



# Voices

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## Special Reports: Dialogue Initiatives with the Islamic Civilization

# The quest for understanding with the Islamic World

*SPF initiatives pursue new globalization perspectives*

By Hozumi Ishii

Associate Program Officer,  
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### Views of Islam in the aftermath of September 11

In recent years, the international community has viewed Islam with alarm each time a major incident has occurred in the Middle East. These events include the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat by Jihad members in 1981, and the war between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s. In the 1990s the Islamic influence on the intifada (Palestinian uprising) intensified, and the Islamic Salvation Front emerged as a political party in Alge-

ria. And the list of developments goes on, including Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Gulf War.

Journalists have reported on Islam within the context of these events and have covered such topics as conditions within Islamic society. Images of terrorism, violence, and war have shaped people's perceptions of Islam. The Japanese see Islam as something remote, and information acquired through the media is directly linked to the way we perceive it.

The terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11 last year put Islam in the world spotlight once again. This attention has brought to the surface an array of views. One outcome has been a stronger tendency to subscribe to the theory that Islam may present a threat. This argument has been circulating since the appearance of Samuel P. Huntington's "clash of civilizations" thesis in the early 1990s. Additionally, some have called for reflection on the fact that, despite the above-mentioned series of major events over the last two decades, foreign policy and aid agendas targeting the regions involved seem to be executed without any grasp of the fact that Islam, which is at the root of such episodes, represents a "different" set of values.

### Islam as a political and economic system

It is difficult to understand developments in the international com-



A scene from the Seminar on Dialogue with Islamic Civilization held in January.

munity without knowledge of what is happening within Islamic society. The desire by people outside the Islamic world to hear firsthand what people within it have to say and the desire by Islamic circles to inform the outside world are both on the rise. What should be our vantage point for viewing Islam today, at a time when a unified set of values—what we call globalization—is spreading? The foundation of the system that has spread globally in modern society comprises capitalism, democracy, the nation-state, and other concepts that grew out of the Christian society of Western Europe. These ideas have nevertheless been adopted by culturally dissimilar societies that possess different values. As demonstrations at the World Trade Organization's conference in Seattle in 1999, the Group of Eight summit in Genoa in 2001, and elsewhere illustrate, however, there is also a tendency to cast doubt on globalization that is in effect "Americanization."

Underlying this, it would appear, is a backlash against the "imposition of values." That is, there is resistance to the products of Western values

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being venerated as if they represented universal principles and then foisted on others as the best possible choice.

Possessing a comprehensiveness that integrates religion and politics, Islam is not a religion with an inner dimension alone but a community-like entity that has social significance. We can regard it as a political and economic system. Moreover, in the Islamic world commonly accepted precepts exist alongside a mix of cultural attributes belonging to its individual segments. In other words, it is a world in which certain shared principles pervade societies that are ethnically and culturally diverse. This aspect of Islam could be helpful when, in the course of contemplating the construction of global systems and global governance, we explore ways to achieve unity while maintaining diversity.

### SPF initiatives for mutual understanding

SPF has launched several initiatives related to Islam and the Middle East. For example, it held an international conference featuring Islamic intellectuals from Southeast Asia and Japanese scholars as part of Islam and Civil Society: Messages from Southeast Asia, a project implemented in 1999 and 2000. SPF published the results of this conference in the English-language volume *Islam and Civil Society in South East Asia*. In 2000, SPF carried out the Research Project on Voluntary Action in the Arab Cultural Context. Focusing on Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine, this project studied local religious, cultural, and historical characteristics and examined both the actual circumstances of voluntary activities in these three locations and their current status. A report on the findings of the project was published in both English and Arabic.

Promotion for Alternative Mechanism of Peace Dialogue in the Middle East (1999–2001) addresses themes related to specific issues, such as refugees, water, natural resources, and peace in the Middle East.

Designed to explore solutions to these problems, this project entails holding workshops for experts and representatives of NGOs as well as a round-table conference for leaders.

Another initiative, Water for Peace in the Middle East (1993–95), examined options for the development and management of water resources in this part of the world and solution-oriented scenarios. The findings of the project were published in English as *Core and Periphery: A Comprehensive Approach to Middle Eastern Water*.

### Endeavors to increase opportunities to hear firsthand the voices of Islam

In addition to the above projects, SPF organizes an assortment of lectures and seminars. In 1997 and 1998, for instance, it provided opportunities to acquire a basic knowledge of Islam by holding four “Dialogue with Islam” breakfast sessions at which Japanese scholars specializing in this field were invited to speak.

Akira Mizuguchi, chief research coordinator at the Middle East Institute of Japan, delivered a special lecture at the invitation of SPF on September 20, 2001, during the seventy-first meeting of SPF’s Board of Trustees. Speaking just days after the events of September 11, he focused on what Japan can do to break the chain of terrorist incidents.

Additionally, as noted in the previous newsletter (vol. 3, no. 31), SPF organized a symposium, “The Significance of Anti-American Terrorism: Rethinking the Image of the World in the Twenty-first Century,” on October 4.

