

**ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA**  
**NO. 25**

## ACTA ASIATICA VARSOVIENSIA

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ROMAN SŁAWIŃSKI

## Social Functions of Contemporary Confucianism; A Comparative Analysis of Philosophical Concepts in Taiwan, Hong Kong and the Mainland China

### Abstract

*Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, issues 23 and 24, contained presentations of basic issues of contemporary Confucianism that attempts, usually successfully, to use Confucian tradition, particularly ethics, to improve social management and the prevention of social unrest. These two articles dealt with history<sup>1</sup> and an evaluation<sup>2</sup> of a specific solution in several East Asian countries. In the present article we would like to focus primarily on a comparison of concepts and experiments aimed at re-introducing Confucianism into social life, especially the earliest ones that still could be active in social practices of the largest country in the region (and the birthplace of classical Confucianism) – mainland China. Some of these concepts were already successfully tested in social engineering, and supporters of Confucianism's re-introduction can use this as an argument to apply this innovation and to defend it against staunch critics of Confucianism. The critics still perceive this philosophical and religious movement as an ideological foundation of quasi-feudalism that was erased in China and which should not be propagated but condemned the same way that it was denounced during the heyday of Maoism.

### I. Theory

#### a) Taiwan and Hong Kong

Let's start with Taiwan, a country that had two reasons to refer to the Confucian tradition:

- 1) The Post-war Kuomintang government (exiled to Taiwan after losing the mainland in 1949) which quite justifiably considered it an historical mission to maintain traditional Chinese culture. Confucianism has been an integral part of this culture for millennia.
- 2) Taiwan was under a Japanese occupation for half a century and the Japanese influence was very destructive to national Chinese culture. After the war, the country was westernized, particularly by American influences. Therefore a reconstruction of Chinese culture through a Committee of exactly this name was additionally motivated by nationalistic reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Sławiński, "Function of the 'New' Confucianism in the Countries of East Asia", *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, No. 23, 2010, p. 25–44.

<sup>2</sup> R. Sławiński, "The 'New' Confucianism vs. the Development of East Asia", *Acta Asiatica Varsoviensia*, No. 24, 2011, p. 7–21.

There is an additional reason for popularization of Confucian ethics in post-war Taiwanese society. Alongside the government and cultural institutions that moved from the mainland to Taiwan in 1950's, there was a large portion of Chinese *intelligentsia* who continued their cultural efforts there. The more "feudal" Chinese culture was being destroyed on the mainland, the more diligent they were.

So-called "New Confucianism" is rooted in neo-Confucian philosophy represented by Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming (also known as Song and Ming Dynasty philosophy, i.e. 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century A.D.). These ideas spread to Korea and Japan and formed a foundation of local Confucianism there. In the case of Japan, this did serve as the best cause, since it supported the cult of the emperor and a military expansion in East Asia that to this day inspires fear of their dominance amongst the majority of the countries in the region.

Precursors of modern Confucianism include the whole pantheon of Chinese thinkers: Liang Shuming, Ma Fu, Zhang Junmai, Xiong Shili, Qian Mu, Mou Zongsan, and Xu Fuguang. Although they originally were active in China, their theories were popularized in Taiwan. Let's take a closer look at their social views.

The most important representatives of the so-called first generation of historians and philosophers include: historian Xu Fuguang (1904–1982), and philosophers Tang Junyi (1909–1978) and Mou Zongsan (Mou Tsung-san 1909–1995). Chun-chieh Huang, a noted Taiwanese scholar of Xu Fuguang writings, identifies this as reaction to 20<sup>th</sup> century crisis of values that resulted in an attempt to "rebuild the system of moral values with Chinese characteristics".<sup>3</sup>

In his writings, Xu Fuguang considered the key question: what is the future of Chinese culture? Similar to other 20<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals, he debated an issue of how to reconcile nationalism and democracy. According Chun-chieh Huang, the research conducted by Xu Fuguang was unique in the fact that he learned about Western culture through Japanese sources and he was comparing the two cultures.<sup>4</sup> In my opinion, this is why he perceives the Western culture in such a pessimistic light as deprived of love of humanity, 'inhuman,' "[...] leading to depths of nihilism".<sup>5</sup> At the same time he seems to be oblivious to the importance of Christianity in Western culture. He criticized "cultural aggression" of the West towards Asian peoples but at the same time he was a staunch critic of right wing and left wing authoritarian rule in China. His contemporaries considered him a fighter against any form of despotism which believed democracy to be the only option. He propagated those ideas for 30 years, especially during his stay in Hong Kong in a magazine *Minzhu pinglun* (*Democratic Review*) that was paradoxically supported by Chiang Kai-shek, even though it would be difficult to consider him a democrat, even if he was a virulent opponent of Maoist rule.

Xu Fuguang derived his concern for people's liberation from ideas of classic Confucianism – writings by Confucius and Mencius. It is therefore not surprising that contemporary extreme Confucianists prefer a return to the roots of Confucian classics instead of a "neo-confucianist" interpretation like that done between 11–17<sup>th</sup> century and which they now reject as an aberration. They mainly concentrate on the idea of "moral

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<sup>3</sup> Chun-chieh Huang, *Dongya ruxue shiyi de Xu Fuguang ji qi sixiang* (Xu Fuguang and his Ideas on East Asian Confucianism), Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 147.



government” and a propagation of a canon of Confucian values, especially such virtues as humanitarianism (*ren*), loyalty (*zhong*) and the principal virtue of filial obedience (*xiao*). It is this set of virtues, tested throughout a long history of China, and not that which later were interpretations of classics and especially not those Western ideas leading to egoism and hedonism, that will lead to the ideal of a “harmonious society” i.e. to a social calm that is so desired by governments.

The second luminary of the older generation among philosophers who dealt with Chinese culture’s future was Mou Zongsan (Mou Tsung-san). He also left the Chinese mainland and was active in Taiwan. His writings included three books on the concept of an “external ruler” which was aimed at eliminating inadequacies of Chinese cultural life. This, in general, it would mean a democratization and a process of making knowledge more independent. There was also a concept of three authorities: morality, knowledge and political power, as well as an inevitability of democratic rule.<sup>6</sup> In his opinion, innately good wisdom (*liangzhi*) and self-improvement leads to an initiation of knowledge for its own sake. Knowledge *per se* creates objective scientific learning and a just liberal democracy.<sup>7</sup>

After the luminaries of the first generation, the next generation also included Chinese philosophers from diaspora: Antonio Cua, Chen Lai, Chung-yin Cheng, Tu Wei-ming, Fu Weixun, Jin Wulun, Liu Shuxian, Qin Jiayi, Tang Liquan, Ye Xiushan and others. It’s not possible to describe their achievements in a concise form considering they dealt with a large array of topics: from re-interpretation of texts and analyses of basics tenets, to detailed analyses of Confucianism of the Song-Ming era as well as disputes between Confucianists and liberals, and a comparison of Chinese, Japanese and Korean philosophers.

Contemporary Taiwanese philosophers are interested in similar research topics. What is new is that they show Taiwanese specifics and sources of transformation that led to the economic “miracle” as well as an abandonment of authoritarian rule in favor of democracy. As it turns out, Confucian ethics does not conflict at all with either a capitalist development or a democratic system. Therefore this creates an important argument in endless discussions over whether mainland China can become democratic. Numerous scientific symposia and current scientific literature resulted in, among others, a collection of forty publications *Dongya wenming yanjiu congshu* (series of studies of East Asian civilization). In the series, the most prolific author is professor Chun-chieh Huang whose nine books deserve particular attention. In order to understand a complicated post-war reality of Taiwan, it is important to study his writings on transformation and its perspectives.<sup>8</sup>

Generally speaking, Taiwanese theoretical studies on Confucianism are not limited only to a study of classical and medieval texts but they also boldly deal with current issues of social and political life of post-war Taiwan.

<sup>6</sup> Wei-fen Chen, *Dzieje konfucjanizmu tajwańskiego* (History of Taiwanese Confucianism), in: *Kraje konfucjańskie. Dzieje nowożytnie* (Confucian Countries. Modern Times), Roman Sławiński (ed.), Kraków: Krakowskie Towarzystwo Naukowe Press, 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> Chun-chieh Huang, *Zhanhou Taiwan de chuanxin ji qi zhanwang* (Transformation in Post-war Taiwan and Its Perspectives), Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2007; *Taiwan in Transformation, 1895–2005: The Challenge of a New Democracy to an Old Civilization*, New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2008; *Taiwan yishi yu Taiwan wenhua* (Taiwanese Mentality and Taiwanese Culture), Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 2009.

## b) Mainland China

An orthodox Maoism precluded any research on Confucianism, be it classical or a medieval Song-Ming version, since Confucianism was treated as a fundamental ideology of a “feudal” system that was being demolished. In practice, not only it was forbidden to study Confucianism but also all artifacts of a cultural past were treated as antiquated junk that should be confiscated (and it was better to do it voluntarily, just to be safe) and destroyed. Simplification of Chinese characters practically cut off younger generations from any contact with original philosophical texts, which were all written in non-simplified characters, and which are still used in Taiwan and among Chinese diaspora. A wake-up call came a while after the death of the Great Leader when the then ‘cultural revolution’ was recognized as a “lost decade.” In reality, Confucian studies lost two decades.

A policy of “openness and reform” introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1978 resulted not only in a rejection of the concept of China’s economic development in isolation from the rest of the world but also it allowed for the rebuilding of private capital and attraction of foreign capital into China. Excellent economic results are evident for everyone to see but not necessarily accepted by everyone. A Maoist nostalgia still lingers. Its followers do not wonder how much earlier China could achieve such incredible development (currently the second position in global economy) if Mao Zedong’s dreamy convictions of self-development (*zili gensheng*) could be rejected earlier. Let’s leave alternative history to historians, though, because obviously an earlier change was not possible. However, it is still puzzling why studying modern Confucianism after dozen of years of “detente” and free Confucianism research is still being justified as “Mao’s ideas” or a “convergence of Confucianism and Marxism-Leninism” (sic!).<sup>9</sup> Let’s leave aside this political hedging to focus instead on the fact that China changed for the better in its treatment of theoretical Taiwanese writings.<sup>10</sup> Scientists from both sides hold meetings and symposia together. Chinese scientists use abundantly Taiwanese theoretical achievements and they even study forgotten Confucian folk customs. This of course does not mean that there is a full unification of views in the mainland that were so pursued half a century ago.

There are some reasonable proposals of using Confucian ethics to organize Chinese social life, but there are also some extreme concepts, e.g. those of Jiang Qing<sup>11</sup> who make anachronistic calls to bring back Confucianism everywhere including in politics and to establish “religious Confucianism” as “state religion” etc. Fortunately, these utopias are criticized in mainland China.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Zhu Ruikai, *Dangdai xin ruxue* (Contemporary New Confucianism), Shanghai: Xueling Publishing House, 2006, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> The example could be Zhang Wenbiao, *Ruxue yu dangdai Taiwan* (Confucianism and Modern Taiwan), published by Huaxia Chubun Faxing Jituan Corporation (ed.), Fuzhou: Fujian Renmin Publishing House, 2010.

<sup>11</sup> Newer work: Jiang Qing, *Ruxue de shidai jiazhi* (Cardinal Importance of Confucianism), Chengdu: Sichuan Remin Publishing House, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> Fan Ruping (ed.), *Rujia shehui yu daotong fuxing – yu Jiang Qing duihua* (Confucian Society and Restoration of Moral Rule. Discourse with Jiang Qing), Shanghai: Publication Huadong Shifan Daxue, 2008.

## II. Practice

### a) Taiwanese practice

A huge Taiwanese contribution to Chinese culture is its preservation of Confucianism during half a century of orthodox Maoist rule in mainland China. Various factors contributed, e.g. Kuomintang rulers who emigrated to Taiwan needed to continue the activity they led on the mainland. Academia Sinica and other universities were recreated on the island, preserving their original names and with the staff evacuated from the mainland. This applied to Gugong Museum with its vast collection evacuated from Beijing even before Japanese invasion. Traditional Chinese writing was preserved, while it got simplified in China. The government supported various initiatives aimed at preserving Confucian legacy. A new, beautiful Confucian Temple – Kongmiao – was built in place of an old one that was destroyed by the Japanese and whose murals attest to its previous beauty and size. This is where annual offerings are made on the master's birthday on September 28 which is rightly considered a teachers' day. Confucius, more than anyone else, contributed to this profession. Of course, this ceremony always takes place in the presence of the highest officials. VIP's are also the ones who allocate funds for reconstruction of Confucian buildings, as opposed to Buddhist or Taoist temples, which are renovated from followers' offerings.

Confucianism is considered a state religion, although arguments never cease whether Confucianism can ever be considered a religion. Some want to consider it only a philosophy and they are happy to point out that Confucius himself was reluctant to talk about deities, saints etc., which was duly noted by his students. Some however point out that he used a concept of Heaven (*tian*) considered as a higher power that provided a ruler with a mandate to govern. Additionally, Confucianism became intrinsically joined to a cult of ancestors and no one was more eager to preserve ceremonies from the Zhou Dynasty than Confucius. Assigning such an importance to a cult of ancestors, or rather their spirits, most likely is caused by the fact that Confucianism was superimposed into earlier animist beliefs. This is why home altars or Confucian temples mainly hold so called name tablets with names of departed beloved ones. There is a partial solution to this religion versus philosophy dilemma by naming one "*ruxue*" (Confucianism as a science) and the other "*rujiao*" (Confucianism as a belief); there is also an unofficial term "*kongjiao*" (Confucianism teachings). In any case, the most convenient is a formula, popular outside China, which treats Confucianism holistically as a philosophical-religious system.

This of course does not preclude further arguments whether Confucianism can be treated as a state religion (*guojiao*) or not. A crowning argument in favor of Confucianism being a state religion in the past was its special position at the imperial court during the times of Confucianist Dong Zhongshu. This is a role that some modern, extreme supporters from the mainland would like Confucianism to play. However, its opponents are pointing out that even during the most privileged period in the 1<sup>st</sup> B.C., other religions were not excluded. In any case, Confucianism in Taiwan was considered a state religion for a reason and Chiang Kai-shek himself boasted of having developed his own (?) diagram of Confucianism. This included a sharp controversy over previously mentioned luminaries of Confucianism who criticized Chiang Kai-shek's authoritarian rule and preferred to express their views out of Hong Kong.

A long period of authoritarian rule by both Chiangs (which was regarded as the longest martial law and caused an isolation of the island) was, despite everything, a period of

continuation of Chinese culture. This was reflected in education programs that contained electives of Confucian ethics connected with patriotism. Democratization of Taiwan brought further successes in this matter, even though democratic rulers tended to accentuate (perhaps excessively) a local culture, a separate history of China etc. Kuomintang's return to rule in 2008 initiated a non-confrontational approach to the mainland and an aim to extend cooperation with the other shore of Taiwanese Strait's. This provides an expansion of scientific exchange, new Confucianism included.

