discussions highlighting these cultural differences are ongoing; let's ask Kondo-sensei a little about this. I believe that the aim of the cultural administration of UNESCO is to connect people through culture irrespective of politics and economy. However, according to Kikuchi-sensei, these cultural differences have been abused, instead leading to the present state of confrontation. Does UNESCO have any tangible initiatives for responding to these conditions in Europe and the world at large?

**Kondo** UNESCO was established in the aftermath of the Second World War. The pretext was that there were not enough structures on the political and economic fronts – like the UN Security Council – for preventing war. In the end, the question of whether to go to war or not is a question that each person needs to come to grips with. As the famous passage from the UNESCO charter reads: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed." No matter what kind of political or economic structure is created, ultimately where there is hate, there is war. UNESCO was created to help man overcome his hatred for his fellow men. UNESCO has done a variety of things on this front. Iranian President Khatami even led a cross-cultural dialogue on the subject. While these have produced results, at the end of the day, ancient resentments always come to the fore. While not uttered, developed countries also harbor negative feelings towards the developing world as well as toward

Islam. Mankind is making a visible effort to overcome this but, inevitably, things don't go as planned. An example of France's inconsistency can be seen in the Convention on Cultural Diversity. This pact created by France seeks not to exclude any culture on the grounds that because cultures differ, they need to be respected. Canada has something similar on the books. In reality, the target of the Convention is the U.S.. There is a steady stream of Hollywood movies entering France. The French movie industry claims that it would be crushed [in the absence of legal protection]. That's nonsense. It is tantamount to arguing that, in order to respect diversity, the French film industry – a minority using our example – needs to be protected by ignoring the WTO's general rules on free trade. That is the ultimate goal here, and it's why the façade of “cultural diversity” is presented in forcibly pushing through aid for developing countries. Recently, however, the real intention – to exclude anything that is different from French culture or French values – has become clear. UNESCO activities have, to a certain extent, produced results but, with elections and politically difficult circumstances, it becomes impossible to protect public positions. Even so, it is not like UNESCO is not needed. It is for this very reason that it needs to continue to try and create situations where people can coexist by hiding its real intentions from the public to some extent and supporting peaceful solutions through its public stances. A flawless system is probably impossible; I believe that mankind will forever be grappling with this matter. Efforts aimed at realizing peace and stability must be strengthened. We must firmly strengthen these efforts.

**Kohara** Your comments on France's Convention on Cultural Diversity are intriguing. If one looks only at the language of this act, it seems great, but engaging in a battle to defend one's own culture highlights a philosophy unique to France.

Mr. Aida provided a comparison with the U.S.; it seems like the leading U.S. newspapers have not, for the most part, published or reprinted such caricatures. Can you tell us how these types of issues are handled and discussed in the U.S.?

**Aida** The Huffington Post was very quick to provide a summary of the U.S. media's reaction to this. There are literally thousands of newspapers in the U.S., so it is impossible to know them all, but the most influential media include the Washington Post, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, CNN, and the AP. The Huffington Post provided a summary of media trends [involving these and other media] on January 14.

Opinions were widely split on the illustration that sparked the initial shooting incident. The Washington Post did not print the cartoon at issue on their news pages but,

because its news pages and op-ed page are under different editorial control, it was carried by its op-ed page. The paper was highly conscious of its journalistic duty to get to the root of the problem. In other words, the paper felt the need to establish the root cause of the incident and to present it to its readers with the hopes of creating a dialogue, a sense of duty that brought up reminders of the origins of the free press in the U.S.. Next, we have the image of Muhammad weeping. With the exception of the New York Times, all of the major media carried this. The New York Times painstakingly researched the incident and also looked into its own journalism. By the way, the Asahi Newspaper is similarly creating a Public Editor position [similar to the New York Times] . Ombudsmen have been around for a long time. They conduct internal investigations into the problems at their own newspapers and then report on them. They may call on external well-known journalists and assign them to a post. The New York Times Public Editor is the former editor of the Buffalo News, a major newspaper in New York State. A former executive vice-president who had also served as managing editor, she was vehemently opposed to the New York Times decision not to print the second cartoon, voicing concerns that it was “problematic.” There was strong dissent on the decision not to print the first one and it seems that this dissent was like this: “This cartoon led to the death of 12 people, why can’t we show it? It just strays too far from our journalistic origins.”