This event featured Akira Mizuguchi and two other panelists: Professor Akifumi Ikeda of Toyo Eiwa University’s Department of Social Sciences and Akira Matsunaga, a research fellow at the EastWest Institute in New York and an SPF research associate. As they discussed the significance of anti-American terrorism and the future course of action that the world ought to pur-


sue, the panelists addressed several questions: How should we perceive the terrorist acts instigated by people joined by Islamic beliefs? How should we respond to people whose values differ from ours? Is the world entering an age of clashing civilizations?

The seminar “Dialogue with Islamic Civilization” was held on January 9, 2002, as part of the project category, Initiatives in Dialogue Across Cultures and Civilizations. Panelists invited from overseas for this event included Dr. Shamsul Amiri Baharuddin, a professor at the National University of Malaysia; Dr. Hassan Hanafi, a professor at the University of Cairo; and Dr. Seyyed Mostafa Mohaghegh Damad, head of the Department of Islamic Studies at the Academy of Sciences in Iran.

Two Japanese scholars—Dr. Tet-suo Yamaori, director general of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies, and Dr. Daizaburo Hashizume, a professor of sociology at the Tokyo Institute of Technology—also served on the panel. The seminar attracted approximately 130 people, far exceeding expectations.

Dr. Shamsul moderated the seminar’s first session, “Islam, Terrorism, and Jihad.” It featured Dr. Hanafi, whose field of expertise is Islamic philosophy, and Dr. Damad, who is a scholar of Islamic law and holds the title of ayatollah. This session provided a valuable opportunity to hear firsthand the views of the Islamic community presented by these two scholars of Islam.

The second session consisted of a panel discussion, “Constructive Engagement in Civilizational Dialogue.” It featured a free and lively exchange involving audience participation.

Most crucial to fostering understanding between Japan and the Islamic world today is increasing opportunities to hear firsthand the voices of Islam. It is hoped that such dialogue between Islam and Japan will occur on various levels. 

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Hozumi Ishii is currently working at the Embassy of Japan in Jordan as a researcher.

## The pitfalls of “Islam watchers”

*Japanese perceptions of the outside world*

By Akifumi Ikeda

*Professor, Faculty of Social Sciences  
Toyo Eiwa University*

### Why perceptions change so effortlessly

When the terrorist attacks in the United States last September were attributed to Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda network, Japanese experts and researchers divided broadly into two camps in their reading of the man and the organization.

One group maintained that bin Laden and al Qaeda were symbolic of the Islamic world's ingrained anti-Western feeling. The other saw them as aberrant and heterodox, atypical of the Islamic world as a whole. In other words, they were seen as either typical or deviant.

Initially I saw al Qaeda as the same kind of upstart group as the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo (Supreme Truth). I was amazed at the large number of Japanese who agreed with the first school of thought. Most of these experts and researchers seemed to anticipate that sooner or later support for bin Laden and al Qaeda would sweep the Islamic world and that the West would be unable to bring down the heavy fist it had raised. When their expectations were disappointed, I was equally amazed at the way almost everyone who had endorsed the “typical” argument scrambled to switch sides. Evaluation of the Taliban, which bore the brunt of U.S. military reprisals for having harbored al Qaeda, underwent the same kind of metamorphosis.

Let us take a look at the tone of Japanese media coverage when the U.S. assault on Afghanistan began, when Mazar-i Sharif and Kabul fell, and when the Taliban in Kandahar surrendered en masse. At first, most media organizations did their

utmost to play down the effectiveness of U.S. air strikes. Extolling the ability of the Taliban—whom they saw as experts in mountain guerrilla warfare who had driven out the Soviet Union—to hold out, even when the capital and other key cities fell, the press refused to see these as defeats, maintaining that the Taliban had simply made a strategic withdrawal in order to recoup their forces for a prolonged war.

As soon as the Taliban's total collapse was obvious, however, the media instantaneously branded them “a feeble bunch of religious students” and joined the ranks of critics of the Taliban's “self-righteous worldview” and “unrealistic perception of things.”

### Recognizing the prism through which we view reality

The phenomenon described above is nothing new. The same thing happened 10 years ago at the time of the Gulf crisis and war. If we simply substitute “Saddam Hussein and the Baath Party” for “Osama bin Laden and the Taliban” and “desert warfare” for “mountain warfare,” we see basically the same set of assumptions and expectations played out. This suggests that the 10 intervening years taught us nothing. Such a trait cannot be cured by study. Perhaps it is inherent to the way the Japanese in general perceive things.

If it is, we need to become aware of the prism through which we view reality. Before pontificating about the self-righteousness and lack of realism of al Qaeda and the Taliban, should we not examine the self-righteous nature of our own perceptions of others and of the outside world?

It seems to me that instead of taking reality at face value we tend to select only the information that fits our preferred scenario. Moreover, by consigning everything to oblivion and behaving as though it had never

been as soon as our wishful thinking is belied by reality, do we not deprive ourselves of the chance to learn from past misjudgments?