### **b) Hong Kong practice**

Hong Kong was this particular place in the second part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century where numerous Chinese scientists, including Confucian philosophers and historians, could find understanding and opportunities to publish. Their dramatic voices in defense of Chinese culture under threat were expressed in a Hong Kong Manifesto written by four Confucian scholars to world leaders in early 1958. Although at a time this cry of despair had no echo, however, after many years, the signatories were proven right by life events. Chinese culture is reviving in the mainland after years of nihilist treatment, nourished by achievements of Hong Kong and Taiwanese scientists. A particular role was played by Chinese University in Hong Kong that is particularly distinguished in the preservation of Chinese culture.

### **c) Mainland practice**

Contemporary continental practice has many similarities with Confucianism's social function in the Chinese society, except that it is half a century behind Taiwan. It includes academic discussions, national and international symposiums, publications of countless articles and texts. Finally, it also includes practical instruction on promotion of Confucian knowledge in schools. One example of such a practical, teaching approach is the work of Zhu Ruikai *Dangdai xin ruxue* (Contemporary New Confucianism).<sup>13</sup> Apart from key theoretical issues, this work provides practical overview of lectures on reading *The Analecta* on the basis of experiences by Shanghai Pedagogical University.<sup>14</sup>

Zhu Ruikai's work was divided into 11 parts. After an ideological introduction which is cleverly alluding to current ideological tenets of the ruling party, the work aims at a detailed discussion with pedagogical students of the following concepts: 1. Humanitarianism, 2. Self-improvement, 3. Confucius and marriage and family, 4. Relations with neighbors and friends, 5. Ceremonies and music, 6. Progressive political ideas of Confucius, 7. Ideal Confucian society, 8. Evolutionary approach of Confucius to Chinese history, 9. Confucius' ideas of Heaven (*tian*) and demons and spirits (*gui shen*), 10. Confucius and learning, 11. Confucius about himself and opinions of his contemporaries.

At the first glance, the most important issues that should be taught are those of family and society relations according to Confucius. However, the internal structure of the primer clearly suggest which values are truly important to the organizers of study of *The Analecta*, the key work written by master's disciples. For example, in chapter 3. Confucius and marriage and family, there are two issues to be taught: a) marital duties (*fufu youyi*) and a union of respect and love (*jing'ai jiehe*) and b) Confucian culture of filial obedience (*xiao*) and hierarchy (*ti*).

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<sup>13</sup> Zhu Ruikai, *Dangdai xin ruxue* (Contemporary New Confucianism), Shanghai: Xueling Publishing House, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 184 et passim.

In the first issue, the interpretation refers to a preference for spiritual values of a partner and not a commentary on the external attributes. However, it ignores such issues as a male domination of women, so characteristic of Confucianism. In the second issue of filial obedience, obviously the accent is on children's duties toward their parents. After half a century of destruction of Chinese families in the mainland, the indifference towards elders is not surprising and at the same time the state is unable to provide decently for the old. The only option is therefore to return to a form of a Confucian relationship with elders in order to replace the state in elderly care. At the same time, there is a complete silence on the subject of ceremony, ritual, etiquette and connected matters of the cult of ancestors, and especially the cult of ancestors' spirits. Let's add that such a selective approach to tradition is presented as "development of advantages of Chinese culture of virtue *xiao* and the development of elderly care" which in turn is a "new input by the Chinese nation in solving of a global problem".<sup>15</sup>

There are attempts to reform some of the basic Confucian tenets, both on the mainland and in Taiwan. For example in Taiwan, professor P'ei-jung Fu explains that the well-known Confucian saying *Ke ji fu li* (to overcome oneself and to bring back ceremonies) as means "to be able to decide oneself about applying norms of etiquette." The argument for using the second meaning of the word *ke* (first one is "to overcome" *kezhi* or "to limit" *yuesu*), i.e. "to be able to" (*nenggou*) is that Yan Yuan, a disciple of Confucius, first got rid of any desires.<sup>16</sup> It seems that these are simply nuances of interpretation and even though Confucian texts have been studied for more than two and half thousand years, we cannot always be sure what interpretation is the right one and what Confucius really meant. Especially that the doctrine's most important work, *The Analecta*, was created by Confucius's disciples who only after his master's death wrote down his teachings in a form of questions and answers. Despite any reasoning, re-interpretation in a social context may prove secondary to the simplest interpretation imposed by a general understanding of the text at the present moment.

One of the most attractive ways of propagating Confucian moral values is through a publication for Chinese sinology students (*guoxue*) so called moral Confucian stories *diangu*. I am providing some examples in translation from the Chinese original. Here they are:

### **1. There is no two Suns in the sky (*Tian wu er ri*)**

Liu Bang, when he became the Emperor Gaozu of the Han Dynasty, he was still treating his father with great reverence. Following the virtue of filial obedience, he still visited him every few days and each time he would kneel down for a ceremonial bow. After a while, the father's servants decided that it was not appropriate for an emperor to make such bows to anybody. Therefore, unofficially, they advised the father that "the same way as there are no two suns in the sky, there are no two emperors on earth. Although the emperor is your son, sir, but this is a ruler and even though you are his father, how can you accept his bows as a courtier towards your ruler?" Liu Bang's father recognized their arguments and decided not to accept his son's bows anymore. When Liu Bang visited again, the father was standing modestly at the door not daring to look up. When he saw his son, he hastily withdrew inside the house. Liu Bang was surprised and when he learned the reason for his

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>16</sup> P'ei-jung Fu, *Kongmen shi dizi* (Ten Disciples of Confucian School), Taipei: Lienching Publishing, 2011, p. 8.

father's behavior, he issued an edict naming him the Highest Emperor (*Taishanghuang*) and he continued bowing ritually to his father.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. It's better to see it once than to hear a hundred times (*Bai wen bu ru yi jian*)**

During the Han Dynasty there were tribes called Western Qiang (Xiqiang- proto Tibetans) who lived west of Huangshui River. They became less rebellious after emperor Wudi conquered Xiongnu tribes. The next emperor Xuandi sent his General Liang Anguo with a mission to bring peace. He learned that some tribes are asking for amnesty but peace was still not settled. Soon after some Xiqiang tribes crossed the Xijiang River and joined forces with Xiongnu, winning a battle against an expedition led by general Liang Anguo. The emperor Xuandi did not know what to do and asked an old General Zhao Tingguo whom should he send to assess the situation. The old general said that it is best to go oneself. The emperor asked him again how many people and horses he should assign against West Qiangs but the general again answered that "it is better to see once than to hear a hundred times. From the back lines, it is hard to assess correctly so the best would be to send me to the front so that I could figure out the best strategy." The emperor did so and sent Zhao Tongguo who analyzed the situation on the spot and then, playing one tribe against the other and weakening others, he finally brought peace to Western Qiang.<sup>18</sup>

## **3. Seat of power – within four seas (*Si hai wei jia*)**

In 199 A.D. Liu Bang as Emperor Gaozu from Han Dynasty achieved a unification of China after many years of battles. When he arrived in Chang'an he saw a magnificent palace and many buildings built by Xiao He. He was very upset and cried out: "How is this possible that in a country that does not yet have peace, the people live in poverty and a defeat is a very real possibility, you are building a palace for me!" Xiao He was not moved: "It is precisely because there is unrest in the country that we have to build a palace. Son of Heaven is of course guaranteed an abode anywhere within the four seas but what harm would a beautiful palace do to his authority? Besides, all his vassals from four corners of the land will be able to come here for an audience and future generation will save money on construction." Hearing that, Liu Bang cheered up and decided to move the capital from Luoyang to Chang'an.<sup>19</sup>

## **4. To bring a wrapped horse on a horseback (*Ma ge guo hu*)**

There was a very distinguished General Ma Yuan during the Eastern Han Dynasty. When he turned 62, there was an uprising at the edge of the country so he was asking to be sent again to Wuling mountains. Long ago, the emperor had sent his army there but it was defeated. The Emperor Guang Wudi was debating sending a general of such an advanced age. The general was ignoring his age and was chomping at bits to go into battle: "I can still put my armor on and go into battle so I am begging your Highness to let me lead the army again." The emperor agreed and made him the leader of the expedition. Ma Yuan used to say "a man's duty is to die in a battle and to return as a corpse on a horseback." A year after starting out on the expedition, Ma Yuan died of hardships and an illness. So, his saying came true that he returned as a corpse on a horseback.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Zhang Chenghua (ed.), *Guoxie diangu quan zhidao* (Compendium of Confucian Tales *diangu*), Beijing: Zhongguo Gongren Chubanshe Publications, 2011, p. 40.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

### **5. The most important thing – everything under Heaven (*Yi kuang tianxia*)**

Confucius was once deliberating a value of humanitarianism with his disciples. Zilu said: “once Prince Huan from Qi principality killed his elder brother named Jiu. When his teacher learned of this deed, he committed a suicide. However, a different teacher named Guan Zhong not only lived on but also helped Huan prince to rule the land. Can such a man be considered a humanitarian?” The master said: “Guan Zhong was virtuous and humanitarian. Because he exhibited an unusual courage, Qi principality became prosperous, its people became valiant and feared by all other peoples and prince Huan from Qi became a top ruler.”

Zigong could not accept a view of his master and said: “How can you ever consider Guan Zhong humanitarian if, according to customs, his pupil’s murderous deed warranted a suicide?” Confucius smiled patiently and explained to his disciples: “A man should not be judged by small actions or events. This would be unjust. Just think, could the Qi principality gain power without Guan Zhong? Could prince Huan become the first ruler without Guan Zhong? We owe the order we have in the country to Guan Zhong and we should be grateful to him to this day. If he was not around, the Qi people would probably still walk around with unkempt hair, poorly shod and dressed like wild people. How could such a man with vast knowledge and talent be compared with simple self-destruction and a waste of talent...”

Zilu and Zigong hung their heads and started nodding to their master’s words.<sup>21</sup>

### **6. To limit oneself and to are about public good (*Ke ji feng gong*)**

The following story is included in a biography of Ji Zun in “Chronicle of Late Han Dynasty:” Zun was very careful and modest, he self limited and cared about public good, he lived his entire life as a simple scholar and he left no inheritance. “Ji Zun, whose second name was Disun, lived during eastern Han Dynasty in a city of Yingyang. He sought learning since he was a child, he lived very modestly, and after his mother died he carried earth to her grave with his own hands.” In the year 24 A.D. the commander Liu Xiu departed with an army against Yingyang. Ji Zun failed to escape a conscription and he was called in to be an army judge. He was always a just judge but one day he condemned to death a man from Liu Xiu’s entourage. The commander got angry and attacked him, crying out that “when you hit a dog, you are not paying attention to who is his master.” However, his faithful courtier replied: “Lord, you wanted severe discipline in the army. Therefore, if the judgment was just and people praise him and you would want to punish him for this verdict, people will start minding only their own good. How will then he maintain an authority in the army?” Liu Xiu saw the reason behind his courtier’s words, hanged his anger into joy and named Ji Zun his general. May years after his death, the Emperor Guang Wudi created a aphorism: to limit oneself and to care for public good “which describes someone who makes great demand on oneself and serves wholeheartedly the public cause”.<sup>22</sup>

### **7. In Lu principality – not many Confucians (*Luguo shao ru*)**

Once the prince Yuan from Lu principality received Taoist Zhuangzi and said: “there are quite a lot of Confucians in the land these days but I have not heard of that many following your teachings. There are really so many Confucians?” – Zhuangzi replied. “I have not noticed that many.” The prince insisted: “Impossible. In Lu almost every man wears Confucian

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 13.

robes – is it so hard to notice?” Zhuangzi explained: “I heard that Confucians wear round hats to stress their knowledge of the Heavens, they also wear square shoes to stress their knowledge of Earth and their jade and sumptuous robe are to attest that their judgment is correct. However, a noble man who gained wisdom does not have to dress so well so I doubt that those people have really understood Confucian teachings. If you doubt my words Your Highness, please command that those in Confucian robes who cannot prove understanding of the doctrine get condemned to death.” The prince did just that and it turned out that Confucians in fancy robes disappeared. But there was still one left who was parading in his robes in front of palace gates. He was then called in front of the prince. The man answered all questions with ease. Zhuangzi stated: “Lu is a large land but only you are worth of a Confucian name. Can we still claim that there are a lot of Confucians?”<sup>23</sup>

### **8. It's not a shame to ask (*Bu chi xia wen*)**

Kong Yu, a scholar from Wei country, was known for his love of knowledge and amazing modesty. After his death, the ruler of Wei gave him a title of “Prince of Writers” (*wengong*); therefore he was subsequently called Kong Wenzhi.

Zigong, a Confucius disciple who was also of Wei origin, decided that Kong did not deserve his title. Therefore he asked his master: “There are many similar scholars, even better ones, so why was this one given a title of Prince of Writers?” Confucius laughed and said: “Kong Yu, despite being smart and clever, he studied hard and if he did not understand he would shamelessly ask people who were in lower rank or had less knowledge than himself. He had therefore a trait that is hard to come by. This is why he was named a ‘Prince of Writers’.” Upon hearing Confucius words, Zigong finally accepted it.<sup>24</sup>

### **9. Confucius lost a horse (*Kongzi ma yi*)**

Once Confucius went for a journey with Zigong and other disciples. They got tired of a long travel and sat down by the roadside but they lost master's horse. They were looking for his horse for a half a day until they finally found it foraging in a peasant's field. Zigong volunteered to recover the horse and Confucius agreed. He was gone for a long time and when he finally came back, he was still without the horse. This is what happened. Zigong presented his reasons to the peasant but he ignored that and did not return the horse. However, there was another peasant who paid his respects to the master and offered to go and convince the villager to return the property. He went to him and this is what he said: “You work a field in the east and I work one in the west. The crop looks the same in both fields so how can the horse understand that it is not supposed to eat yours?” The peasant cheered up and said: “Now when you are talking, I can understand, unlike that weirdo before you, who was impossible to understand.” He untied the horse and returned it.<sup>25</sup>

### **10. Zilu attends teachings (*Zilu shou jiao*)**

Zhong You, called Zilu, lived during the times of Spring and Autumn and he hailed from Lu principality. He became one of the “seventy two venerated” disciples of Confucius. He was brave and understood state issues. However, at the beginning of his apprenticeship with Confucius, he did not appreciate his teachings. This came out during one of his conversations with the master.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 152–153.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 144.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 153.