It was the editor-in-chief of the New York Times who made the final decision. He explained his decision as follows: “At first I thought we should run it, but, after thinking it through, I couldn’t help but realize I would be putting our reporters at risk. So, I asked everyone who would be affected what they thought.” He felt that the majority opinion on the matter was that running the second cartoon would not present a danger. However, in the end, it was determined that it would be best not to run the caricature for the sake of the country’s Muslims. This was the decision reached by editor-in-chief [Dean] Baquet. At the time of the incident involving the Danish newspaper, Mr. Baquet was working at the Los Angeles Times. Most newspapers chose to run the offending cartoon, but he also decided not to run the caricature when he was managing editor of the Los Angeles Times. This decision created many problems within the newspaper, as there were reporters who cited this decision in resigning. This seems to have been a way of thinking unique to the current editor-in-chief of the New York Times. What is the basis of this way of thinking, I wonder? There was the matter of taking into account the feelings of Muslims, a minority group. While such things are rarely voiced in the U.S., as is widely known by those who have done any reading regarding the New York Times, a large number of the leading reporters at the New York Times are Jewish. Therefore, even if the consensus is

that publishing the caricature would not create any problems, one can't help but wonder whether there was a feeling of anxiety regarding this decision. A unique newspaper, the New York Times holds a special place in the U.S. and enjoys a very good reputation. It is hard to know for sure whether this had any bearing on their ultimate decision not to publish the cartoon, however.

**Kohara** The mainstream U.S. media's response was also split, with heated discussions quite common. There was also the opinion that it would be useful to discuss the issue and bring the details out in the open. U.S. newspapers have ombudsmen. Japan is definitely behind when it comes to employing them. In Japan, there are several newspapers that publish caricatures. When these provoke objections, the newspaper sometimes issues apologies but even with these, it is hard to discern from outside what discussions are taking place within the newspaper.

**Aida** One thing I'd like to add is that taking into account the feelings of minority groups is an immensely important matter. However, if this is not balanced against the news value, there is the very real possibility that almost all news reporting will disappear, as nobody will want to offend any minority group. Controversy in the U.S. media raised this fundamental point. It is "What is news value?" As journalists we believe that empowering people through knowledge is very important; that's why we work in this field. It is this knowledge that spurs debate, with the idea being that a way forward will become apparent through the voicing of a diverse range of opinions. We practice a kind of liberal ideology in our work. My biggest concern is that when we choose not to publish something there is the danger of this foundation crumbling.

**Kohara** That can also be considered a question of the value of liberal democracy, can't it? I have a final question for Kikuchi-sensei. How do you feel the Japanese media will respond to the series of events in France? What do you propose Japan should do?

**Kikuchi** First of all, I'd like to comment on the question of whether the *Charlie Hebdo* illustrations should have been published or not. I myself am really not uncomfortable running it. If the media exercises voluntary restraints and decides not to run such content under the pretext that it would bother minority groups, it runs the risk of avoiding dialogue on a number of controversial issues. However, if the objective of carrying such content is simply to offend Muslims, as was the case with *Charlie Hebdo*, this is totally

different from explaining content with the intent of gaining a better understanding of the problem. I myself presented a commentary one week after the incident utilizing several copies of the illustration. Simply adding taboo words does nothing to solve the problem and in fact serves to weaken the media, I believe.

Finally, I'd also like to emphasize that Europe's Islamophobia should not be viewed as somebody else's problem; rather I believe we should try to understand it in the context of Japanese xenophobia. When reading the Japanese accounts of the *Charlie Hebdo* attack, I was struck by the overwhelming amount of culturally comparative commentary pitting Europe against Islam. Reporters provided detailed coverage of the incidents by presenting them in chronological order, while French and Muslim researchers provided commentary based respectively on "freedom of expression" and "the dignity of religion." However, even with the caricature incident and headscarf issue, if the problem at hand is not European and Islamic cultural difference, but rather racism in the name of "freedom of expression" and "*laïcité*," then what is the best way to proceed? Maybe we need to take a more multifaceted approach to Europe's Islamophobia and Japan's xenophobia.