Bin Laden and al Qaeda clearly deviate from the mainstream of Islam. Seen in terms of orthodox Islam, their theory of struggle and understanding of jihad are heterodox. I believe that underlying the psychology that elevated them into symbols of the Islamic world was a deep-seated anti-American feeling.

Latent resistance to the United States, as the world's only superpower and a nation that thrusts its own values on others in the name of “global standards,” leads to hopes of American failure, generating wishful fantasies based on little concrete evidence, such as the belief that the Taliban will not be defeated and the Islamic world will rise up. While adequate objective information is gathered, only that which supports these wishful fantasies is selected. As a result, analyses far removed from the actual situation are churned out.

The unexpectedly swift collapse of the Taliban marked the end of one stage of the “international war against terrorism.” But in order to consider the significance and salient features of this war and see how it is likely to unfold and its relationship to us, we need to arrive at an accurate synthesis of the causes and mechanics of our analytical failures and unrealistic perceptions so far.

### Akifumi Ikeda

Akifumi Ikeda was born in 1955. He was graduated from the Faculty of Law, Tohoku University, and joined the Institute of Developing Economies in 1980. He did postgraduate study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Oxford University, and was a visiting professor at the Hebrew University in the 1995–96 academic year. At present he is a professor in the Faculty of Social Sciences, Toyo Eiwa University.

## Jordan: An inside perspective

By Randa Mukhar  
Majlis El Hassan  
(Office of Prince El Hassan)

Jordan lies at the crossroads of three continents, Europe, Asia, and Africa, a geostrategic position allowing it to play a role that exceeds its size of 92,300 square kilometers and its population of 5 million people.

Though lying in the volatile region of the Middle East, Jordan has managed to maintain political sanity by adopting a policy of moderation and tolerance and a humanitarian approach to issues whenever the human dimension is concerned.

Within this context, during the Gulf War in 1991 Jordan hosted the exodus of immigrant workers. When the Gulf War broke out, these workers in the Gulf countries and Iraq, had to return to their home countries. Jordan provided the necessary transit haven for 1 million people. Besides accommodating the 300,000 Jordanian returnees from the Gulf in 1991, Jordan has been the host of two waves of Palestinian refugees, in 1948 and 1967. Jordan currently hosts 41% of all Palestinian refugees.

The majority of Jordanians are Muslims of the Sunni sect. The indigenous Arab Christian minority of about 6% is the largest religious minority in the country. It should be noted that the Muslim world is not uniform in terms of its peoples and cultures. It is regrettable that the non-Muslim world tends to stereotype Muslims, particularly in the aftermath of the horrific acts of terrorism in the United States. We have to remember that there are more than 1 billion Muslims in the world, and 56 Muslim states.

One attribute of Islam is that its openness and tolerance have allowed different peoples to contribute to an Islamic civilization. Each has retained its own particularities and ties to its own culture and language. Arab Christians are no exception.

The Jordanian constitution states that all Jordanians are equal before the law. There shall be no discrimination in regard to their rights and duties on grounds of race, language, or religion.

Christmas day is a public holiday for all Jordanians. The tradition is that Muslims visit their Christian friends on Christmas and Easter and Christians visit their Muslim friends on the Muslim feasts. HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, a proponent of civilizational and interfaith dialogue, attends Christmas Mass.

Thus, in Jordan Christians are equal citizens. I myself happen to be an Arab Christian. While I am proud of being a Christian, I am also proud to have an Arab Islamic culture.

A French Journalist once asked me if, as a Christian, I regretted being born an Arab. My answer was to ask him whether he regretted being born a Frenchman! Often, the West finds it convenient to assume that there are no Christians in the Muslim world. They tend to forget that it was our region that witnessed the birth of Christ and from which Christianity spread.

At times Arab Christians are portrayed as apprehensive living in a predominantly Muslim world. Their anxiety is part of the anxiety of all contemporary Arabs, who are involved in a search for identity, loyalty, and heritage. The Arabs as a whole suffer from an anxiety that can be attributed partly to the strains and tensions created by the processes of development, modernization, and globalization as well as the continuous Zionist challenges, which the Arabs have not managed to cope with adequately.

Regarding gender issues and women's rights in Jordan, a look at the educational statistics reveals that school enrollment is equal for boys and girls—and is among the highest



Jordan's Prince El Hassan, center, speaks at the opening of the Conference on "The Middle East: Alternatives for the Future" in February of last year. The meeting was held as part of the Promotion of an Alternative Mechanism of Peace Dialogue in the Middle East project.

in the Arab countries. Women account for 49% of enrollment in Jordanian colleges and universities. Women work in government offices; there are female doctors and engineers. The aim currently is to give women the chance to rise to managerial positions.

In conclusion, Jordan, has managed to open up to the world without suffering from xenophobia. Within this perspective of multilateralism, the Majlis El Hassan (Office of Prince El Hassan) has cooperated with SPF in the project Promotion for Alternative Mechanism of Peace Dialogue in the Middle East, a cooperation that has allowed for the convening of workshops and round tables that bring together participants from both the Middle East and elsewhere.