## Confucianism: Past and Present



**Confucian Imperial Academy in Beijing (Guozijian 国子监), built in 1302. View of a Hall (photo: A. Slawinska)**



**Confucian temple (Kongmiao) in Beijing (photo: A. Slawinska)**



**Entrance to Confucian Academy Yuelu (Yuelu Shuyuan 岳麓书院) built in 976. Changsha, Hunan province (photo: A. Slawinska)**



**Statue of Confucius teaching, Yuelu Academy (photo: A. Slawinska)**



**An annual ceremony held on Sept 28 to make offerings on Confucius birthday in his temple. In Taiwan, this day is also celebrated as Teacher's Day (photo: Taipei Kongmiao)**



**R. Slawinski meeting Mrs. Chen, a Kongmiao representative (photo: Taipei Kongmiao)**



Confucius insignia: a fan (*shan* 扇) and a parasol (*san* 繖)  
(photo: Taipei Kongmiao)



A symbolic offering of “five animals”  
(photo: Taipei Kongmiao)





Confucian orchestra instruments (from the left) Chinese Bamboo Panpipes or Multiflute (*paixiao* 排簫); Far East litofon (*biansheng* 編磬); Time Bell (*zhuanli* 轉鐘), and Lying Tiger – idiofon non-metalic (*wu* 敔) a wooden instrument with a 27 teeth comb (photo: Taipei Kongmiao)



A choir and dance troupe during a Confucian ceremony (photo: Taipei Kongmiao)

When they met for the first time, Confucius asked: “What is your favorite occupation?” Zilu did not fully understand the question and said: “I like sword fighting.” Confucius became more clear: “This is not what I mean. I heard that you are talented and that your gift from Heavens and hard study could provide for a great future, could they not?” Zilu was doubtful. “Can learning give power?” Confucius replied: “Of course. For example if a ruler chooses not to employ talented officials, it will be hard for his country not to fail. If a student does not gain his friends’ help, his character can go bad. The same way you cannot whip an unruly horse, the same way you cannot be straightening a strong bow. If people are willing to accept somebody’s opinion, they will perfect their character. It is enough to study and there is no learning that cannot be learned. People who turn their backs on humanitarian values and morality, can get into conflict with state law any minute. That’s why we say that a noble man cannot stop studying.”

Zilu was still not convinced and he asked again. “In southern mountain there is a type of bamboo that is very straight and it does not require any straightening to make arrows that can pierce a buffalo skin. That’s why they say that some things are inherently perfect. Why one should always learn?” Confucius replied: “You are right but if you add to the arrow some feathers, a sharp tip in the front and you smooth the arrow, will it not travel farther?” Upon hearing these words, Zilu thanked him saying that he profited a lot from this discourse.<sup>26</sup>

### **11. Important visit in the city (*Zhaoyao guo shi*)**

Once Confucius undertook a journey to spread his views in the lands of Zhou kingdom. On the news of his arrival in the principality of Wei, Lady Nanzi, the wife of Prince Ling, advised his entourage that if they want to visit the prince, they have to visit her first. Confucius was therefore forced to visit her. When he entered the reception hall, lady Nanzi was hidden behind a curtain and when Confucius bowed to her, she bowed back, shaking her bracelets to announce her presence. Later, Confucius was saying that he did not really wanted to visit her but since he was received, he had to give bow to her ritually as if she was the prince. Zilu was not very pleased with that and thought that the master did not have to do it. Confucius was however of a different opinion: “I visited Nanzi to spread my teachings. Let the Heavens crush me if there was a different reason.” Confucius spent over a month in Wei principedom. One day, Prince Ling and Nanzi went on an outing outside the palace. A trusted eunuch was with them inside a carriage and Confucius was following in a second one. They were crossing the streets of a city with a great pomp and circumstance but the inhabitants were ignoring them. What’s more, some were even demonstrating their ill will and disgust. Confucius was very moved: “Truly, I have not seen here any people who would love morality more than they love women.” He was disgusted with the land of Wei and he left it for a principality of Cao.<sup>27</sup>

### **12. Three moves for learning (*San qian zhi jiao*)**

Mencius was still a child when his father died. He lived with his mother near a cemetery, where children often parodied funeral ceremonies. Their mother frowned upon such inappropriate child play and she decided that this was not a good place to raise her son. They moved then to the center of the city but they found themselves near a market. Of

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 168–169.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 228–229.

course the young Mencius, who had a gift of comedy, now liked to play seller haggling. A caring mother decided that again that this is an inappropriate location for a youngster who needed to study and should not learn trading. They changed abode again, this time near a school, and this was considered an ideal neighborhood by the mother.

One day the young Mencius came back from school while his mother was weaving cloth. "How's school?" she asked. "Fine, as usual," said Mencius lightly. Such nonchalance got her mad. She grabbed a pair of scissors and she cut up her cloth in anger. Now the careless student got really scared. And her tirade started. "You are wasting a chance to learn something the same way I wasted this cloth! If you do not study now, you will have to take any lousy job later!" And so on... Mencius, really scared, started studying hard, he became a disciple of Zisi (Confucius's grandson) and thanks to exceptional hard work he became the second Confucianist in the land.<sup>28</sup>

### **13. Su Xun burns his texts (*Suxun feng gao*)**

A famous writer and his sons, Su Shi and Su Yu, created "one of the eight schools during the end of the Tang and a beginning of the Song Dynasties." However, when he was young, Su Xun did not like to study, did not like reading books and he led a careless life. Only when he turned 27 years old, did he start forcing himself to read. He became more knowledgeable after 10 years. After a year of preparations, he decided to take upon a challenge of imperial exams but he failed twice. He was stubborn though and he decided to persevere. One day, a black smoke started coming out of his house. When his neighbors ran in, they were surprised to discover that it was Sun Yu himself who was burning his own texts, over a hundred works that he deemed unworthy. He decided to write them again. In eight years he did indeed write his most important works: "Chronicle of Han," "Theory of Balance," and "Strategy." They all gained an approval of Ouyang Xiu, the member of Hanlin Academy who admitted that his style is better than Liu Xiang's and he presented Su Xun to the Chancellor's Board. In this way, after so much perseverance in gaining knowledge and writing ability, Su Xun in one decade became a great man.<sup>29</sup>

As we can see, the choice of Confucian tales is not accidental. Some of them have always been popular (e.g. number 1 and 2) and the quoted text serves only a reminder. Some others are clearly addressing desired qualities: self-limitation (6), modesty (8), good expression (9), appreciation of learning (10), creating good condition for learning (12), or finally, overcoming laziness and achieving success due to one's hard work (13).

We are therefore dealing again with a selective approach to Confucian tradition to advance certain social attitudes.

## **III. Conclusions**

1. Research on various interpretation of texts, looking for similarities between Song-Ming Confucianism and Kant philosophy, studying various influences of other doctrines on modern Confucianism and an analysis of Confucianism applications in other countries (Japan, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan) – all this will continue (despite advanced research and digitization), perhaps till the end of the world. This proves an exceptional durability of classic Confucianism as well as a relativity of interpretations. There is a

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 157.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

particular demand for a system of values that would enable social engineering aimed at prevention of negative social attitudes (egoism, hedonism, life on credit, social indifference) and a propagation of social attitudes that would replace the state's role in elderly care.

2. Ideas that will probably eventually get marginalized include: a promotion of political Confucianism by extreme Confucianists (Jiang Qing) and an invitation to return to classic tradition without later additions or "aberrations." This is because it is too politicized and it ignores huge social changes after 1978, creating a potential competition for governing people's souls by the current system. The nouveau riche may perhaps be socially minded and participate to certain degree in social initiatives (e.g. supporting NGO's) but they will not necessarily support a system of self-improvement, which is treated as an element of Confucian domination, a new "state religion." Followers of other faiths (Buddhists, Taoists, Christians, Moslems) will not be satisfied with scrap offerings of the Confucian table allowing them to exist under an umbrella of Confucianism as a state religion.
3. A grand-scale, optimistic project of creating all over the world a thousand Confucian Institutes of which half already exist will most likely fulfill its role of preparing cadres of people who know the Chinese language and who are so indispensable for economic purposes. It would however create a better understanding that would profit both China and the world if these Institutes had a role to strengthen Chinese culture *par excellence*. And even then, one should not expect that popularizing Confucian values and Chinese philosophy will establish Confucianism as an equal partner with other values already existing in the West. Despite Singapore's success as a multinational society or many examples of "Asian values" in business, and even if Confucius Institutes double in number, a modern Confucianism cannot replace on a global scale neither Christianity, nor Islam, nor Rights of Man nor liberal democracy. Confucianism will remain in highest regard – as a local phenomenon of East Asian societies – and only in this way it will participate in global cultural legacy.
4. A further process of returning to a traditional Chinese culture on the mainland will largely depend on whether the ruling party in the period just prior to 2012 congress will decide that it is advantageous to strengthen their power and keep social order through further use of social functions of modern Confucianism (ethics, loyalty, harmonious society, self limitation and self improvement, elderly care). We must remember that those in power were mostly participants in the 'cultural revolution.' Today, they are middle-aged people in key positions and they may not necessarily be enthused by Confucian ideas and at the same time they may have a different perspective on Maoist orthodoxy than the rest of the world. Their memories of youth include seductive images of ignoring any authority, including a moral one.

Therefore, it seems plausible an appearance of a lasting compromise of rejecting any extremes: a "government of souls" would be given to Confucians (i.e. applying a political Confucianism) or a continuation of an authoritarian rule in a Maoist style. What could win is a symbiosis of Confucianism (in its pro-social version) and Deng Xiaoping's views (understood as a continuation of state capitalism, a continuous increase of China's role in the global arena, criticism of liberalism etc.). The effect would be an increase of China's power on the basis of Western technologies. This is what generations of thinkers from

Kang Youwei to Sun Yat-sen dreamed of exacting that. They supported a modernization of China and at the same time they were under a great influence of traditional Confucian culture.

It seems that in the long run, the future of Confucianism in continental China will be decided not by study of text supported by the authorities (this is recommended to various parts of the society, including prisoners during re-socialization) but it will be determined a slowly emerging relationship between the society at large to Confucian values. After all the society does not have other alternatives in absence or weakness of other beliefs and half a century of unattractive orthodox Maoism. With a selective approach to tradition and a universal acceptance of Confucian ethics of humanitarianism (*ren*) understood as decent treatment of fellow man and a cultivation of virtue of filial obedience (*xiao*) that requires elderly care – human relationships in China could get largely improved. At the same acceptance of virtue of loyalty (*zhong*) might satisfy the rulers' appetite for social peace – what is determined by a Confucian's term of "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui*).





MAGDALENA CZECHOŃSKA

## Body Linguistic “visibility” and “retrieved bodies” of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century in Chinese Women’s Literature and Art<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

The notion of a body (*shēntǐ*) which is deeply embedded in Chinese culture is a point of departure for an analysis of the female body in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Chinese female authors and artists present a model of identity in which it appears as a means of self-articulation. The selection of works, that can only be partly comprehensive both vertically in terms of chronology and horizontally in terms of cultural breadth, is aimed at showing an enhanced awareness of themselves as women and of their bodies in both public and private spaces. The image of women that emerges from there are women that consciously claim the territory of body and authorship.

The encoding of body for questions concerning relations of thought to culture, culture to language and language to thought is of a great significance for understanding the context in which the notion of body *shēn* (*shēntǐ*) is embedded. Traditional Chinese culture and philosophy<sup>2</sup> marked the body as a hub of worldly interactions, the point of departure for understanding the self and the world, as well as the relations between the self and the other.<sup>3</sup> The *performance* of the body or classical conception of *xiūshēn* (self-cultivation) is a means of self-articulation similarly to the practices of ritual<sup>4</sup> or writing, music and art creation. Thus in classical understanding the place of the body in the process of self-cultivation is of

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<sup>1</sup> Earlier drafts of this article were presented at the “Body and Person in China” conference held in University of Vilnius in June 2011.

<sup>2</sup> The author is referring here to the pre-Han period within Confucian tradition, and by extension, to Chinese thought in general.

<sup>3</sup> The conflict between body and mind or body and soul never appeared in Chinese thought unlike in European philosophical and religious context.

<sup>4</sup> Ritual *Lǐ* is translated into English as ‘ritual’, ‘ritual propriety’, ‘customs’, ‘etiquette’, and ‘rules of proper behavior’ among other terms. The ritual *lǐ* embodies the entire spectrum of interactions of humans, the state, nature and even material objects within prescribed and intersubjectively verifiable norms. This can be especially said of the time before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. As the editors of *Body Subject and Power in China* have explained, “within tangible forms of the language and gestures of *li* subjectifications of people occur as they live and imagine their bodies”, *Body and Subject in China*, Angela Zito and Tani E. Barlow (eds.), Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995, p. 10.

primordial importance. The body in question is a living body – a mark of the Confucian social self. The social aspect of the living body covers a shared level of discourse, transmitting and sharing the meaning with other participants in the community.<sup>5</sup> As Roger T. Ames remarks this irreducibly social place of a body in the construction of the entire person *rén* allow us to observe “(...) that a human being is a social product, defined not as some essential locus of potential or right claims but in the patterns and roles of social discourse. This stands in contrasts to the liberal and democratic conception of an ‘individual’ most familiar to us in our present historical period. In this later tradition, what is most significant and defining of person is acultural and ahistorical notions such as ‘human rights’ and ‘sexual equality’ that can be asserted as universals”.<sup>6</sup> The encoding of the body within social discourse of classical Chinese thought made it through the ages leaving a trace in language, that the pre-Han Chinese share with contemporary users.

### Chinese linguistic order and body

The examination of the language in which the notion of body – *shēn* is rooted can be traced back to antiquity and oracle bones – *jiǎgǔ wén* where character *shēn* appears as a profile pictograph of the human figure with a protuberant stomach. Its literal meaning would be that of a gestation – *rènshēn*, *signifiant* of pregnant women.<sup>7</sup> It also stands for one’s physical being, frequently referring to one’s entire psychosomatic self<sup>8</sup>, one’s living body seen from within.<sup>9</sup> The lexicon of the latter Han (*shì míng*) identifies *shēn* with help of the homophone to stretch (to stretch one’s limbs or one’s body).<sup>10</sup> What provides additional evidence that *shēn* is a psychosomatic entity is mentioned by Roger T. Ames its phonological association with spirit *shén* and correlation between *shēn* and *rén*. The second one, according to its meaning undertones a ‘person’ with a connotation of the ‘other’<sup>11</sup> while the first one denotes a ‘person’ with an implication of the ‘self’.<sup>12</sup> The additional picture of this case may be provided with the pronoun *rénjia* that we can respectively translate as other, he, she, they and I.

<sup>5</sup> Roger T. Ames, “Introduction to Part Three: On Body as Ritual Practice”, in: *Body in Asian Theory and Practice*, Thomas P. Kasulis, Roger T. Ames and Wind Dissanayake (eds.), Alabany: State University of New York Press, 1993, p. 149–151.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.confucianism.com.cn/html/hanyu/11979465.html> (accessed 18.11.2011).

<sup>8</sup> Confucius associated the process of learning with the triple cotidian introspection of self/body *wú rì sān shěng wú shēn* Verse 4 of *Analects of Confucius* Chapter 1, <http://www.zhuoda.org/suncity/14006.html> (accessed 11.10.2012).