The situation that Muslims from all around the world found themselves in following 9/11, and the situation that Japanese residents of Korean descent found themselves in following the North Korean kidnapping of Japanese citizens are, to a certain extent, similar. After detection of the incident, the Japanese mass media began bashing North Korea and, in fact, various sanctions were imposed on Japanese residents of Korean descent by national and local governments. Examples of such sanctions include frequent compulsory searches of the General Association of Korean Residents, not allowing the Mangyongbong-92 vessel to enter Japanese ports, not allowing Korean school students to sit for university entrance exams, and excluding Korean schools from the free public education system. Meanwhile, at the grassroots level, there has been a deluge of racist violence and hate speech directed at these people, as personified by incident of Korean women's traditional *chima jeogori* being torn up and the raid on a Korean School in Kyoto conducted by the *Citizen Group That Will Not Tolerate Special Privileges for Koreans*. The way I look at it, these circumstances are probably similar to the situation that France's Muslims find themselves in, but this point of view is almost totally absent from Japanese media reports on the *Charlie Hebdo* incident. But then, to the extent that the comparative cultural argument for Europe and Islam is taken seriously, there should be no expectation that this point of view will gain traction. Even with that being the case, I do think we need to rid ourselves of Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" paradigm as quickly as possible.



**Kohara** Thank you very much. I think this subject has come into much clearer focus thanks to all of your efforts. I don't think there is any special need to rush to a conclusion today. However, I do hope there is a general understanding that we cannot afford to ignore events that occur in Europe. While Japan by no means has a large Muslim population like Europe, Kikuchi-sensei pointed out that we may have similar issues to deal with. The issue of *freedom of speech* is important for us as well. We need to look at and continue to consider incidents that occur in Europe as having a profound impact on us all.

## The Contemporary Jewish Diaspora<sup>1</sup>

Uzi Rebhun

### **Abstract:**

This paper examines and seeks to account for major demographic, social and identificational patterns of the contemporary Jewish Diaspora, with the historical demographic evolution of world Jewry as a background. It concerns itself with the geographic distribution of Jews, especially between homeland (Israel) and the diaspora, international migration, definitions of group belonging, interfaith marriage, social and economic stratification, and attachment to Israel. These dimensions are dealt by means of quantitative data from various complementary sources.

### **Keywords:**

Jewish population, Diaspora, migration, interfaith marriage, identity

## **1. Introduction**

This paper examines and seeks to account for major demographic, social and identificational patterns of the contemporary Jewish Diaspora, with the historical demographic evolution of world Jewry as a background. It concerns itself with the geographic distribution of Jews, especially between homeland (Israel) and the diaspora, international migration, definitions of group belonging, interfaith marriage, social and economic stratification, and attachment to Israel. These dimensions are dealt with by means of quantitative data from various complementary sources.

## **2. Numbers, Geographic Distribution, and Migration**

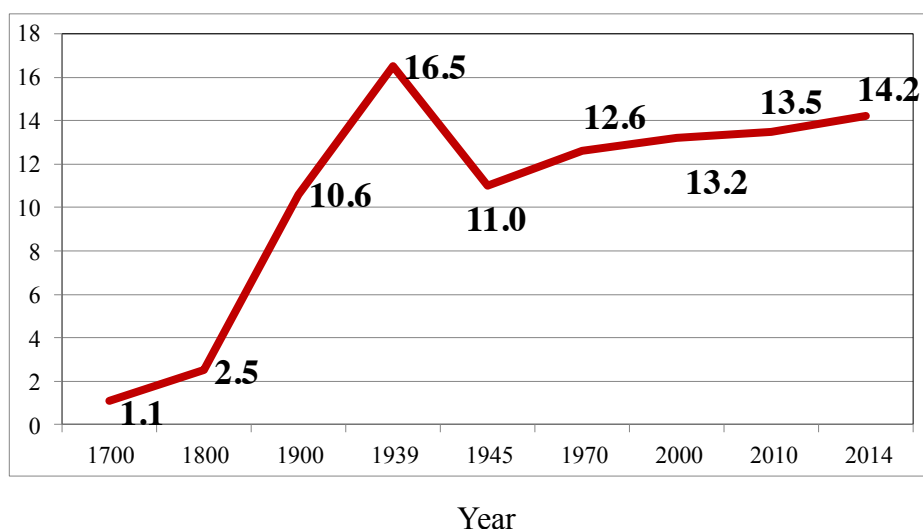
From an historical point of view, at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century world Jewish population was estimated at around 1 million. This number reflects stagnation in the size of the Jewish population in preceding centuries and the Jews' inability, mainly due to massacres, persecutions, and general ecological conditions, to increase demographically (DellaPergola, 1989).