### Randa Mukhar

Randa Mukhar was born in Jerusalem in 1943. She earned her B.A. and M.A. degrees in political studies from the American University, Beirut. Returning to Amman, she was appointed the head of the External Cultural Relations Section of the Ministry of Culture and Youth. In 1984, she joined the Office of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal, now known as the Majlis El Hassan, where she coordinated research teams, and managed projects in the Educational Reform Program with which the late King Hussein had entrusted Prince El Hassan. In 1985-86, she spent a year as a fellow at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University.

# Planning an evaluator education program in Japan

By Yukihiro Terada

Manager, Planning and Public Relations,  
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*Since its establishment in 1971 the International Development Center of Japan has built up a solid record in development-related areas, including surveys on the training of personnel in development-related areas and on development planning in developing countries.*

*IDCJ has also turned out numerous Japanese personnel working in international aid organizations. With the help of SPF grants for fiscal 2000 and 2001 IDCJ has been carrying out the project The Development of Evaluator Education Program.*

## The importance of evaluator education

Recently recognition of the need for evaluation has been rising in Japan. After the Administrative Reform Council incorporated proposals concerning the introduction of policy evaluation in its December 1997 final report, work proceeded on the introduction of a policy evaluation system, seen as a key component of administrative reform, and the Government Policy Evaluation Law (a law concerning policy evaluation conducted by government agencies) is to take effect in April 2002. Local governments are also moving ahead vigorously with the introduction of evaluation mechanisms.

In the past, evaluation was carried out in Japan in a few fields, such as official development assistance and public works projects, but the conceptual framework and methodology were not firmly established.

Now that there is more vigorous discussion of the introduction of an

evaluation system, those involved in public-interest programs need to address these issues.

This means not only putting in place systems and procedures—conducting evaluation activities and surveys, reporting the results of evaluation, building evaluation systems, and so forth—but also educating evaluators and securing the personnel needed to oversee evaluator education.

In fiscal 2000, IDCJ and Hiroshima University's Center for International Cooperation in Education (CICE) initiated a two-year study on development of an evaluator education program.

The study has three objectives: first, to survey evaluation activities and education in the United States; second, to study practical program evaluation techniques suited to Japan by identifying specific needs regarding evaluation and evaluator education; and third, to develop an evaluator education program on the basis of the techniques studied, including creation of an instructor database and basic teaching materials and compilation of proposals on putting in place an education and training system based on a model program.

## Toward formulation of an evaluator education program

In fiscal 2000, questionnaire and interview surveys of evaluation needs in Japan were carried out, mainly targeting local governments. The first survey of U.S. evaluator education programs was also conducted and the basic framework for such a program in Japan studied.

In fiscal 2001, IDCJ, the Japan Evaluation Society, and local governments jointly organized three seminars, in Kitakyushu City, Morioka, and Tokyo's Suginami Ward.

These seminars, aimed at providing information to and exchanging views with people having an inter-

est in evaluation initiatives, attracted many participants, mainly people involved in evaluation in local governments, and featured lively discussion.

In addition to contributing to the introduction and firm establishment of evaluation, the seminars provided good opportunities for understanding practical needs in relation to evaluation in Japan, as well as background factors, and enabled us to confirm the importance of our study.

In September 2001, as part of case studies of evaluator education, Dr. Ray Rist, senior evaluator in the Operations Evaluation Department of the World Bank Group, was invited to lead a short evaluation program on evaluator education based on the World Bank's experience in this area.

The results of this program, along with information collected and detailed case studies of evaluator education programs (a graduate-level program and a short practical training course) conducted in the United States in January and February 2002, will be featured in the study's final report.

In December 2001, a workshop was held for representatives of Japanese universities and graduate schools expressing an interest in evaluator education (the evaluator supply side) as well as other institutions with a need for evaluators.

It provided a forum for confirming various issues relevant to the introduction of evaluation programs, including the introduction of a system of official accreditation of such programs, the incorporation of lectures in some graduate-school programs into short training programs, and accreditation of such courses.

Building on the information collected and surveys conducted so far, IDCJ and CICE aim to complete the study and produce a model evaluator education program by the end of fiscal 2001.

## The case for “structural transformation”: Rethinking scholarship and education

*Sakuji Yoshimura, professor in the School of Human Sciences and director of the Institute of Egyptology, Waseda University, talks with SPF chairman Setsuya Tabuchi*

### No scholarship without profligacy

**Setsuya Tabuchi:** The late Yosoji Kobayashi, who was honorary chairman of the Yomiuri Shimbun and chairman of Nippon Television, is supposed to have had a great fondness for pyramids. In his day, NTV put on a program in which, under your direction, a pyramid was built and then demolished. I remember thinking with admiration what a splendidly profligate thing that was to do.

**Sakuji Yoshimura:** It was built and demolished not as a monument but as a way of showing how pyramids were constructed. There are a lot of questions over how they were built.

For example, at the time the only metal tools must have been made of bronze. But when you use bronze tools to cut stone the blade breaks. It occurred to me that since bronze has a low melting point, when a blade broke it would have been possible to melt it down then and there and reforge it. Figuring out how often this would have had to be done and how long it would have taken was an important point of the experiment.