<sup>9</sup> There are separate expressions for the body as ‘corpse’ seen from outside such as one’s physical body (*qūti*), body-flesh (*ròuti*).

<sup>10</sup> Xu Fangmin, *Shě míng yánjiù* (Research on Shiming), Taipei: National Taiwan University Press, 1989; *shēn, shēn yě, kě qū shēn yě* <http://lib.jmu.edu.cn/departments2/magazine/philosophyol/ch29.htm> (accessed 06.06.2011).

<sup>11</sup> The examples of culturally defined relations include husband and wife (*fūfù*), older, younger brother and older, younger sister, (*xiōngdìjiěmèi*), parents (*fùmǔ*) see also: Sun Longji, *Zhōngguó wénhuà de shēncéng jiégòu* (The Deep Structure of Chinese Culture), Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2004, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> Ames, “The Body in Classical Chinese Philosophy...”, p. 165.

Further etymological associations of the word *shēn* show that we are dealing with the physical body as an important focus of self, “body of mine”.<sup>13</sup> The fact that Chinese thinking is concrete and bodily and that ‘I’ existentially is inseparable from a body-presence in which the belief itself is rooted perspicaciously as explained by Kuang-Ming Wu.<sup>14</sup> The evidence can be found in Chinese language where *shēn* is related to the self (*zìshēn*), oneself (*běnnshēn*), to the person (*gōng*)<sup>15</sup> or to life. The scope of verbs *shēn* relates to life and encompasses different cycles of it. Just to mention a few of them, *ānshēn* translates as to make one’s home, to take shelter, or to settle down. *Shēnshì* means ‘the bodies world’ and one’s life time experience. Others like *chūshēn* translate to birth, filiation, origin, family background, or educational background; *xiànshēn* means to «give the body», devote one’s life to, or sacrifice. *Fānshēn* means to ‘turn over the body’, to emancipate.<sup>16</sup> The body (*shēntǐ*) that emerges from classical thought and permeates Chinese language is processual. It is more than a substance or thought because it is not complete or accomplished but it is to be realized or produced through social life.<sup>17</sup> *Shēn* as a ‘body person’ is a ‘living body’. To some extent, according to semantic value of word *shēnfèn* ‘one’s body allocation’, identity is related to the personal status, to its background, position and seniority and etymologically to the body *shēn*. *Shēnfèn* is what makes entity (*shēn-tǐ*) definable and recognizable. *Shēnfèn* enable human selves conditionally, specific unities (*fèn*). Since the Chinese language itself provides us with an important reason it is justifiable to link the *subjectifications* to body as an area of investigation. They confirm that human beings are produced. The important Chinese body studies research “Body, Subject and Power in China” is accompanied by this argument. In the introduction the editors justify the applied function of subject positionality, which “(...) takes us beyond “roles” that presume a unified, unchanging “self” behind and anchoring the masks of social role playing, once again staging the individual (...) battle for authenticity against society. Subjectification builds conflict, loss, and absence into the very constitution of the person (...). Focusing on subject positionalities instead of “individuals” takes into account that selves are processual and that they change over ones lifetime experience, that one person can simultaneously occupy many subject positions” (woman, female, mother, daughter, wife, reader, consumer); and that these dynamics are constructed within an ensemble of social relations”.<sup>18</sup> Confucian thought encoded the body within its social discourse and imposed the power relations within Chinese language and society. Subject positionality enables us to look at the female body from a historical perspective that a lack of the category of generic

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>14</sup> Kuang-Ming Wu, *On Chinese Body Thinking. A Cultural Hermeneutic*, Leiden, New York and Köln: Brill, 1994, p. 121.

<sup>15</sup> Semantic root (radical) of this character is body – *shēn*.

<sup>16</sup> The translation in parentheses are literal translations of words, other translations are from the *Chinese English Dictionary*, revised version, Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2001 and *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian*, Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 2003.

<sup>17</sup> It links the notion of *shēntǐ* with Euro-American, 20<sup>th</sup> century critical theories that introduces a notion of person/subject as positionality, the acknowledgement’s of one position.

<sup>18</sup> Zito, Barlow (eds.), *Body and Subject...*, p. 9.

women would make impossible.<sup>19</sup> Female writers and visual artists, both modern and contemporary, are making efforts to revise the acquired knowledge within existing power relations. This is happening within (and not outside) society. They propose the perspective of personal experience and subject positionality where the body or more precisely the feminine body holds crucial semiotic function.

### Chinese women's bodies and marking of gender

Tracing its origins back again to the traditional Chinese script of *jiǎgǔwén* and inscriptions on ancient bronze objects *jīnwén* we have on one hand pictographic representation of a body as a human figure with a protuberant stomach, a possible synecdoche of a pregnant women. On another hand we have pictograph of women *nǚ* represented as figures with breasts, kneeling<sup>20</sup> or standing. Both of them evoke the physical presence and 'container' aspect of the depicted figure of women.<sup>21</sup> Chinese tradition perpetuated the objectification of the female body through thousands years of its history. There was no place for women in the project of *xiūshēn*.<sup>22</sup> Confucian techniques of self-cultivation applied only to men. Women were occupied with preserving and reproducing for the family body. Their own bodies were particularly disciplined for predefined goals of procreation. Their families put an effort to hide their daughters and wives' bodies from the eyes of strangers. This is evident in their confinement in their domestic areas,<sup>23</sup> as well as in their clothing. Women's daily techniques of body management included concealment and seclusion of the body in the spirit of propriety and devotion to the family. Chinese female bodies were seen from the outside as carriers of corporeal attributes such as propriety, gentleness, devotion and sartorial ones such as cloths, accessories, and make-up. Both of them were expressing a social and to some extent a moral status. Women, within traditional perspectives, because of a lack of capacity to achieve sagehood, were considered unnecessary in both their ability to reclaim self and body. Women's bodies were the only capital of theirs, or more

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<sup>19</sup> Tani Barlow's study on the Chinese woman was a cornerstone in understanding different epistemologies in the conceptualization of the female subject. She claims that there is not a category of generic women in Chinese cultural context. The 20<sup>th</sup> century naming for the female subject denote respectively *nǚxìng* – the term coined within May Fourth discourses suggesting the essential feminine woman; *fūnǚ* collectivist women of Maoist ideology; and *nǚrén* – the contemporary post-Mao woman see: Tani E. Barlow, "Theorizing Woman: Funü, Guojia, Jiating" in: *Body and Subject...*, p. 253–291.

<sup>20</sup> Keeling was ancient way of seating for Chinese people see: Mao Zhicheng, "Shitan jiaguwen zhong de nǚ" (An example of reading the pictograph women) <http://school.ggedu.gov.cn/show.aspx?id=6694&cid=6440> (accessed 18.11.2011).

<sup>21</sup> Compare with the pictograph of man *nán* which is a cluster of two characters field (*tián*) and hand, strength (*lì*) indicating a meaning outside the figure, relating to the character of work the man was carrying out and qualities he needed to accomplish it.

<sup>22</sup> Traditional women's education of a selected group of women *guǒxiù* (well cultivated daughters of rich families) consisted of family based education, the study of Commandments for Women and Four Books for Women a relatively limited environment of social display see: Guo Yanli, "An Introduction to Modern Chinese Female Literature", *Sunkyn Journal of East Asian Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, 2003, p. 110–111.

<sup>23</sup> One of the classical, formal naming of women is an 'inside-person' (*nèirén*).

specifically of their families, with a precise marked value. One could described someone’s daughter as a ‘thousand golden coins’ (*qiānjīn*) or one’s own daughter as ‘money loosing commodity’ (*péiqiánhuò*). Premature loss of virginity devaluated the goods and was equal to a broken body *pòshēn* that translates as ‘losing one’s body’ or ‘sacrificing one’s body’. Deprecatory terms were widely used and referred to description or reference to women in traditional China’s patriarchal society. These terms were in a broad use and continued throughout the centuries. Just to name a few among others ‘woman’s perspective (which is to say) is narrow’ (*fūrén zhī jiàn*) and ‘woman is virtuous when she is incapable’ (*nǚzǐ wúcai biàn shì dé*) was abolished by Chinese government after 1949.<sup>24</sup>

The Chinese female body appeared in the public sphere within Western style education, work and leisure time organized by the Republic of China in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Along with raising number of literate women, the accessibility of feminist discourses, translations of Western literature, the overall project of women’s emancipation, together with the development of press and the possibility for publication, emergence of popular culture with cinema and advertisement brought forth a new model of femininity and thus new ways of displaying and representing female bodies.<sup>25</sup> New women (*xīnnǚxìng*) claimed their independence and female authors (*nǚ zuòjiā*) publicly voiced their opinions. The appearance of female authors disclosed the problem of representation and overt gender-marking with *nǚ* ‘female’ suffix terms for occupation that have traditionally been male dominated, and thus covertly masked as masculine. The phenomenon of feminine linguistic marker sets it off as another clearing path for generic or the neutral sex masculine form and brings about obvious implications for person-perception.<sup>26</sup>

The revolutionary shift of 1949, in turn, inscribed the female body within the state ideology, shifting it from the realm of family (*jiā*) to that of nation and country (*guójiā*). Originally a kin-inflected category of *fùnǚ* (woman) adhered to the ranks of state categories such as workers, youth or the proletariat (*gōngrén, qīngnián wúchǎnjiējī*).<sup>27</sup> The female body under the Maoist vision of “holding up half of the sky” were uniformed in their sartorial expression and deprived of gender differences. Negation of the female self under socialism became another form of self-confinement. Their identities were marked political

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<sup>24</sup> Cathrine S. Farris, “Gender and Grammar in Chinese. With Implications for Language Universals”, *Modern China*, Vol. 14, No. 3, p. 277–308; Yu-Hwei Shih, “Cong shehui yuyanxue guangdian tantao Zhongwen nannu liangxing yuyan de chayi” (A sociolinguistic study of male-female differences in Chinese), *Jiaoxue yu Yanjiu*, p. 207–229; Marjorie K. M. Chan. “Sound Symbolism and the Chinese Language. Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> North American Conference on Chinese Linguistics (NACCL) and the 4<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Chinese Linguistics (ICCL)” Tsai Fa Cheng, Yafei Li, and Hongming Zhang (eds.), Los Angeles, CA: GSIL Publications, University of Southern California. Vol. 2, 1996, p. 17–34.

<sup>25</sup> In the latest research on the Chinese body inscribed in the project of Chinese modernity the emphasis is put precisely on body representation which enables to see how they shape live experiences of bodies see: *Embodied Modernities. Corporeality, Representation and Chinese Cultures*, Fran Martin and Larissa Heinrich (eds.), Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>26</sup> Farris, “Gender and...”, p. 283.

<sup>27</sup> *Gender Politics in Modern China: Writing and Feminism*, Tani E. Barlow (ed.), Durham: Duke University Press, 1994, p. 254.

and institutionalized by Fulian (The All-China Women's Federation), that monopolized all inscriptions of womanhood in official discourse.<sup>28</sup>

### **Multiplicity of bodies**

The dynamic history, of modern and contemporary China, viewed through the eyes of female writers and artists indicates a desire to unfix the meaning that the traditional patriarchy and state have inscribed on the female body. Especially that their contemporary practice provide us with a ubiquity of the body. The body appears as continuous both with the world and self, as a site ('here') across which artists and writers ('I') engage themselves (now) in acts of making meanings similar to what Kuang-Ming Wu explains as the Chinese body concept.<sup>29</sup> The expression of 'performance' of the body understood as a medium for self-articulation or in classical Chinese terms as 'xiūshēn' is reacted within the literary and artistic creation of women in China. Photographs, sculptures, and text documents are an embodied trace of self as if "body (-ies) was (were) not to be compared to a physical object (-s) but rather to a work (-s) of art" as Merleau-Ponty argued convincingly.<sup>30</sup> They challenge the conventional fetishization of the bodies of women fully leaving them, what makes them the subjects and makes them the objects for the others proving their own their bodies no matter the subject positionality they embody in the particular moment of life. Their self-portraits or their autobiographical texts seem to reaffirm the bodies never ending "thereness", its refusal to disappear, its infinite capacity to render up the self in some incontrovertibly 'real' way.

This is through the body that the problem of representation discloses itself and that the conundrum of representations recalls itself most starkly. To point out this problem, before introducing several analyses of selected texts and work of arts of women authors at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries I would like to draw attention to four writing pieces completed respectively in the year of 1827, 1927, 1974 and 1979.

The story of Li Ruzhen "Flowers in the Mirror" is set in the reign of the Empress Wu Zetian who ruled personally the Empire of China in the turn of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> century. The novel written in the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is nowadays known for its contribution to the idea of feminism, as it prizes women's talents, acknowledges their social status and breaks the old concept that "women are inferior than men" (*nánzūnnǚbēi*). The hero of the novel Liu Zhiyang travels to many strange lands with "Land of Woman" (*nǚrén guó*) among others.<sup>31</sup> Women in this land are shown as successfully playing the social gender roles of males but what is more stringing is the representation of the main hero cast in the role of a male 'concubine' for the female ruler. According to this role he is forced to submit

<sup>28</sup> Lydia H. Liu, "Invention and Intervention: The Making of a Female Tradition in Modern China", in: *From May Fourth to June Forth. Fiction and Film in Twentieth Century China*, Ellen Widmer and David Der-Wei Wang (eds.), Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 196.

<sup>29</sup> Kuang-Ming Wu, *On Chinese...*, p. 121.

<sup>30</sup> Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, Translated by Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, [1945], 1995, p. 174.

<sup>31</sup> Li Ru Zhen, *Jīng huā yuán* (Flowers of the Mirror), Beijing: Huaxia Press, p. 168–173; *Anthology of Chinese Literature: From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century*, Cyril Birch (ed.), Vol. 1, New York: Grove Press, 1972, p. 187–189.

himself to a treatment that would render his body feminine. Bathed, dressed in skirts with a powdered face, reddened lips and his foot bound he is waiting for the king/queen to come and see him/her disguised as a woman. This masquerade takes place off-stage which the male become aware of being considered as an sexual object, which renders him very uncomfortable. Li Ruzhen was one of the first to show that the roles assigned by social conventions on the basics of bodily differences and enacted through the protocol specific to the female subject position were, to a large extent, arbitrary. The reversion of real-life roles of the two genders show that women who turned into sex objects were denied both the full social personality and right to dispose of their own bodies. The representation of women, as disclosed by Li Ruzhen, concentrates on a certain discipline of fashion and invasive external treatments such as foot binding or ear piercing.

A hundred years later the reversion of subject/object helps Ding Ling to establish gender differences through discourse. The authors represents the legacy of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The female narrator of “Miss Sophia’s Diary”<sup>32</sup> introduces gender differences into a text by taking over the authorial position and by casting the young man Weidi in the role of the reader of her diary.<sup>33</sup> In this short text she focuses on the female and female authors subjectivity. She is rejecting the dominant view in Chinese society and considerations of viewing women as a body. Her body, and the image of the body in the mirror are important points of departure to question the existing power relations in republican society. The explicit revolt against the objectification of the female body and stereotyped male-female relations has resulted in the problematization of writing and reading as a profound gender practice.