Some of these factors were moderated over the course of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially in Europe, as part of what is known as the "demographic transition," which comprised the lengthening of life expectancy at a time when the level of fertility was still very high. Accordingly, by the end of this century world Jewish population more than doubled to 2.5 million, and it further increased fourfold to reach 10 million by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were characterized by intensified processes of urbanization, secularization and the increasing tendency to acquire higher education, all of which operated toward the decrease of the number of children per woman and, subsequently, of family size. Despite these trends the number of Jews continued to rise reaching an all time peak of 16.6 million at the outbreak of WWII (DellaPergola, 1989). The Holocaust and the destruction of six million Jews diminished the Jewish population by one-third within only six years. In the history of the Jewish people, which was often accompanied by pogroms and alienation, there had never been such a short period which had such a strong influence, not only on the size of the Jewish people but also on its structure. This was true because a large proportion of one-fourth of those Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust were children. This undermined the demographic base which is responsible for intergenerational replacement (DellaPergola, 1991).

Since the end of WWII the Jewish population has increased to slightly more than 14 million people today. Most of the growth took place in the years immediately following the war and during the 1950s and 1960s, but also more recently, i.e. over the last decade,

it experienced a growth of one million. Overall, world Jewry did not recover from the demographic turbulence of the Holocaust and has never returned to its pre-WWII size (DellaPergola, 2014).

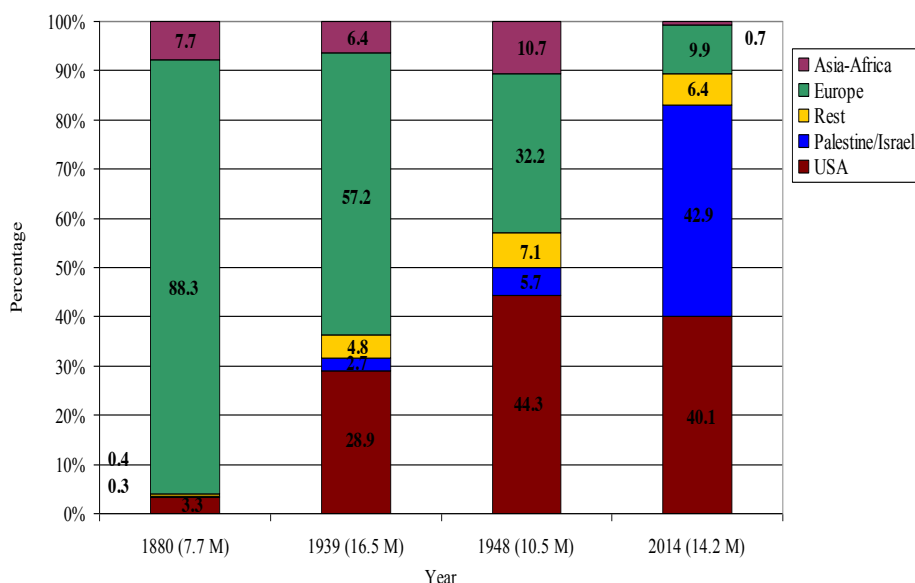
### World Jewish Population, 1700-2014 (In Millions)



*Adopted from: DellaPergola, 1989; 2014.*

The spatial patterns of the contemporary Jewish population attest to a unique combination of concentration on the one hand, and dispersion on the other. The largest single Jewish community today is in Israel (43%) and the second largest concentration is in the United States (40%). Together, these two countries are home to 83% of world Jewry. Adding the next eight countries with the largest Jewish populations it is evident that 96% of world Jewry lives today in only ten countries. At the same time, the remaining four percent are distributed across some 75 countries with each one having a salient Jewish population of more than 100 Jews (DellaPergola, 2014).

These residential preferences differ widely from past spatial distribution. Follow-up over time reveals a substantial decline in the proportion of Jews in Europe, a decline and later emptying out of the Jewish communities in Asia and North Africa, and an increase in the relative shares of the United States and Israel (DellaPergola, 1989; 2014).