As for hauling the huge blocks of stone, I had thought the ancient Egyptians used sleds and rollers, which are believed to have existed at the time, but when we actually tried moving stone this way we realized how hard it was to get the rollers under the sled even on flat ground.

Experimenting in this way we checked out our suppositions and presented our findings to an international academic society. The whole thing cost about ¥200 million, and NTV paid for everything.

This was magnificently extravagant,

but you can't advance scholarship unless you're prepared to be so. Nowadays, I feel, we live in a constricted society that disapproves of profligacy. I believe thrift is the beginning of the end for the human race. The deflationary spiral and steadily shrinking economy we're seeing in Japan today are unprecedented, aren't they?

**Tabuchi:** You've said that pyramids were public works projects. In Japan today people tend to see public works projects as wasteful and therefore bad.

What do you think of this?

**Yoshimura:** It's not just me. The pyramid researcher Kurt Mendelssohn, too, says pyramids were public investments. Reassessing the British economy from the viewpoint of the usefulness of public works, the economist John Maynard Keynes established his own theory of macroeconomics.

I completely repudiate the current idea of public works projects as bad. The reason for this tendency is political, bureaucratic, and business corruption in connection with public works projects. Naturally this is bad, but that doesn't mean public works projects themselves are a bad thing.

Projects using public funds, that is, taxes, are generally called public works projects, but there are a variety of such projects. Some are carried out by the private sector, some use tax revenue as well because the private sector alone can't implement them, and some are funded entirely by taxes because even if they aren't profitable they are important to the

nation. These projects should be judged according to whether they serve the public, but that dimension is missing from the current discussion. What's the point of talking about what's wasteful and what isn't without also discussing who decides what's wasteful, and according to what time frame?

People need to see things in a broader perspective. For example, the pyramids may be considered hugely wasteful, but Egypt earns \$4 billion a year from them. The Japanese should take another look at expressway construction, too, before declaring it wasteful.

### Innovative ways of supplementing inadequate research funding

**Tabuchi:** I believe Egyptian archaeology is very important for understanding human history. You are spearheading this kind of research in Japan, which is one proof that Japan is a civilized nation. How does government funding for scholarly research in Japan compare with that in Western countries?

**Yoshimura:** Different countries have different financial bases. We receive funding from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology,



SPF chairman Setsuya Tabuchi, right, talks with Sakuji Yoshimura, a professor at Waseda University.

but it covers less than 10% of the funds needed. This is the result of a warped egalitarianism.

If you divide up a certain amount of money among all those who want it, everyone gets only a little bit. As a result no one has enough, which means relying on donations. This is fine when times are good, but when business is bad corporate donations dry up. That's why Japanese scholarship doesn't make more headway.

In my field, if you receive funding, it's enough just to read some books, write a report, and tack on some photographs of the sites you've visited. In extreme cases, professors and their ilk simply go on junkets. This doesn't work in the West, however. Unless you publish your findings you can't receive further funding.

In Germany, for example, the government provides funds, but recipients who don't publish their findings are immediately dropped from the list. It's the priority principle. France puts a lot of emphasis on nuclear power generation, but it also provides generous assistance for other kinds of research. Here too we see the priority principle in action.

When Margaret Thatcher was prime minister she applied market principles to education in Britain. As soon as she declared that eating is more important than learning, government assistance slowed to a trickle.

Archaeologists scrape together enough money to go to Egypt, stay in cheap lodgings, and just look around. They can't afford to do excavation. Even so, they're doing their best. America has well-endowed foundations that give generous grants. Poland is a poor country, but it provides money for scholarship. As for Japan, when times were good there was a sense that surplus funds might as well be used for worthwhile causes.

**Tabuchi:** You're talking about corporate philanthropy, right?

**Yoshimura:** Yes. But this is no longer the case. For one thing, the big construction firms, which were the most generous sponsors, are now in

dire straits. Nowadays, you can't do archaeological research unless you're the kind of person who can raise funds on your own. In the academic world, people like me, who appear in TV commercials and quiz shows, are immediately criticized. That doesn't bother me, though. Thanks to appearing on TV I get higher lecture fees. Few Japanese scholars think in terms of using lecture fees to fund excavations. They're not determined enough.

**Tabuchi:** Recently you made a major discovery, didn't you?

**Yoshimura:** In the summer of 2001 I discovered two sculptures inscribed with the name of King Khufu. One inscription was most unusual, being on the foot of a sphinx. There are now three sculptures with Khufu's name in the world. This discovery was big news overseas, but it was hardly reported at all in Japan.

**Tabuchi:** Are there young people who can follow in your footsteps?

**Yoshimura:** When I returned from Egypt 21 years ago, I wanted to do three things: build a firm financial base for my work, nurture successors, and publicize Egyptian archaeology. In 20 years I've trained four people who can hold their own anywhere in the world. Then there are about three people as backup, and 10 people or so in the next rank. Working to turn out at least one or two promising people each academic year for 20 years, I've now produced well over 20.