The way bodies are represented reveal a key cultural transformation. As mentioned the modern plea for a woman’s independence and recognition of the new woman was further appropriated by the Communist State. The revolutionary body of women, filled with symbolic value became a component in a collective structure represented accordingly in the literature of socialist realism. Seemingly equal gender distribution of the People’s Republic of China blurred all expression of gender differences. The emancipation (*fānshēn*) and liberation (*jiěfàng*) processes were veiled by the idea of total equality as can be seen in the constructions of the female models in so called “revolutionary operas” among other examples. The institutionalization of the female position within the *Fulian* resulted in the post-1978 era, rejection of feminism by women who before 1949 expressed a strong desire to position themselves against male (state) discourse on gender. The communist *fānshēn* and *xiànshēn* (*to sacrifice*) project idealized the female body as a carrier of revolution devoted to the state (*guó-jīā*) body and reproduction of the heroes of revolution. The Confucian vision<sup>34</sup> of the woman’s duty as protecting her body for the sake and prolongation of the family line in the spirit of filiality was “inscribed from now on with the symbolic value of women to give physical birth to this future if it is to exist at all”.<sup>35</sup> Any

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<sup>32</sup> Ding Ling, “Miss Sophia’s Diary” (Shafei Nüshi Riji), *New Edition of Ding Ling’ Literary Work* (Dingling zuopin xinbian), Beijing: People’s Literature Press, 2010, p. 43–81.

<sup>33</sup> Liu, *Invention and Intervention...*, p. 201.

<sup>34</sup> Along with total negation and rejection of Confucian values.

<sup>35</sup> Mark Elvin, “Tales of Shen and Xin: Body-Person and Heart-Mind in China during the Last 150 Years”, in: *Body in Asian...*, p. 259.

expression of sexuality was replaced by uniform representation of a physically strong and healthy body. As Mark Elvin points out in his analyses of the Hao Ran novel, *The Children of the Sands* the revolutionary body is “a remarkable all-purpose tool and weapon, hardened in training”. Additionally he went on to say that it is “illuminated by Communist and patriotic faith”, while “the female body integrity once endangered does not finish in a suicidal attempt but in the sacrifice of her life in the name of the communist struggle”<sup>36</sup> as is the case of the main heroine of the novel – A Bao who will reproduce her mother’s fate for the sake of the communist revolution.

The new policies introduced in the year of 1979 found female writers in a situation of necessity to renegotiate their positions both in the society and the very *milieu* of authors and artist.<sup>37</sup> By their own choice female writers and artists positioned themselves at the margins of the so called “grand narratives”.<sup>38</sup> This took place while their male counterparts engaged themselves in critically reviewing the Cultural Revolution’s past literary currents of ‘scars’ (*shānghén wénxué*) and ‘root-searching’ (*xúngēn wénxué*) literature. Zong Pu is one of the first authors to write about humiliation inflicted on the body, humiliation that pushes her to refuse any subjectivity by asking an excruciating question ‘who am I’. Her novel takes us back to the start of Cultural Revolution. The female character Wei Mi and her husband are horribly beaten by the revolutionaries. Their heads are half shaved and they are forbidden to grow their hair. Brought on by the verges of madness they, one after another, end up committing suicide. The resignation from the self, from life is intermingled with the living experience of her own body inflicted with pain, disgrace and humiliation.<sup>39</sup>

Autobiographical components of female creation is an important axis of their texts and work of arts, yet so is the body. The embodiment of the text, the omnipresence of bodily stages in art are palpable evidences for increasingly fractal Chinese identity. Chinese females contend with society and “the nexus of living meanings”<sup>40</sup> expressed through their bodies which “builds conflict, loss and absence into the very constitution of the person”<sup>41</sup> as they have embarked on the road of self-re-discovery, towards the construction of their erased identity. In the late 80s there is a new literary genre coming out, represented among others by Chen Ran and Lin Bai.

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 283–287.

<sup>37</sup> Zhang Kangkang expressed it plainly yet relatively late in her article “We Need Two Worlds” that challenge the view of the universally accepted truth that only men could be the writers, because they were not simply born writers, see: Zhang Kangkang, “Women xuyao liangge shijie” (We Need Two Worlds), *Wenyi Pinglun*, Vol. 1, No. 57, 1986.

<sup>38</sup> Dong Zhilin, “Nüxing xiezuo yu lishi jingchang. Cong 20 shiji 90 niandai wenxue sichao zhong de ‘shenti xiezuo’ tanqi” (Women’s writing and its historical scene discussed from the perspective of the 20th century 90s ‘Body Writing’ literary trend), in: *Dangdai zhongguo nüxing wenxue wenhua piping xuanze* (Selected Works of Contemporary Women’s Literary and Cultural Criticism in China), Chen Huifen and Ma Yuanxi (eds.), Guilin: Guanxi Normal University Press, 2007, p. 128.

<sup>39</sup> Zong Pu, “Wo shi shei” (Who am I), in: *Zong Pu jingxuan ji* (A selection of Zong Pu Literary Works), Beijing: Yanshen Press, 2006, p. 59–63.

<sup>40</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology...*, p. 175.

<sup>41</sup> Zito, Barlow, *Body and Subject in China...*, p. 9.



### “Female *Shēn-fèn* as Performance”

“Saying that I have a body is thus a way of saying that I can be seen and that I try to be seen as a subject”.<sup>42</sup>

The novel of Chen Ran “Private Life”<sup>43</sup> opens to the reader a private world of sensual experiences, to the former “inner chamber”.<sup>44</sup> The reader is invited to follow the emotional and sexual development of Ni Niuniu in her passage from adolescence to womanhood. The main protagonists family name and the given clarify her character and her very position in society. They can be translated respectively as the beginning and end of her family name and rivaling against, disobedience and rebelliousness for her namesake. Intense corporeality, ubiquity of bodies and body parts pervade the whole text. The main protagonist’s body, in the process of maturation, chronicles her inner life. However, contrary to what the chronicle may suggest, the book does not follow a linear path of narration. It is to a large extent fragmented. The first person narration is disturbed by the description of Ni Niuniu’s first heterosexual intercourse experience narrated in the third person. The saccaded rhythm of the text map out the stories from the past, the scenes of introspection reappearing repeatedly in the text. The body of it is interrupted with different ‘material objects’ such as letters, notes, medical history of the illness of the protagonist and traces of ink blot. When looking at the images of the ink blot left by the author on the paper, which shows very intimate relations with the writing itself, or when looking at scenes which resemble pictures, or when lifeless objects become animated by the imagination of the protagonist, the reader is expelled outside the text and is casted in the ‘role’ of the voyeur.

The verbal close-ups of the female body recall what Cixous has proposed to include in female writing.<sup>45</sup> She advocates when writing that, “personally, when I write fiction, I write with my body. My body is active, there is no interruption between the work that my body is performing and what is going to happen on the page. I write very near my body and my pulsions”<sup>46</sup>, has also become an important component of Lin Bai fiction. The monologue of the “One person battle”<sup>47</sup> is conducted in a very autonomous way, with persistence on first person narration. This “I” or “self” which is written introduces “I” or “self” confronted with multiple “selves”, “you”, “him” or “her”. This “I” voyaging into its interior becomes a plural one. The main protagonist is experiencing “I” in the living self/body. The presence is multiplied with its mirrored image. This important device introduces to the text the

<sup>42</sup> Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology...*, p. 193.

<sup>43</sup> Chen Ran, *Siren de shenghuo* (Private Life), Beijing: Zuoja Press, [1996], 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Pauline Yu identifies the theme of “inner chamber” as an important element to the song lyrics. The world derives from the translation of “poets of the inner chamber” (*guīgēshīrén*) in: *Voices of the Song Lyric in China*, Pauline Yu (ed.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994; <http://ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/ft129003tp/> (accessed 24.09.2012).

<sup>45</sup> Hélène Cixous, “Śmiech Meduzy” (The Laugh of Medusa) in: *Ciało i tekst. Feminizm w literaturoznawstwie – antologia szkiców* (Body and Text. Feminism in Literary Theory – an Anthology of Essays), Anna Nasiłowska (eds.), Warszawa: Instytut Badań Literackich, 2001. p. 147–166.

<sup>46</sup> As cited in: Kathryn Robson, *Writing Wounds: The Inscription of Trauma in Post-1968 French Women’s Life-Writing*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004, p. 62.

<sup>47</sup> Lin Bai, *Yi ge ren de zhanzheng* (One Person Battle), Beijing: Zuoja Press, 2009.

corporeal dimension. “I” of the main character is looking on herself, which is described in a very visual, palpable and often narcissistic way. Her look, her glance go through the mirror that accompany the main protagonist from early childhood. It appears and reappears to characterize her life. In front of her body she is not only in it, she is it. The intimate confessions of Lin Bai are very deranging for her critics.<sup>48</sup> Especially when she is describing love between women or when she reveals her passion for her body, its sensations and secrets. The author consequently engages in a kind of personal research which starts with the writing itself which serves to legitimate herself, as a writer and homosexual lover in a world dominated by men and dominated by one socially accepted kind of relation. The character of Lin Bai fiction access the self via visible corporeal form, a form they want to serve a guarantor of the body. The written self bourgeoning on the tip of the pen allows a woman’s voice to be heard and her body to be seen. Instead of being an object, unknowingly and partially exposed for the voyeuristic pleasure of the male gaze, the female persona is now a subject who consciously examines and admires her body. This freedom of writing and freedom of body expressions were captured in a short author’s introduction for another novel of Lin Bai “A Fatal Flight”. She explained the title of the novel in the following way: “to fly is an extraordinary state of being. To write is to fly, to dream is to fly, to enjoy art is to fly, to smoke marijuana is to fly, to make love is to fly, to not respect the rules is to fly, to overcome morality is to fly. All those flights are like gloomy passageways, dark and profoundly silent. To enter it we have to turn sideways, and put the world aside”.<sup>49</sup>

Overtly constructed self-performative texts have their equivalent in contemporary photography consisting of body fragments. A series of a dozen photographs entitled “Twelve Flower Months” (*shí’èr huā yuè*) (1999–2000) mark the first time an artist – Chen Lingyang – has consciously made the issue of women’s identity a primary concern. The work draws upon the resources of traditional Chinese culture as well as Western feminist tradition. The taboo of menstruation blood was first broken by second tradition’s artists such as Judy Chicago and Carolee Schneemann. Whereas still life of flowers evoke Song Dynasty female paintings. Finally, unusual shapes of the photographs resemble windows and doors open in garden partitions introduced by Chinese traditional garden architectural principles. They used to change the angle of perception of garden’s landscapes. On the one hand, the use of the windows move the viewer to the Chinese female secluded spaces mentioned earlier in terms of the “inner chamber”, into very intimacy of private space, and on another hand proposes a different angle of perception of femininity. The juxtaposition of female genitals, menstruation blood and flowers creates a very subtle portrait of a young female artist and her fragmented, not yet defined identity additionally expressed by the need to refer to both Chinese traditional and Western feminist tradition. This young artist manages to break into the tradition of representation as she represents herself by the twelve months cycle of the body. By time’s notion it is seen as linked to a larger cycle of nature. The work conveys the desire of the artist and image to render the body and thereby

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<sup>48</sup> Referring to the Chinese language Shih notes that a use of profanity and taboo words would lower a woman’s social status, in: Yu-Hwei Shih, “Cong shehui yuyanxue...”, p. 219. The argument of obscenity and literalness of heterosexual and homosexual experiences in Chinese women’s fiction was used by male critics to diminished the status of female authors.

<sup>49</sup> Lin Bai, *Zhiming de feixiang* (The Fatal Flight), Beijing: Taihai Press, 2001, p. 2.

the self in its fullness and truth. It promises an unmediated access to the artist as an origin of the work. This work is both a reflection of the artist’s reticent personality and an artistic treatise on the subject position of a young female and artist, who by posing as an ultimate object is trying to be seen as a subject.

### Monument of the female body

In the recent production of art, body not only was explored in the sheltered, private space of women. In 2001 He Chengyao made a double interruption of her naked body in public space and in the mainstream of male art production when she spontaneously joined in an installation<sup>50</sup> of H.A. Shult presented on the Great Wall of China, which she called the “Opening of the Great Wall” (*kāifàng chángchéng*). The photographs documenting this action show the artist with bare breasts, walking ahead between the columns of German artist’s figures with a deadpan expression and self-confident attitude, keeping the red t-shirt in her right hand, followed by a procession of the others participants. The social context permeates He’s oeuvre. Her approach is particularly bold in a country, where nudity remains a taboo and where the body is culturally intermingled within its social living nexus. In her other performance work “Broadcast Exercise” from the year 2004 the artist interposed the themes of body and identity. In this particular piece she wrapped tightly her naked body in transparent packing tape with its sticky side outside. While performing exercises the audience was not only confronted with the naked female body but also with the ripping sound of the tape painfully suggesting the body being ripped open. The performed exercises resemble collective physical exercises she had carried out in her past as a part of a collective engagement that marked a shared experience of suppression of the individual body and the experience of a female body deprived of its basic gender differences. The body of He Chengyao exposed in multiple performances appears as the body of a female, of a daughter, and of a mother when she speaks openly about difficult, imposing and private aspects of her heritage. In her performance from the year 2002 entitled “Needles” she talks about mental illness that has haunted her family and stigmatized her family. Her grandfather suffered from the illness, as well as her mother who additionally committed a socially deprived act of having a daughter when she was only eighteen years old and not yet married. She performed the “Needles” (*zhēn*) as a homage to her mentally ill mother who was forced to have acupuncture treatment that was supposed to heal her illness. Many times He saw and heard her mother screaming and struggling against her “healers” without ever being cured. This unorthodox method imposed on her mother body was repeated by the artist who stuck 99 needles on her own body and face until she passed out. As the oeuvre of He Chengyao shows the body that does not convey significance but is filled with it. It is not a sign of something but it is a sign in of itself.

Particularly interesting is also the rendition of the female body in the art of Xiang Jing.<sup>51</sup> The sculptures of which show the female body in its truth. From the antithesis of traditionally represented consumptive beauty of the female body emerges the laud critique of the condition of females in the Chinese social and cultural context. The analysis of her works

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<sup>50</sup> The installation consisted of 1,000 life sized figures constructed from recycled consumer waste.