**Percentage Distribution of World Jewish Population, 1880-2014**

*Adopted from: DellaPergola, 1989; 2014.*

To a large extent, the changes in the geographical distribution of Jews may be attributed to their exceptionally high rate of international migration. From 1948, the year the state of Israel was established, to the present, more than five million Jews have crossed continental boundaries. Out of a total population that ranged between 11 and 14 million, this is undoubtedly an unprecedented rate of long distance movement. The Jewish international migration system has two major areas of origin, namely Eastern Europe, and Asia and North Africa, and two major destination areas these being Israel and the western countries, first and foremost the United States. Approximately two-thirds of the Jewish international migration flow was directed toward Israel; and slightly more than one-third to the western countries. These figures include also the exchange between Israel and the West and vice versa. These two opposing flows were very similar in size thus compensating one for the other (DellaPergola, 2011).

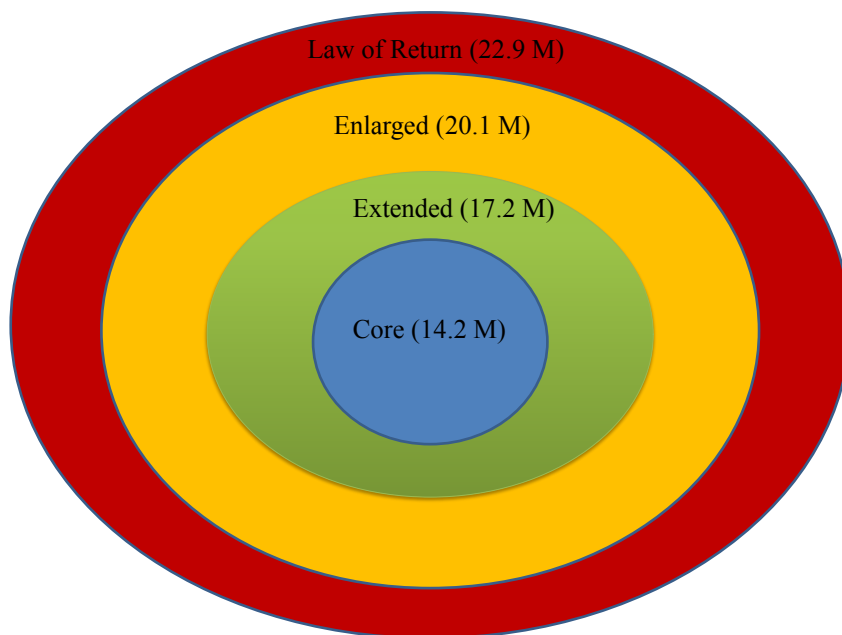
These directions of Jewish international migration resulted in the increasing share of Israel among world Jewry from six percent in 1948 to as high as 40% today. Still, the majority of world Jewry lives today outside the Jewish state, namely in the diaspora (DellaPergola, 1992; 2014).

### 3. Typology of Jewish Population

In the social and cultural context of many of the countries in which Jews reside today, group identity is not regulated by formal provisions. Hence, the definitions of collective boundaries and group belonging are complex and often confusing. The degree of ethno-religious identity may change during an individual's lifetime; one can cut the ties with one's origin group whether or not one adopts another religious faith, and these identificational alterations are reversible (Schmelz and DellaPergola, 1992). A growing number of people may have multiple bases (Lieberson and Waters, 1988). The dynamics of group identity are largely influenced by the changing role of religion and ethnicity in the country of residence, and in the west this seems to be developing towards a stronger demand for independence and self-autonomy on the part of several groups; yet it is debatable whether these observations reflect a revival of the ethnic factor or should be interpreted as symbolic identity (Alba and Nee, 2003).

Given such circumstances the very basic definition of group identity is complex. We distinguish between three types of belonging to the Jewish group. The first are the core Jews, who include all those who either regard themselves as Jewish or are identified by others from within the same household as Jews. This approach reflects subjective feelings and is not limited by any legally binding definitions (DellaPergola, 2010). A different group includes people with a Jewish background, many of whom have one Jewish parent, but currently claim identity with another religion. The core Jews, together with those having a Jewish background, comprise the extended Jewish population. Further, the enlarged Jewish population takes into account also non-Jews with no Jewish background who reside in households with at least one person who is Jewish; often these are the spouses or children of mixed marriages. Implementing this typology, while the core Jewish population is estimated at 14.2 million, this increases to 17.2 million for the extended Jewish population and to more than twenty million for the enlarged Jewish population (DellaPergola, 2014).