**Tabuchi:** Do you have a research institute at Waseda University?

**Yoshimura:** Yes, it's called the Institute of Egyptology. I've also created courses that students from all faculties can take. I think I've put scholarship and research in Egyptology on a fir footing. But since I'm putting in a lot of my own money, once I'm gone there will be financial difficulties. This is my biggest headache.

## Islamic fundamentals and Osama bin Laden

**Tabuchi:** On a different subject, you're known for your expertise on

Islam. What's your feeling about the U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan, which appears to be winding down?

**Yoshimura:** The problem with America right now is that it hasn't said clearly what will mark the end of the "war on terror." Will it end if Osama bin Laden is captured or killed, or will it extend to involve the Israeli-Palestinian problem? America hasn't said.

The attack on Afghanistan was begun in order to catch the terrorists responsible for September 11, but looking at the way things have developed I get the impression America wants to resolve a whole range of problems at once.

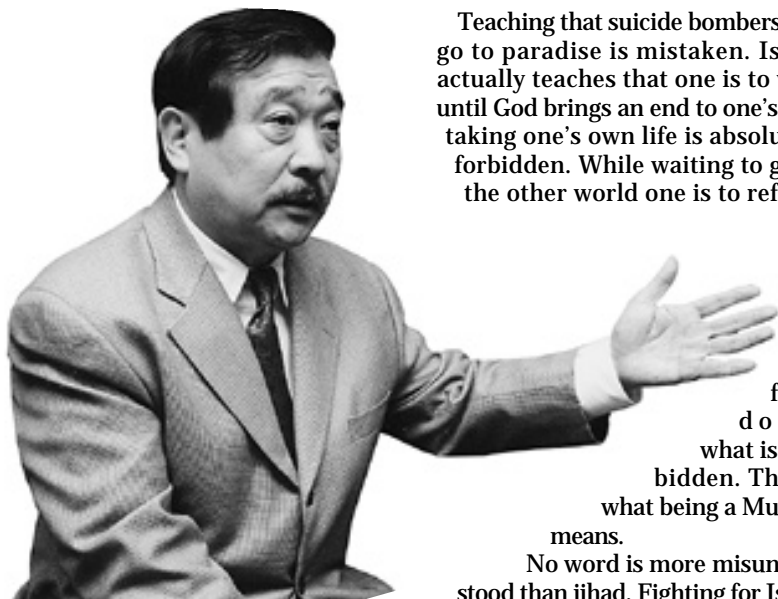
**Tabuchi:** It looks like several issues—the Israeli-Palestinian problem, President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, and so on—are all linked.

**Yoshimura:** About 60% of the world's terrorism occurs in the context of Islam. This applies to the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in the Philippines, too.

**Tabuchi:** I've visited Islamic countries a number of times in the course of my work. Watching how everyone from the president of the central bank on down to taxi drivers would stop whatever they were doing and face Mecca whenever it was time for prayers, I was impressed by the power of Islam.

Muslims have a number of duties in addition to praying five times a day. They say that the flip side of duties is rights. I have the feeling that Muslims' rights and Islamic fundamentalism are linked to various problems at present.

**Yoshimura:** The notion that rights and duties are two sides of the same coin reflects modern European thought. In Islam, which perpetuates the thought of the medieval Orient, there's no link between the two. The Muslim precepts are not so much duties as natural outgrowths of being born Muslim, as much a part of oneself as having ears and a nose. If they were duties, they would have stopped long ago.



## Sakuji Yoshimura

Sakuji Yoshimura, born in 1943, was graduated from School of Literature, Waseda University, in 1970 and is now a professor there. He received a doctorate in engineering from Waseda University in 1999. From 1967 to 1969 he studied at Cairo University's Faculty of Archaeology. As a member of a Waseda University survey team on ancient Egypt, he gained an international reputation for the discovery of the remains of a building constructed by Amenophis III at the Malqata-south site. In 1987 he organized a Waseda University pyramid survey team, which used sophisticated technology to examine pyramids at Giza. By means of an underground radar system using electromagnetic waves, the team discovered hitherto unknown spaces in the Great Pyramid and a second "solar boat" on the southern side. He has been an SPF counselor since 1996. His many works include *Ejiputo shi o horu* (Excavating Egyptian history), *Farao no shokutaku* (What the pharaohs ate), *Kodai Ejiputo bunmei no nazo* (Mysteries of ancient Egyptian civilization), *Piramiddo no nazo* (Mysteries of the pyramids), *Kizoku no haka no miiratachi* (Mummies from the tombs of the aristocracy), *Piramiddo, arata naru nazo* (New mysteries of the pyramids), *Tsukai! Piramiddogaku* (The fun of pyramid studies), and *Hito no chikara* (The power of man).

Teaching that suicide bombers will go to paradise is mistaken. Islam actually teaches that one is to wait until God brings an end to one's life; taking one's own life is absolutely forbidden. While waiting to go to the other world one is to refrain

from doing what is forbidden. This is what being a Muslim means.