<sup>51</sup> <http://xiangjing.arttron.net/main.php?aid=A0006310> (accessed 24.09.2012).

is like journey into the “nation of women” that is about to declare the independence of body that infers from the very existence and experience. There is no space left anymore for these female bodies that have been looked through history by the eye of its viewer and autocratic male creator. Xiang Jing narrates her protagonist’s bodies in the first person bringing to the viewer realistic life-like sculptures ranging from miniature ones to larger than life ones, cast in bronze or polyurethane. She portrays experiences of urban, contemporary women engaged in different social activities and depict them in different cycles of life. They are depicted sometimes as teenagers, pregnant or as elderly women among others. We encounter in her oeuvre women who are both naked and equipped with sartorial attributes which in spite of their synthetic look and mundane innocence bring through expressions of self-confidence interwoven with violence and a certain malaise. Hyperbolisation of the female body is one of the themes of her sculpture from the year 2005 “Your body” (*nǐ de shēntǐ*). The larger than life naked female figure is disconcerting in detailed. On one hand her radiating skin has an artificially pale finish, her shaved head and imposingly heavy body gives her doll-like, motionless presence. On another hand her penetrating and deadpan gaze downward with oppressive force, shows the inadequacy of reception and representation which bring alive the monument of the female body.

The recurrent motif of the self (selves)-reconstruction is apparent from the selection of texts and works of art discussed above. Women hope to redefine their subjects positions reflected by an increased need for a voice and identity in society. Close examination of the female body, as a synecdoche of the self, expresses an urgent issue to fully recognize Chinese females as subjects with distinct selves and bodies. The selection of works above, that can only be partly comprehensive both vertically in terms of chronology and horizontally in terms of cultural breadth, shows distinctively the enhanced awareness of themselves as women and of their bodies in both the public and private sphere. The image of women that emerges from there is the women that consciously claims the territory of body and authorship. The body appears simultaneously in the foreground with its politics in the background. By choosing to read the body from the background to the foreground we can see to which extent the construction of female subjectification is connected to the body in the sense of a ‘person’ and with an implication of ‘self’.

IZABELLA ŁABĘDZKA

## “Taiwanese Trilogy” of Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan: in Search of Taiwanese Identity<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This article is devoted to Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Yunmen Wuji), modern dance and its search for Taiwanese identity in a globalized, cosmopolitan society at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The author analyses three choreographic works by Lin Huaimin, the founder of Yunmen Wuji: „Legacy” („Xinchuan, 1978), „My Nostalgia, My Songs” („Wo de xiangchou, wo de ge”, 1986) and „Portraits of the Families” („Jiazou hechang”, 1997). The analysis focuses not only on the formal aspects of the dances but on their role in shaping the cultural and socio-political identity of the Taiwanese in the seventies, eighties and nineties as well.

Dance dramas inspired by Taiwanese history and the experiences of the people of Taiwan include, among others, three leading performances from various periods of Cloud Gate activity and choreographic work by Lin Huaimin<sup>2</sup>: *Legacy* (*Xinchuan*, 1978), *My Nostalgia, My Songs* (*Wo de xiangchou, wo de ge*, 1986) and *Portrait of the Families* (*Jiazou hechang*, 1997). All of them are the result of a reflection on the phenomenon and uniqueness of being Taiwanese. In the form of dance, they pose the question of what it means to be Taiwanese and thus join the long-lasting debate on the special and national Taiwanese characteristics, which were formed as early as in the 1920s and 1930s and continued throughout the 1950s and 1960s and eventually reopening in the second half of the 1970s and in 1990s. This debate is a part of the Nativist Cultural Movement and one of the most important social phenomenon in Taiwanese history of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century with respect to forming the cultural identity of contemporary Taiwanese people. This debate has cooled down a number of times, only to explode with renewed fervent, and it seems that it will galvanize intellectual circles of the island in the future as well. It will be accompanied by a debate on democratic processes and the formation of a modern, multicultural and open society which along with the progressing globalisation, universalisation of values and uniformisation of life models and styles, will keep posing questions on the individual features of local culture, in a voice which at times sounds louder and at times is more hushed. The question about the significance of being Taiwanese

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<sup>2</sup> Contemporary Taiwanese dancer and choreographer; founder of the famous Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan (Yunmen Wuji, 1973) and its artistic director.

will recur as an attempt to defend oneself against tendencies which enforce uniformity and spiritual sterility and to seek things special and unique; however, it may never give rise to such dramatic vehemence which accompanied the staging of *Legacy*.

### **Legacy**

*Legacy* was created in 1978.<sup>3</sup> Cloud Gate Dance Theatre had been established six years earlier. In the meantime Lin Huaimin had already created several important dances, but it is *Legacy* which should be treated as a corner stone of Cloud Gate. More than thirty years later the dance is still in Cloud Gate's repertoire. It is not only a documentation of the early years of Lin's choreographic activities, a reflection of a very special moment in modern Taiwanese history or a unique dance work born out of humiliation, anger and contrariness, but a starting-point for all scholars conducting research on contemporary Taiwanese dance theatre as well. It seems almost impossible to overestimate the role of this special dance which played such an important role in shaping the cultural and socio-political identity of the Taiwanese at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Taiwanese dance critics draw our attention to national sentiments aroused by the dance. SanSan Kwan writes:

Certainly, the epic story of tribulation, struggle, determination and final triumph is a sure mark of nationalistically-driven narrative. The choreography, which has remained essentially the same throughout the politically expedient shifts in *Legacy's* interpretations, argues best for *Legacy's* power. The Graham-like contractions and pleadings, the yearning, outstretched poses, and the desperate, flailing jumps of the earlier sections represent a heroic struggle against all the odds of privation. The rhythmic chanting and stamping, the arm-in-arm linking of dancers, and the simple, repetitive, chore-like movements of the middle section build an image of collectivity and cooperation, of shared labours, shared hopes, and shared history. Finally, the triumphant leaps and grinning faces, the splashes of red, and the valiant poses conclude the dance with an evocation of collective pride and elation.<sup>4</sup>

*Legacy* is a skilfully told, eight-episode story of southern Chinese peasants evicted from their homes by hunger, diseases, natural calamities, poverty and an exploitation of those who travelled to a rocky island, covered by a sub-tropical forest, beautiful but deceptive. These peasants were people of the earth who emigrated to get better life for themselves and their children and traveled to their new promised land through stormy waves, praying to Goddess Mazu, the patron of fishermen and sea voyagers. It was an ideal story for a great saga which would move Taiwanese hearts for many years to come, irrespective of their background and origin. Chen Ya-ping rightly mentioned that: "For many years, dance drama was endowed by its creator and audiences alike with a socio-political

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<sup>3</sup> My analysis of this dance is based on a DVD recording of *Legacy/Xinchuan*, Jingo Records 2003, première: December 16, 1978, Jiayi Tiyyuguan, choreography: Lin Huaimin, music: Nanguan music, Chen Da's singing, voices of Cloud Gate's dancers, music arrangement: Li Tai-hsiang, Chen Yang, costumes: Lin Huaimin, Lü Fangzhi, lighting: Lin Kehua, props: Xi Song.

<sup>4</sup> SanSan Kwan, "Vibrating with Taipei: Cloud Gate Dance Theatre and National Kinesthesia", in: Lin Huaimin. *Wudao Guojia Xueshu Yantaohui lunwenji/Lin Hwai-min. International Dance Conference Proceedings*. 2005.8.2-3, Taipei, 2005, p. 109.

significance that went far beyond the scope of ordinary dance pieces”.<sup>5</sup> The Taiwanese researcher explained in her work the reasons for which *Legacy* occupied a special place in Taiwanese hearts, as an artistic and cultural phenomenon. The political moment during which the dance drama was staged was also of significance; in the year of its first performance, the United States announced a break of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. The first night of this dance drama which was the apotheosis of strength, courage, a sense of solidarity and a spirit of mutual support in critical conditions was, therefore, of special significance. Defying all and any, particularly the most powerful global decision-makers, the perfectly arranged dance drama with particularly difficult choreographic sequences which required amazing technique and physical fitness, was a precise, sophisticated and painfully artistic slap in the face of the giant – the United States and all those who humiliated the tiny island, stripping it slowly but surely of all the rights for representing the Chinese state on the international arena and ceding them all on the growing continental power of Communist China. It was neither the first and nor the last example of a nation/community sold by the powerful and the great in order to achieve more or less short-sighted political and economic goals. Chen Ya-ping recalled the words of Lin Huaimin from the times when he was visiting the United States in 1977/1978. He said that there were three times in his life, when he thought about Taiwan with a desperate mood. “The first time was the Tiao-yü-t’ ai Diaoyutai Incident, which was possibly what gave rise to the founding of Cloud Gate... The second time was in New York [in 1978]. The newspapers kept talking about the rapprochement between the U.S. and Beijing, which made me desperate”.<sup>6</sup> Lin Huaimin’s third moment of desperation came in 1989 after the bloody massacre of June 4<sup>th</sup> at Tian’anmen Square in Beijing.

However, *Legacy* was not born out of desperation and a tailspin, but out of the spirit of wilfulness and conviction that only the weak can break down in trying times. One can and should treat history as a lesson. The exiles from the continent who left it more than three hundred years ago taught such a lesson to future generations. They did not yield to the hardships of the sea voyage and tedious, heavy work in the new land. Their heritage which was passed down to their children and grandchildren was the conviction that people have as much freedom as they are able to gain by hard work. The dance drama became a moving tale of toil, hardiness, and resistance through all and under any circumstances, even the most adverse. The dance drama portrays those of huge ambition and stubbornness, defying all and everyone. But it was also a tale of love, death, despair the dramatic fear of passing away and the miracle of birth, of toil and sweat, of joy and play and joy of feasting together. Although the Guomindang critics used to value *Legacy* as an example of “healthy realism”, the choreographer reached for means of expression beyond simple realism. Although the gestures and movement of dancers included plenty of imitating elements, Lin Huaimin referred also to non-common movement techniques, to the aesthetics of folk ceremonial dance, to gesture techniques derived from the Beijing opera, to folk music forms, not to mention classical ballet and modern dance. He also used symbolic gestures and stage props. Nevertheless, decorations and stage props were sparse, as Lin Huaimin always

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<sup>5</sup> Chen Ya-ping, “*Legacy* and the Nativist Cultural Movement in 1970s Taiwan,” in: *Lin Huaimin. Wudao Guoji Xueshu Yantaohui lunwenji*, p. 117.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

avoided literal meanings and preferred to rely on the imagination of the audience and old Chinese principle which said that the less you showed, the more was there to see.

The choreographer and group prepared themselves to perform the dance drama with focus and gravity. The performance of *Legacy* followed a training of Cloud Gate dancers which Lin Huaimin arranged on the banks of the Xindian River in Taipei. He did this on the southern, rocky edge of the island, during stormy weather. In this way they were able to recreate, even if only to a small extent, the way of their forefathers. It allowed them to get ready for their new dancing parts, physically and mentally as well. Lin led a variety of exercises in the course of a few autumn Sunday afternoons, on the rocky side of the Xindian.<sup>7</sup> One of them was a relaxation exercise, consisting of skilfully loosening the body and positioning it on a riverside boulder in order to distance oneself from the hustle and bustle of the city, become one with the natural, hard bed of stones and fall asleep. The stones turned into a safe bed and shelter.

Another exercise consisted of getting up from the stones. Lin Huaimin intended it to reflect the first, fundamental gesture of the forefathers, who rose from the stony coast and went forward. The exercise made dancers experience the resistance of rough, hard substance and feel the pain when their fragile human bodies are hurt by the stones. The key element of the exercise was the interaction of the performers with irregularly shaped, resistant surfaces: the reaction of the body to the varying size and shape of the stones and to dangerous cracks in the rocks. In the process, the dancers acquired awareness of the weight of the matter/earth. Its resistance forced them to make greater efforts and release energy to face the resistance, leaning how to master their own power.

Other exercises, performed with a partner, included lifting stones, carrying them and throwing them over into water. They taught the dancers about weight, balance and energy, developing a special type of dance dynamics, expression and exaggerated swing in motion.

All these exercises, along with some other ones, were accompanied by vocal training. Carrying and dropping the basalt rocks, the dancers encouraged themselves with rhythmic shouts. They would also sit in a circle on the stones, and murmur in unison, holding hands. Their individual voices would grow into a powerful choir. There was something ceremonial, even religious in this strange wordless chant, noted Liu Cangzhi.<sup>8</sup>

The riverside training sessions included a story telling episode. One day, the participants were asked to tell life stories of their families, which proved quite interesting and variable. According to Lin Huaimin, every dancer should answer the following questions: Who was my mother? Who was my father? What did our forefathers give to us? What will we give to the next generation? Certainly, these were basic questions asked by every person searching for identity, not only in the national and racial sense, but also cultural sense. Such questions were posed with growing frequency at the time of the staging of *Legacy*. However, no uniform answers were given then to the questions of identity; they differed depending on the respondent's background and the depth and length of his/her Taiwanese roots: for some, they dated back thousands of years, for others – two or three hundred years, for others still – three or four recent decades.

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<sup>7</sup> The description of exercises presented herein was based on the report by Liu Cangzhi, "Hebian de Yunmen" (Cloud Gate on the river banks), in: Yao Yiwei et al., *Yunmen wuhua* (Cloud Gate. Talks on Dance), p. 169–187.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 182.



The outdoor training sessions were conceived for a variety of complex reasons, some of which had been mentioned by Chen Ya-ping in her work:

Obviously, the attempt to re-establish relations with the land as well as the down-to-earth approach to the task of constructing body images and a movement vocabulary in the training sessions had very much to do with the beliefs and influence of the nativist movement. At the same time, traces of the certain important concerns in American post-modern dance were also discernible in the outdoor exercises that led to the choreography of *Legacy*, albeit with very different results and for very different purposes. As early as the second half of the 1950s, Anna Halprin began conducting improvisational workshops in outdoor environments in Northern California in search of a freer and more natural or authentic expression of the body. Her open attitude toward dance as well as her analytic investigation of the body in movement were carried over by her students, including Simone Forti, Yvonne Rainer and Trisha Brown, to the East Coast and had considerable influence on the post-modern dance movement of the 1960s. During those experimental years, from the late 1950s to the 1970s, outdoor excursions and happenings were conducted by dancers and other artists to explore the possibilities of the human body in various natural environments or physical conditions.<sup>9</sup>

In fact, Anna Halprin was one of the pioneers of dance training sessions which became a standard of post-modern dance. She preferred a more organic, biological approach to the body and dance, based on the strive for the harmony of body and mind. She relied on improvisation and natural movement impulse. She readily left dance rooms, going out with her performances to city streets, sea beaches and forests: “Halprin deliberately avoided modern dance techniques in the classroom so that her students could not borrow movements nor pick up stylistic habits that were not their own; instead they acquired strength and mobility in tumbling lessons and by learning to move confidently along trails in the woods and across such obstacle courses as floors littered with automobile tires”.<sup>10</sup> Her followers also readily used non-theatrical locations, in city spaces and outside. They also consciously blurred the boundary between professionalism and amateur dancing, techniques and the lack of them, between learnt style and commonplace gesture which sometimes surprised and baffled their audience. If anything can be dance, are there any things which are not dance then? This purposeful blurring of boundaries was often involved in the search for new means of movement expression; however it was employed equally often due to the lack of virtuoso dance techniques for dancers who started late their professional education.