## World Jewish Population By Alternative Definitional Criteria



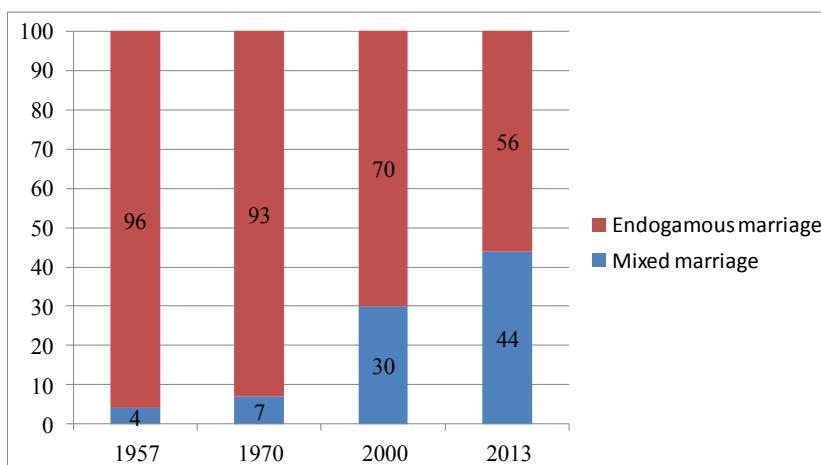
*Adopted from: DellaPergola, 2014.*

As for the homeland, Israel's Law of Return (LOR) guarantees the right to immigrate and receive citizenship to every Jew as well as to his/her non-Jewish spouse, their non-Jewish children and their spouses, as well as to the non-Jewish grandchildren of a Jew and their spouses. This wide definition of the LOR increases the population of those with a current of past attachment to Judaism, hence the right to immigrate to Israel. On the average, the number of people who meet the criteria of the LOR is one and a half time the number of core Jews (DellaPergola, 2014).

### 4. Marriage and Demographic Dynamics

As indicated earlier, this typology of Jewish population is mainly the result of intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. Over the second half of the twentieth century there has been a significant increase in the tendency of Jews to marry outside the faith. While in the late 1950s less than five percent of American Jews had a non-Jewish spouse, this rate increased to approximately 10% by 1970 and up to 44% today in 2013 (Goldstein, 1992; Pew, 2013).

## Jewish Intermarriage in the United States, 1957-2013



*Adopted from: Goldstein, 1992; Pew, 2013.*

In fact, the tendency is still gaining strength as seen by comparing different cohorts according to period of marriage. In 2013, among Jews who married before 1970 some 17% had a non-Jewish spouse; this was already true for 42% among those who married in the early 1980s, and increased further to 58% among the most recent cohort (Pew, 2013). In other words, every second Jew who marries in the United States today does so outside his/her religious faith.

The rate of intermarriage of Jews in the United States reflects an intermediate level between Jewish communities in which this marriage pattern is slightly lower, such as France, the UK, and Latin America; and other Jewish communities in Western Europe such as Germany, Eastern Europe which are characterized by even higher levels of intermarriage (DellaPergola, 2009).

High rates of intermarriage attest to the acceptance and successful integration of Jews into the general population. At the same time they create a major challenge for Jewish cohesion and continuity. Indeed, intermarriage by itself does not pose a major demographic threat to the Jewish community because in the overwhelming majority of intermarriages each partner maintains his/her religious identity. Indeed, the number of



those who switch from Judaism to another religion is slightly higher than those who switch in the opposite direction. Further, less than half (36%) of the children of mixed parentages are being raised Jewish resulting in additional loss to the Jewish side (Pew, 2013).

A more crucial factor of Jewish population dynamic is the low fertility among all Jewish diaspora communities which is below replacement level. The result of these processes is the reversal of the age pyramid to a narrow demographic base and widening toward the upper part of the pyramid. This attests to the aging of the Jewish population, and more deaths than births, namely negative natural movement, and the subsequent unavoidable diminution in the size of the diaspora Jewish population (DellaPergola, 2011).

Jewish intermarriage also influences the ability to maintain religious and ethnic vitality. In various expressions of Jewish identification such as rituals, institutional affiliation, or informal networks with religious peers, intermarried Jews exhibit weaker identification than do their counterparts in homogenous marriages. This is true after controlling for major demographic and socio-economic characteristics (Rebhun and DellaPergola, 1998; Rebhun, 1999).

## **5. Social and Economic Stratification**

The successful integration of Jews into the general society is also documented through their social and economic attainments (Pyle, 2006). These achievements reflect the high value that Jews attach to learning and the channeling of education into high rank positions. In this respect, Jews and many East Asian societies have much in common.