No word is more misunderstood than jihad. Fighting for Islam is secondary. Jihad means "struggle." The first jihad is to struggle against the evil that arises within oneself; the second jihad is to struggle against the demons that infiltrate one's family; the third jihad is to struggle against the demons that enter one's community. There are both mental and phenomenal demons.

**Tabuchi:** So there are various kinds of jihad. When Muhammad conquered Mecca after having been driven out, that was jihad too, wasn't it?

**Yoshimura:** Yes. It was jihad to protect one's group.

**Tabuchi:** That was the beginning of jihad, wasn't it?

**Yoshimura:** That's right. The first religious wars were the Crusades, when Christians attacked Muslim lands. Islam has never attacked Christians or Jews. Judaism doesn't recognize any other religion. Christianity recognizes Judaism but not Islam. But Islam recognizes both Judaism and Christianity.

Osama bin Laden and his followers think of the economy-focused "Christianism" and "developmentism" of the West as a cultural Crusade against Islam. The way they see it, if things go on this way Islam will be utterly destroyed. If the attack were merely economic, it could be fought econom-

ically and somehow fended off, but mental elements, being invisible, stealthily undermine Islam. This "westernism" is a cultural Crusade. It just happens that the stronghold of that westernism is in the Christian realm.

This is called Islamic fundamentalism, but its adherents aren't fighting according to the fundamentals of their religion; they are attempting to protect Islam, fearing cultural and mental invasion. Fundamentally, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are absolutely the same. The Koran says clearly that people who worship God are not to be attacked.

**Tabuchi:** Certainly the idea of rights and duties reflects a Protestant way of thinking. It's also the basis of capitalism.

**Yoshimura:** It was also incorporated into communism, except that the relationship of rights and duties was reversed. In capitalism rights are predicated upon duties, whereas in communism duties are predicated upon rights.

**Tabuchi:** Israel is Jewish, while Palestine is Muslim. Will the Israeli-Palestinian problem ever be settled?

**Yoshimura:** There's never been a conflict in history that hasn't eventually been settled. It generally takes about 100 years, so the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will probably come to an end 40 or 50 years from now. This is proved by history.

In form this is a religious war, but essentially it's a struggle for land. We have police and courts, but internationally there are no real equivalents of these institutions. If we want to resolve the conflict in the short term, it can only be done if, like America in reaction to September 11, some entity takes it upon itself to act as a police force and forcibly wields authority. I think the conflict could be resolved if some entity fulfilled the function of the world's police and exerted authority in a way that also took more account of the interests of the Palestinians. It's because this hasn't been done that September 11 happened.

## The need for educational and political structural change

**Tabuchi:** Changing the subject again, recently you published a book titled *Hito no chikara* (The power of man), which deplores the state of Japanese education. What do you deplore most?

**Yoshimura:** Compulsory education. Compulsory education is ruining education as a whole. When Japan was still developing and everyone had to be mobilized for development, there was a need for compulsory education. But essentially, education is a right. If it's a right, people are free to exercise it—or not exercise it.

As we can see if we read the Constitution of Japan, compulsory education is a duty of parents; it's not a duty of children. What children do is free. If there are duties, resistance to them arises. Because everyone has to receive compulsory education, rights accrue to teachers. The main reason post-World War II education went wrong has to do with *Nikkyoso* (the Japan Teachers' Union). Teachers have lots of holidays, a stable income, and job security until they reach the mandatory retirement age. That's why there are some who don't bother to study, which means there are huge disparities in teachers' quality.

**Tabuchi:** Education is based on the constitution. The Imperial Rescript on Education grew out of the prewar Meiji Constitution, while the Fundamental Law of Education grew out of the present constitution.

**Yoshimura:** But the constitution and the Fundamental Law of Education are inconsistent in many respects. For example, Article 89 of the constitution says, "No public money or other property shall be expended or appropriated for the use, benefit or maintenance of any religious institution or association, or for any charitable, educational or benevolent enterprise not under the control of public authority," but in fact private schools receive ¥800 billion a year from the public purse.

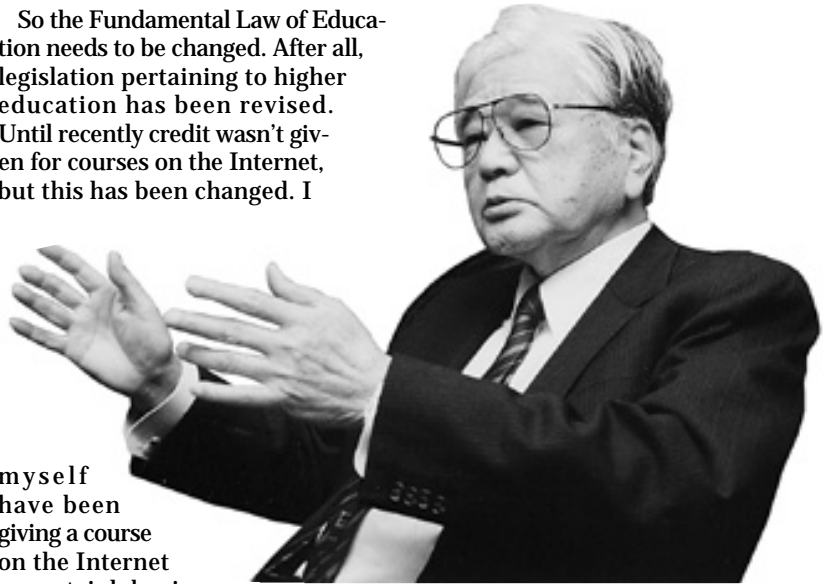
So the Fundamental Law of Education needs to be changed. After all, legislation pertaining to higher education has been revised. Until recently credit wasn't given for courses on the Internet, but this has been changed. I