Chen Ya-ping respectfully remarked that the outdoor dancing sessions which Lin Huaimin himself had emphasised as important in their inspiration provided by his friend and artist Xi Song (Hsi Sung)<sup>11</sup> and were more important than the influence of American style

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<sup>9</sup> Chen Ya-ping, *Dance History and Cultural Politics. A Study of Contemporary Dance in Taiwan, 1930s–1997*, New York University 2003, unpublished PhD dissertation, p. 125.

<sup>10</sup> Nancy Reynolds, Malcolm McCormick, *No Fixed Points. Dance in the Twentieth Century*, New Heaven, London: Yale University Press, 2003, p. 397.

<sup>11</sup> For more information on Xi Song’s role see Liu Cangzhi “Hebian de Yunmen”, in: Yao Yiwei et al., *Yunmen wuhua*, p. 177–178.

experiments of the body in natural surroundings. She said: “(...) what Lin strove so hard to attain through those outdoor exercises was to go beyond the codified body languages of both the Graham technique and [the] Peking Opera in order to return to the basics – to feel afresh in the sensation of weight and gravity, to be inspired by such simple physical tasks as moving a rock, and by reconnected to one’s roots – the land, its history and ancestral heritage. The body images Lin sought after were those of farmers, fishermen, and common folk who perform physical labour on Taiwan soil”.<sup>12</sup> On one hand, the organic approach to the body and the desire for the communion through group dance placed Lin Huaimin closer to the main concepts of American post-modern dance. On the other hand his focus was on his dance technique and his careful upkeep of the boundary between amateur and professional dance set him apart from the trends in American modern dance of that time.<sup>13</sup> An important element of the outdoor training sessions of Cloud Gate dancers was their openness to new experiences and experiments with space and matter, without limiting them to repetition in various configurations of the well-known, tested and approved, traditional dance techniques. The experiment which began at that time – whether inspired by local Taiwanese or foreign, American sources – turned into a standard later, during Lin Huaimin’s search for new concepts of movement. As a result, he took an interest in Far Eastern meditation, movement and breathing techniques of *taijiquan*, *qigong* and yoga.

*Legacy* started with a “Prologue” – a ceremonial offering to the spirits of ancestors. The dancers paraded majestically with incense sticks in their hands towards an offering vase located in the left bottom corner of the stage, and put burning sticks into the vase. They were clothed in modern, colourful wear, as young Taiwanese people of the present age who looked like millions of young people around the world. A moment later, women removed their blouses revealing deep blue, Chinese smocks and trousers; men took off their shirts and remained with bare torsos, wearing black, loose trousers. In a blink of an eye, the dancers turned into their ancestors from hundreds of years ago, who came to the island from southern regions of the continent. However, Ch’u Ke’s report of 1978 recalled by Chen Ya-ping was slightly different: during the “Prologue”, Lin Huaimin stood in the centre of the stage holding up a torch while young people lit their offering incense sticks from that torch, and soon the stage was crowded with people entering it from various directions. Additionally, newcomers from the audience handed burning incense sticks to the choreographer. The dancers among the crowd would remove their modern clothing, revealing costumes of their ancestors.<sup>14</sup> This rendition of the “Prologue” referred to a Chinese dance name – *Xinchuan*, which – in turn – was an abbreviation of a Chinese idiom (*xin jin huo chuan* which meant that “the wood burns out, but the flame is passed on”), and expressed the continuity of family and national traditions. One may venture to say that Lin Huaimin while creating his *Legacy* he also created the myth of the founding of Taiwan, and re-created the myth of the origins. In his dance performance he showed the beginnings of Taiwan, and in the process of recalling and creating the myth, he renewed today’s community of Taiwan, as Mircea Eliade might say. He provoked this community to re-discover its roots and re-live its beginnings. As a result, the community had a chance to

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<sup>12</sup> Chen Ya-ping, *Dance History and Cultural Politics*..., p. 126–127.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127–128.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

strengthen its sense of unity and power derived from regenerating energy provided by continuous recollection. Such is the process of creating a community of the living and the dead, in which nobody feels out of the way and unimportant, because everyone participates in passing the flame on. People are the wood, but this is “the thinking wood” which burns and passes on the burning heat, joy and life. *Legacy* is the apotheosis of indestructible life, its awesome simplicity and hardship, lightness and weight, frivolity and toil.

Yao Yiwei simply called *Legacy* a ritual drama (*jidianju*), at the same time reminding that the American theatre of the time also made use of rituals, the leading example being The Living Theatre.<sup>15</sup> He noticed typical ritual gestures in two fragments of *Legacy* in particular, that is in the “Prologue” and “Epilogue”, especially in the scene of passing the fire and the lighting of incense sticks. According to him, it was a clear reference to an ancient cult of ancestors in China. However, the situation when viewers mingled with actors, entered the stage and participated in a ritual/theatrical action, returning to their seats afterwards, was an example of a modern ritual community – a practice well known by American practical avant-garde of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Yao Yiwei considered *Legacy* also an example of a group/collective dance (*qunwu/jitiwu*). According to him, this collective character also included a ritual element.<sup>16</sup> However, the dance had many more other ritual, mythological and religious elements, among others the symbolism of fire, offerings of incense sticks and obviously the collective dance, but also the universal mother figure which was impersonated not only by the Chinese Goddess Mazu but also by a figure of a mother with child, easily associated with the Holy Mother even by non-Christian viewers. However, it was the choreography, which contributed the most to the creation of the unique, ritual atmosphere of the dance: the collective arrangement, the clear domination of group dances over solo ones, repetitions of the sequences, regular rhythm, intended austerity and crudeness of the movement which did not by any means exclude virtuoso technique of the dance, as well as varying musical arrangement, correlated with the character of the dance.

The “Prologue” started with traditional Chinese music but when the dancers removed their modern wear and disclosed their traditional clothing hidden underneath, the music changed to a wordless chant sung by a choir. The slow chant and movement of dancers emphasized the extraordinary moment of the metamorphosis of contemporary people into their ancestors. The next part, “Call of the New Land” (“Tangshan”) differed dramatically with respect to sound background sound. There was no music, only rhythmic drum beat which sounded at the moment of the sequence. The dancers punctuated the rhythm of the dance with loud, unison shouts. Their dramatic dance which purposefully stressed the physical effort was performed in almost absolute silence, which highlighted even more the dramatic choreography.

Dancers stood in the centre of the stage in a circle of bluish light, and suddenly they fell on the floor, rolling from side to side with effort. They stood up, held their hands and fell to the floor again. Shouting rhythmically, they tried to get up and they fell again. These up-and-down movement sequences were repeated many times. Faces of dancers expressed

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<sup>15</sup> One of the most influential experimental theatre groups of the 1960s, created in New York in 1951 by Julian Beck (1925–1985) and Judith Malina (1926–).

<sup>16</sup> Yao Yiwei, “*Shipping Xinchuan*” (On *Xinchuan*) in: Yao Yiwei et al., *Yunmen wuhua*, p. 157–159.

great effort. Finally, a woman would emerge from the crowd. She held a red bundle in her hand, as if she was hugging a child. At that moment, tugging began. The dancers stood in a row as if they were tugging something with great effort. The woman with the bundle appeared again. The remaining dancers held one another's arms, tensing their muscles. The woman extended her hand once, and then twice, as if she wanted to grasp something which was out of her reach. The remaining dancers, exhausted, fell on the floor. The woman trodded carefully, as if she wanted to feel the touch of earth under her feet. A group of dancers raised their torsos but they fell down again. Everybody crowded in a circle. The women broke from it, followed by two men crawling on the floor. They caught the woman by her arms and lifted her high in the air, as if she was crucified in the air and fell to the floor. When she rose again, still holding her red bundle, she went to the offering bowl with burning incense sticks, commemorating people who passed away. Some men grabbed her again and lifted her up. She stood unmoving, with her hand raised up, as if she were a monument in space; gradually, was surrounded by two separate circles – one of men and the other of women. The woman fell down and got up. When dancers who accompanied her also fell down, she rose and crossed the centre of the scene, stomping with her feet as if angry or helpless. The crowd got up and followed her; she pointed up with her raised finger and headed towards the offering vase with incense sticks. Perhaps she was pointing to the other side, to the hope of another life which would be better? The dancing style emphasised common actions, which was additionally underlined by the rhythm, measured beats and repetitive movement sequences. The protagonist in this part was undoubtedly the figure of the mother with child, which can be considered to be an archetype of a childbearing mother and a mother of the community.

A moment later Chen Da, a folk singer from southern Taiwan, began to sing a fragment of a ballad about ancestors who crossed the great water many ages ago. The old man's rasping voice separated dance scenes, leaving time for reflection and helping to concentrate. The monotonous ballad emphasised the emotional qualities of the performance, intended by the choreographer to be epic in character. It also encouraged the audience to identify themselves with the characters and events, wake up their emotions and heighten their empathy. Lin Huaimin's choreographic strategies fostered the realisation that dancers were spectators, but at the same time they were also the ancestors from many centuries ago.

Another episode featured "Crossing the Black Water" ("Duhai"). To the tune of peaceful music, a man with naked torso went out, dragging a piece of white cloth which represented a sail. This simple prop was skilfully used to create an impression of a violent storm. The cloth was hiding a crowd of men and women. One of the women beckoned to someone or something. Perhaps she was calling the wind? The crowd fell on their knees and started to bow. The sail became full and the crowd raised their hands. The cloth, covering them, started to move, as if by waves. Then it lifted, showing a neatly arranged group of dancers. However, soon the crowd fell into disorder and people began to put their hands together in the gesture of prayer. Somebody shouted. The dancers fell down on the cloth, as if they drowned among the waves. They squatted in a circle, made the prayer gesture and got covered by the cloth again. They seemed to push something. One person climbed up on their backs, but it fell down. Then the sequence repeated itself. The dancers were shouting. The dance was performed to the quick, violent beat of the drums, but at the end of this sequence a quiet flute melody sounded. A woman with

hands clasped in the prayer gesture made it to the shore on her knees, crossing the wavy cloth. All the dancers reached the vase with burning incense sticks and fell to their knees in the gesture of gratitude. Chen Ya-ping pointed out not only to the skilful use of the cloth, but also to the role of accompanying drums which created a unique sound aura in this part of the performance:

Throughout this stormy scene, the thundering strikes of the drum play and the extremely important role of creating theatrical effects and fomenting the audience’s emotional as well as kinaesthetic empathy with an ensemble of dancers. More than just a musical accompaniment to the dancers’ movement, the use of drums in “Crossing the Black Water” and later in “Taming of the New Land” serves as the driving force of a high voltage communal energy that constitutes not only the backbone of Lin’s choreography in these particular episodes, but the source of *Legacy’s* extraordinary contagious power over its audiences. The pulsating drum beats which accompany the dancers’ powerful thrusts of their torsos in unison stand symbolically for the collective heartbeats that unite the pioneers in their striving towards the same goals – to preserve lives and reach the new land. As the rhythm of the drums accelerates and their force intensifies, the visceral sensation of togetherness through sharing the same heartbeats strengthens and the feeling of a shared destiny becomes undeniable.<sup>17</sup>

The Taiwanese researcher pointed also out that this common heartbeat rhythm was symbolically reflecting the blood ties joining the past and present generations in Chinese tradition. “His reference to the passing-on and sharing of the same blood line – echoing the often cited Chinese idiom «*xie mai xiang chuan*» which reinforces the concept of «natural ties», or a sense of ‘fatality’ within the «imagined community» is crucial to the formation of nationalistic sentiment”.<sup>18</sup>

“Taming the New Land” (“Tuohuang”) was a part based on the contrast of lightness and heaviness, showing the power of earthly gravity and attempts to overcome it. This was achieved by constant attempts to jerk oneself up as well as, through acrobatic somersaults, jumps and whirling motions. A man was pushing something with great effort, in the company of three women. Another woman was lifting something and pushing it away with all her might. Men were pushing things or hitting things with all their might, standing in groups of two, three or four. The dancer’s centres of gravity were lowered and they performed frog jumps, letting their arms completely free, setting them aside or lifting them up. Their faces expressed effort and determination, with thinly set lips. But this appearance of heaviness of movement, caused by yielding to gravity, was – paradoxically – the source of its amazing lightness. One would transform into the other in a nick of time. This special form of movement was achieved as a result of this unique training session performed by Lin Huaimin with his group on the banks of the Xindian. Chen Ya-ping reminded that Lin developed the concept of the training session and particular choreographic solutions after a visit to a friend living in the suburbs of Taipei. “The sight of miles of barren boulders stretching over the river banks struck Lin as an ideal place for his dancers to experience in both the body and soul of the hardships their ancestors had

<sup>17</sup> Chen Ya-ping, “Legacy and the Nativist Cultural Movement in 1970s Taiwan...”, p. 127.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

had to overcome and the obstacles they literally had to remove in order to build up their homes and livelihood on the island three centuries before”.<sup>19</sup>

The exercises included – as I have already mentioned – quiet resting on the rock, seeking direct, contemplative contact with the surroundings, crawling on the rocks on all fours in order to feel the roughness of the rocks, lifting and pushing heavy boulders, and collective physical exercises consisting of holding one another’s arms and rocking relatively fast, or sitting in a circle and humming, in order to experience a community spirit not only through physical exercises but also through vocal training. All these exercises had a great impact on the way of dancing in *Legacy*. The rhythm of dances in *Legacy*, collective shouts of the dancers, repetitiveness of the movements performed in unison and regular drum beats contributed to the sense of participation in some mysterious and not fully comprehended ceremonial/tribal dance. The intentionally square, sharp movements of dancers performed along straight lines, without curves and arches were building sophisticated and dynamic choreographic sequences subject to symmetry and repetitiveness.

Women’s solo dance characteristic for this part of *Legacy* referred to selected gesture and movement conventions known from classical forms of Chinese drama, with typically slowed-down motions and halts, similarly to women warrior characters in the Beijing opera. They released their energy only to hold it up, as if some external force disturbed them or slowed their movement down. They often adopted stances known in literature as unstable balance positions. According to Eugenio Barba, actors and dancers of various cultures have a special non-everyday sense of so-called unstable balance.<sup>20</sup> The actor would intentionally upset the original balance striving for permanently unstable equilibrium. In fact, the whole *Legacy* is full of unstable balance positions which include unnaturally deep bends of the body, standing on one leg while slowly sifting the other up to 180 degree angle, standing still in some unnatural position, a bit similar to *liangxiang* of the Beijing opera where the actor halted still for a second to emphasise his position. However, such stillness hid awesome potential of movement, as if an invisible hand stopped the dancers, suspending them in the air. Actually, the unstable equilibrium intensified the bodily presence of the actor on stage. The dancer stood still for a moment, but at this very moment he held absolute power over the space and imagination of the audience.