Already in the mid-twentieth century Jews in the United States were characterized by higher levels of education than non-Jews from the social mainstream, namely white Protestants. Over time, both groups have experienced upward mobility but the pace was faster among the Jews. Accordingly, the advantage of Jews has strengthened as evidenced by the index of dissimilarity which shows the percentage of members of one group, in this case white Protestants, that would need to change their level of education in order to attain an educational distribution similar to that of the other group, that is, the Jews. This index rose from 14% in 1957 to 33% in 2008.

Similarly, a distinction between four levels of earnings suggests that at both points of time, i.e. 1957 and 2008, Jews had higher earnings than white Protestants; and that this differential increased over time. These data show that the proportion of Jews at the lowest level of income diminished substantially, and approximately half of the Jews today are concentrated in the uppermost stratum of annual income: \$100,000 and above.

It should be noted that the comparison between 1957 and 2008 takes into account changes in the Consumer Price Index.

## **6. Jewish Identification and Attachment to Israel**

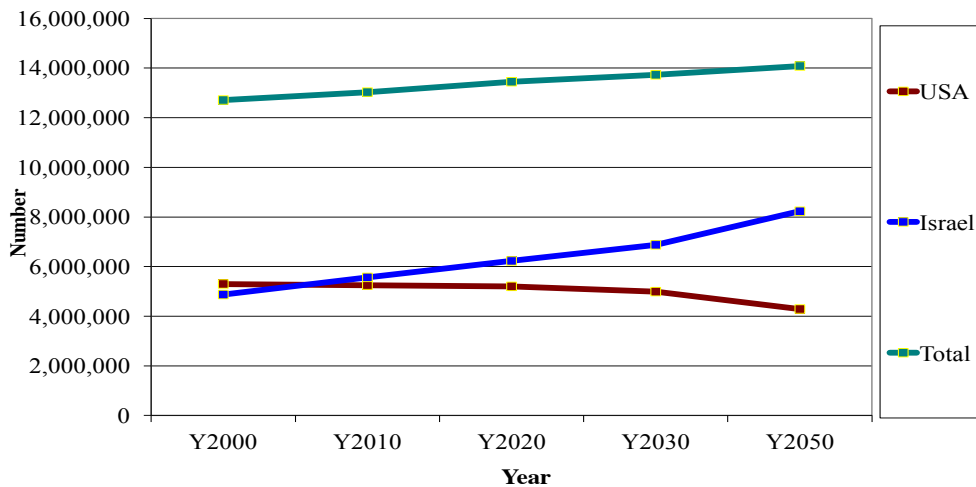
We have seen how intermarriage is significant for group identification. More generally, the trends in Jewish identification in the diaspora, as seen in the case of the largest diaspora Jewish community, namely that of the United States, lead to postulate that permanent behaviors and ongoing patterns that penetrate daily life, such as keeping the Jewish dietary laws, membership in parochial organizations, social relationships with other Jews, as well as the attachment of importance to being Jewish are all dimensions of Jewish identification which have declined over the last three decades. By contrast, the more intermittent aspects of Jewish identification, which occur at particular points of time over the Jewish calendar, maintained their stability (Rebhun, 2004).

In fact, one indicator, which is central to the diaspora-homeland relationship, namely visits to Israel, more than doubled: while in 1970 only 15% of American Jews had ever visited Israel, this was already true for 43% of American Jews in 2013. Another indication for the relationship between Diaspora Jews and Israel is their subjective attachment to Israel. The proportion of American Jews who claim that they feel very attached to Israel hasn't changed much over the last decade. Although it has fluctuated somewhat, it is within a very small range of between 67% and 74%. Over the last three years it has been increasing steadily.

## **7. Concluding Remarks**

Only recently has Israel become the largest Jewish community in the world. If the current demographic patterns of Jews remain stable in the foreseeable future, namely low fertility levels and aging populations in the diaspora and a fertility level above replacement in Israel, somewhere in the second quarter of the twenty first century the overwhelming majority, namely more than half, of world Jewry, will reside in the homeland of the Jewish people (DellaPergola, Rebhun, and Tolts, 2000). Nevertheless, a large number of Jews will still be living outside of Israel with the demographic, social, and identificational ambivalence involved in this status.