myself have been giving a course on the Internet on a trial basis

since April 2001. Three hundred students enrolled, and in the first half-year there was an 86% attendance rate. That's a pretty good figure.

So far mine is the only Internet course at Waseda, but this April, when the new academic year begins, it's planned to offer 50 courses on the Internet. Also, in December 2001, it became possible to earn up to 62 credits by taking Internet courses. Students from other universities can take Internet courses. After all, there are many universities with no courses on Egyptian archaeology. The advent of Internet courses means that dull lectures will be naturally weeded out. Professors won't be able to rest on their laurels; they'll have to work hard to attract students. This is what education should be all about. It's no good continuing to focus on prestigious universities—Waseda, Keio, the University of Tokyo, and so on. Japan is called a society that emphasizes academic credentials, but it's actually a "brand society" that emphasizes name schools. No other country actually has less regard for academic credentials in the true sense.

Scholastic performance has fallen drastically in Japan. There are more and more young people who don't even know the multiplication tables.



In South Korea, by contrast, young people know them up to double-digit figures. The only way to change this state of affairs is to have all schools engage in free competition. Education is a service industry.

As we can see from the example of education, the time has come to change Japan from the bottom up. Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi should undertake structural transformation, not structural reform. Mere reform isn't enough.

**Tabuchi:** In Japan these days, the phrase "structural reform" has risen to the fore, isn't it?

**Yoshimura:** Yes, people love the phrase "structural reform." But structure can't be reformed. It can only be destroyed. People are bandying about the meaningless phrase "structural reform"; it's all smoke and mirrors.

**Tabuchi:** The three Rs are the most basic, and most important, part of education.

**Yoshimura:** Correct. If we must have compulsory education, it should be limited to arithmetic and the national language. Other than that, children should be free to pick and choose.

**Tabuchi:** Yes, those are the basics. Thank you very much for your time today.

## SPF PUBLICATIONS

- *The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia* — edited by Shinichi Shigetomi, published by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies — Results of the fiscal 2001-2002 project The State and NGOs: Comparative Study of 15 countries in Asia.
- *Slovakia 2001: A Global Report on the State of Society, and Slovakia 2001: A Pictorial Report on the State of the Country* — published by The Institute of Public Affairs — Results of the fiscal 2001 project Slovakia 2001: A Global Report on the State of Society.
- *Industrial Policy, Innovation & Economic Growth: The Experience of Japan and the Asian NIEs* — edited

by Poh-Kam Wong, Chee-Yuen Ng, published by Singapore University Press — Outcome of Rethinking the Development Paradigm: Lessons from Japan and Asian NIEs project (1997-1999.)

The Internet on-demand publishing service BookPark ([www.bookpark.ne.jp/spf/english.asp](http://www.bookpark.ne.jp/spf/english.asp)) offers an English interface to facilitate the purchase of English-language SPF lectures and project reports. For further information on BookPark and other SPF publications, please contact Yuko Nomura ([spfpr@spf.or.jp](mailto:spfpr@spf.or.jp)) at SPF in Tokyo.

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

With the approach of the end of the fiscal year in March SPF becomes even busier than usual as we assess the reports submitted by grant recipients, bring some projects to an end, and prepare to launch new ones.

Among the activities that take place during this period are "hearings." Each grant application sent to SPF is first scrutinized by the program officer in charge and other key staff members and then goes through a two-tiered selection process of consideration by the program study council and executive hearings. Project proposals that make it through the hearings are recommended to the board of trustees for approval.

Generally, hearings take place at the end of January and the board of trustees makes the final selection at its March meeting. The board meets four times a year, but the largest number of project proposals are put before it in March, when the program for the next fiscal year,

starting in April, is set.

The January hearings last several days, as the program officers in charge of various proposals present them to SPF executives, including representatives of the Administrative Division. By this time the program officers have had thorough discussions with the applicants and have become deeply committed to the proposals they are overseeing, so they naturally put a great deal of energy and enthusiasm into their presentations. The executives conducting the hearings bombard the program officers with tough questions, and the latter staunchly defend the proposals they are presenting. This is how well-tempered SPF program officers are forged.

In fiscal 2002, SPF Voices will be bringing you reports on some of the new projects selected through this rigorous process.

*Akinori Seki*

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*Please note: The views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are of the individual writers and do not necessarily reflect those of the Sasakawa Peace Foundation.*



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