### Jewish Population Projections, 2000-2050



Source: DellaPergola, Rebhun, and Tolts, 2000.

Finally, this study focused on Jews who constitute a small minority group in their country of residence in the diaspora. Previous studies, mainly in the United States, suggested that Jews have often been ahead of other ethnic and religious minorities in adjusting to the demographic and socio-economic patterns of the majority population (e.g., Goldschieder, 1967). Thus, an analysis of the patterns and trends of this rare population can help to assess the anticipated trajectories for other minority groups, including recent immigrants, and hence to contribute to the broader literature on transnationalism and diasporism.

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**Note**

- <sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise stated, the data are based on my own analyses of various sources including NJPS 1970, 1990, 2000, and 2013; American Jewish Committee Annual Survey of Jewish Public Opinion; and the 2007 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey conducted by the Pew Forum. And this paper's contents were presented at CISMOR research meetings of the project "Jews and Judaism in Japan" on September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014.

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## Editor's Postscript

We are pleased to present you with the eleventh issue of the Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (JISMOR).

The Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR) held a symposium titled “Can Freedom of Expression and Religious Sanctity Co-Exist?” on March 14th, 2015. This issue represents the symposium in its entirety. The *Charlie Hebdo* Shooting took place on January 7th, 2015. Although this symposium was held two months after the shooting, when its aftershock was still felt, detached analyses of the incident were provided by the participants. While terrorism must not be tolerated, we must beware of the possibility of emergence of racism in the name of such universalistic principles as “separation of church and state” and “freedom of expression,” as Prof. Keisuke Kikuchi points out.

While I was writing this postscript, a cease-fire took effect in Syria. This cease-fire is so fragile that it may be broken in any minute. I sincerely hope that perpetual peace will be established in Syria and all the other parts of the world plagued by war.

March 2016

Takehito Miyake, Chief of Editorial Committee

## Guidelines for Submissions

Revised on March 31, 2014

1. *JISMOR* is an online journal published annually in or around March in Japanese and English, and is made publicly accessible on the Doshisha University Academic Repository and the website of Doshisha University Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR).
2. In principle, eligibility for contributing papers is limited to research fellows of CISMOR and individuals recommended by at least one research fellow of CISMOR.
3. Each submitted paper will be peer-reviewed, and the editorial committee will decide whether to accept it or not for publication.
4. In principle, submissions are limited to unpublished papers only. (If you intend to submit a paper that has been published before, you should obtain the permission of the relevant institution for the publication of your paper in *JISMOR*.)
5. Please send a resume of your paper (written in approximately 400 characters in Japanese or 150 words in English) via e-mail by the end of May to the address shown below. Any format is acceptable.
6. Your paper should be received by the editorial committee by the end of July.
7. Please prepare your paper both in Word format (see below) and PDF format, and submit them, as e-mail attachments.
8. To submit a paper, please use a template for Microsoft Word, which can be downloaded from the CISMOR's website. (<http://www.cismor.jp/en/publication/index.html>)
9. The paper should be written in either Japanese or English.
10. The paper should be written from left to right.
11. The paper should be 16,000 to 24,000 characters long if written in Japanese and 6,000 to 9,000 words long if written in English.

Research notes, book reviews, and research trends should be within 8,000 characters if written in Japanese and within 3,000 words if written in English.
12. The first page of the paper should include: the title of the paper; the name of the author; the organizational affiliation; an abstract (in approximately 400 characters if written in Japanese and 150 words if written in English); and five key words. If you write the paper in Japanese, please write the title, the name of the author, and the organizational affiliation in both Japanese and English.
13. Footnotes should be provided collectively at the end of the paper. No bibliography is shown, in principle.



14. If your paper includes reference to books, magazines, and/or newspapers in a European language, their names should be written in italic type, while titles of papers that may appear in your paper should be written in roman type.
15. In principle, Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and other words from any language using a non-Roman alphabet should be transliterated into the Roman alphabet, using the same system of transliteration throughout the paper.

Specifically, in transliterating Hebrew and Greek words, please comply with the guidelines specified in Chapter 5 (p. 25 onward) of P. H. Alexander, et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, 1999 (hereinafter referred to as “SBL”), as much as possible. While SBL specifies two systems of transliterating Hebrew words—academic and general-purpose—you may use either one that better suits your purpose. (Use of SBL is also recommended for transliterating the words of ancient languages such as Coptic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic.)

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