Whether the dances were solo or group, performed by men or women, one was stricken by their desire for the absolute rule over the space, and for filling this space with a body permeated with kinetic energy. A conquest of new land is always a conquest of space, in this instance including the stage space. It is always performed with the body and through the determination of the incomer or dancer. “Taming the New Land” was the most dynamic part of *Legacy*. Dancing sequences emanated with powerful energy, generated by whirling hand movements, pirouettes in the air, jumps with hands and legs set aside, back-flips and somersaults. The boundary between women’s and men’s dance became blurred, as both were equally dynamic.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 124.

<sup>20</sup> See Eugenio Barba, Nicola Savarese, *Sekretna sztuka aktora. Słownik antropologii teatru* (original title: *The Secret Art of the Performer: A Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology*), Wrocław: Ośrodek Badań Twórczości Jerzego Grotowskiego i Poszukiwań Teatralno-Kulturowych, 2005, p. 185–186.

After this passionate, dynamic part, the tone of the performance changed again. “Joy in the Wilderness” (“Yedi de zhufu”) was stylised after Chinese folk dance with its courting and wedding-like overtones. The stage was alive with the mood of folk entertainment, delicate frivolity, lightness and smile. Delicate dances of women would be contrasted with a heavy and gross dance of men. Background music consisted of traditional Chinese music and drumming. However, the mood of the next part, “Death and Rebirth” (“Siwang yu xinsheng”) was totally different. The dancers told quite a different story: a tale of the mystery of death, a mourning for the departed ones and the miracle of birth. Dancers brought to the stage the dead body of a man, father to a child which would soon be born and laid it on the floor. A pregnant woman expressed her despair with symbolic gestures and wordless cries. A dancer with a piece of white cloth tied over him passed by the dancing circle of silent mourners, whirled in the air with his cloth and then put it in the hands of the women crying after the departed man. A shaman woman in black, who previously announced the arrival of the dead body, performed a whirling trance dance. Cries and desperate laments echoed over the stage. Female dancers performed a sequence with scarves and stopped in a silent cry of despair. Male dancers took away the body, throwing the cloth across their arms. The pregnant woman tried to stop them, holding to the edge of the cloth, but her efforts were in vain. The white cloth pulsed in the background, adding a group of dancers imitated the pain and effort of giving birth. Chen Ya-ping noticed in this sequence still another reference to the Graham strategy which consisted of introducing a choir as the double or projection of the protagonist.<sup>21</sup> It was also an indirect reference to the tradition of ancient theatre with the choir acting as a story teller and commentator of events performed on stage. Suddenly, the shaman dragged a piece of red cloth from under the white one, and pulled it across the stage towards the incense burner. The miracle of the birth had occurred. The mother carried the red bundle towards the offering vase with incense sticks. The woman with the infant was another incarnation of the archetypal mother who gives birth and care. The gesture of carrying the child to the incense burner was a symbolic emphasis on the links between generations and a request for a blessing of the ancestors.

The singer introduced another part of *Legacy*, “Planting the Rice Sprouts” (“Gengzhong yu fengshou”). The mood changed again. A rhythmic song of the male and female choir introduced the atmosphere of a simple, merry dance imitating the planting and harvesting of rice. The lightness of the musical background was complemented by the lightness of the dance. Chen Ya-ping considered this sequence of choreography to be an example of Lin Huaimin’s mastery in using nativist language for conveying a nationalistic message. The choreographer referred to the tradition of national/ethnic dances (*minzu wudao*) with stylised farmers’ dances typical for this genre. According to the critic, the audience of the 1970s and 1980s knew this tradition quite well: “Through the use of music, the pacing of movement tempo, the structure of group formations, as well as a unique way of transforming the agrarian gestures into an almost gymnastic style of movements, Lin made the scene into a grand spectacle of mass dance that aimed at exciting the audience’s emotions – the feelings of sharing the same destiny and working towards the same goal – into a physical-psychological climax”.<sup>22</sup> A re-arranged popular Taiwanese folk song acquired the aboriginal

<sup>21</sup> Chen Ya-Ping, *Dance History and Cultural Politics*..., p. 151.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

sound.<sup>23</sup> Its changed tempo and rhythmic character emphasised the gymnastic – as Chen Ya-ping worded it – a character of the dancers' movements. In a subsequent part of that dance sequence, the increased tempo and louder choir singing turned the quiet folk song into a march: "Grouped into a large phalanx, the men and the women move in canon, unison or a combination of both, driven by the accelerating tempo of the singing the formerly toiling gestures become increasingly unified, gaining a touch of militant excitement as the hypnotic rhythm of the repetitive music and movement turns the dance into a mass spectacle, in which the individuals give themselves over to the collective existence".<sup>24</sup> During the finale the character of the dance changed again, with ritual and ceremonial characteristics prevailing over the military march.

The performance ended with a dance with red scarves and the lion dance. The dancers were dressed in modern apparel, similarly to the "Prologue". The last scene was permeated with an atmosphere of folk fair, emphasised by loud Chinese music.

The stage decorations and costumes of *Legacy* were dominated by four strongly contrasting colours: deep blue, white, black and red. Deep blue and black costumes of the dancers were similar in cut to traditional Hakka (Kejia) wear. In traditional Chinese culture, black was the colour of water and the North, characterised by a salty taste. According to Eberhard – black symbolises all things dark, deathly and honourable.<sup>25</sup> Black was associated with roughness but also with fairness. Indigo, since ancient times, was the colour of poor people. Black and deep blue were associated with poverty and simplicity, but also with determination and unyielding character. Poverty expelled Kejia from their homeland, but the strength of their character and will made them build their new life and happiness on the new, unfriendly land.

White was used in *Legacy* for the colour of the sail used by the exiles to travel by sea; whiteness was also ascribed to stormy waters which claimed human lives. The mourning cloth carried after the deceased man and desperately held by the wife was also white. The symbolism of whiteness in Chinese culture is quite complex. White can be the colour of autumn and old age, but it can also symbolise purity and innocence. It is also associated with mourning, although it is not quite justified, because – according to Eberhard – the mourning clothes were the colour of unbleached cloth (*su*) which was brownish and yellowish.<sup>26</sup>

The red, contrasted with white, is the colour of blood and therefore the colour of life, summer and the South. It had the same connotations in ancient China, and for that reason people would then put cinnabar or ruddle into the tombs. Red was also the colour of richness and opulence. For this reason, one of the good luck deities was depicted wearing a red robe. Bridal gowns also were red. Also, red has the power of sending the evil away, and for this reason people painted small red dots on the foreheads of little children. During exorcist rituals, red blood, particularly drawn from the comb of a cockerel, had immense exorcising power. In *Legacy*, red was used for a number of times. In "Tangshan", a red

<sup>23</sup> The arrangement was made by Li Tai-hsiang, Taiwanese composer of aboriginal background.

<sup>24</sup> Chen Ya-Ping, *Dance History and Cultural Politics*..., p. 154.

<sup>25</sup> See "Black" entry in: Wolfram Eberhard, *Symbole chińskie. Słownik. Obrazkowy język Chińczyków* (original title: *Lexicon chinesischer Symbole. Die Bildsprache der Chinesen*), p. 47.

<sup>26</sup> See "White" entry in: Wolfram Eberhard, *Symbole chińskie*..., p. 26.



bundle made of the dancer’s apron symbolised a bundled infant. In “Death and Rebirth”, a bright red piece of cloth pulled from under a white screen symbolised birth and the miracle of life’s rebirth. The final scene, stylised into a folk fair, was also dominated by red colour, with red scarves moved in the air with dancers, and red body of a lion which was considered a good omen in the Chinese treasury of symbols.

*Legacy* was a rich and diverse performance also with respect to its music background. Narrative songs of Chen Da, a folk singer of Pindong, who was 74 years old in the late 1970s, included in the performance, proved to be an excellent idea. He sung his tale on the emigration of the forefathers of modern Taiwanese people to the accompaniment of *yueqin*.<sup>27</sup> His untrained, natural voice matched perfectly well the sophisticated dance which was stylised for folk dance and therefore simplified and based on rhythmic repetitions of sequences of movements performed by dancers. Another great concept was the voice accompaniment consisting of diverse but harmonious shouts of dancers. Such sound effects, correlated with the character of the dance, emphasized its communal, almost ritual, ceremonial character. Still another interesting solution with respect to music in *Legacy* consisted of using re-arranged folk music of local Aboriginal people. Wordless song performed by male and female voices was used to set a quick, merry rhythm for the part of the performance symbolising the ploughing of the land.

The reception of *Legacy* was quite diverse. This does not change the fact that this dance drama, in spite of the passage of time, remained one of the most important choreographic works of Lin Huaimin and stayed for good in the repertoire of the Cloud Gate Dance Theatre. For many, it was a prominent work of its time. Taiwanese people consider it a cult performance – a manifestation of their identity. For continental Chinese it was, in turn, the reflection of Chinese identity, emphasising the ties of Taiwanese people with the continent and their Chinese roots. Political turmoil in the 1970s made *Legacy* a legendary work. Its first night was held on December 16, 1978, exactly on the day when the United States announced the breaking of diplomatic relations with Taiwan. By nature, it was set in the specific historic context, quite accidentally turning into a manifestation of patriotic and nationalistic emotions. For the small, lonely island located on the edge of the world, betrayed by its grand yet materialistic ally, the USA, this dance drama became a consolation and undoubtedly cheered their spirits. At the time of its performances, Lin Huaimin intentionally added fuel to the fire when giving interviews, kindling the patriotic attitudes. He tried to persuade people that there is no point in despairing, that they should take matters in their own hands and support one another, like their forefathers did, because modern Taiwanese are again aboard a boat thrown about by stormy waves.<sup>28</sup> *Legacy* helped to create the myth of Taiwan’s origins. Lin Huaimin used a variety of means for this

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<sup>27</sup> *Yueqin*, called also a moon guitar is a “Chinese lute, one of a family of flat, round-bodied lutes found in Central and East Asia. It was invented, according to tradition, during the Chin dynasty (AD 265–420). It has two pairs of silk strings, tuned (in relative pitch) to c-g, which run from a fastener on the wooden belly to tuning pegs set in the sides of the pegbox. A metal plate is hung inside the body, vibrating against it when the instrument is played.” [Encyclopaedia Britannica 2002, CD edition].

<sup>28</sup> Wen Manying, “Zai feng yu ru hai zhong yan *Xinchuan*” (To play *Legacy* when wind and rain sweep across a gloomy sky), in: Yao Yiwei et al., *Yunmen wuhua*, p. 189–198.

purpose, including diverse dance styles, cultural, religious and political traditions, Graham techniques, Beijing opera conventions, folk dances and songs, national/ethnic dance (*minzu wudao*) tradition, military marching rhythms, the cult of ancestors, and nativist/nationalist strategies. With the passage of time, the youthful patriotism evaporated in the natural way, and Taiwan became one of the most powerful economies in the world, not fitting for the role of betrayed and dejected victim. Lin Huaimin, with his immense artistic achievements, re-examined *Legacy* from a cool distance. In 2006, a reviewer of *Die Zeit* Evelyn Finger quoted his opinion on his early dance drama: “Aesthetically, *Legacy* was an isolated wonder (...). Too expressive. Not introspective enough. Not free enough. «One must develop a softer power, like in martial arts,» and Lin means martial arts, not martial sports, «or like in calligraphy»”.<sup>29</sup> But this was said by Lin from a totally different perspective, after completing work on his most masterful, abstract compositions – a “*Cursive trilogy*” referring to the aesthetics of Chinese calligraphy.

Today, the patriotic fervour has evaporated and the aesthetics of modern dance have changed dramatically. Modern audience feels a tad irritated by the narrative overload of *Legacy*. However, it would be difficult to deny that this choreographic work is marked with unique dynamics, technical intricacies and amazing dance passion which seems to be contagious for the audience. Thirty years ago, Taiwanese people watched that dance drama moved to tears, mostly for reasons other than artistic emotions. The audience of today follows *Legacy* thoroughly, attentively, full of admiration for the Art. The art, for which no grand or small scale politics, alliances and betrayals are of any consequence in the end, as it has just been proved.

### ***My Nostalgia, My Songs***

*My Nostalgia, My Songs (Wo de xiangchou, wo de ge, 1986)*<sup>30</sup> was completely different in character from *Legacy* created less than one decade earlier. This dance drama can be also counted into Lin Huaimin’s “Taiwanese trilogy”. However, in contrast to the previous work, this dance drama had no consistent narrative plot. Neither did it strive to re-construct any monumental and reassuring story, or to tell a pathetic «history of a tribe», narrating the fates of founding fathers of modern Taiwan. It also reflected on history, that time on the contemporary period – but on history which was quite different and was seen from a different perspective. It was not a tale dating two or three hundred years back, well known from textbooks or scientific works, but a story which was more personal and private – the history of two or three decades before the creation of the drama. Consequently, the dance aesthetics was also quite different.

Lin Huaimin recalled the Taiwan of his adolescence and youth, the Taiwan of the 1950s and 1960s. Episodes of the dance drama, connected loosely or having no connection at all, were attempts to grasp tiny fragments of the past reality of the island, seen through the prism of individual experiences. They intended to record shards of life which passed away

<sup>29</sup> Evelyn Finger, “The Most Beautiful Writing in the World”, *Die Zeit*, April 2006.

<sup>30</sup> My analysis of the dance is based on a DVD recording of *Wode xiangchou, wode ge/My Nostalgia, My Songs*, Jingo Records 2003; première: 1986, choreography: Lin Huaimin, music selected: Chang Chao-tung, stage design: Yang Jiwen (based on a woodcut print: Xi Song), costume: Lin Jingru, lighting: Lin Keh-hua.

definitively and remained only in the memory of people who used to be young then. It is a series of volatile images, haunting fragments of songs from the past times, tiny everyday gestures, clothes which went out of fashion. All these elements create an eerie aura of the world which inevitably passed away, but still exerts powerful influence on the imagination of the audience. It was a difficult task to render this aura with dance and with movements and gestures of the body, as it was so volatile and fleeting; another danger was sentimentalism and nostalgia, referred to in the title of the drama.

The impulse for *My Nostalgia, My Songs* was a photograph made by a Taiwanese photographer, showing six men on a beach in winter. Later, another artist made a wood print (*banhua*) out of it. A copy of the print was enlarged, cut into four parts and turned into a decoration for the performance. There was nothing out of the ordinary in the scene, it was strikingly common. The photographer, and later the engraver, depicted an everyday, banal scene: one of the man was squatting, another one was standing. Someone kept a baby in his arms, still another person was bent over a small monkey. The background was just the sky and the sea.

A woman in a simple white dress appeared among fragments of this decoration. The scene slowly filled with dancers: boys and girls in everyday wear used many years ago. They took their positions on the stage. It seemed that the girl in white projected them on stage with her thoughts, or perhaps they stepped down from old photographs to pay us a visit. They walked slowly, absently, insecurely, as if they observed something, as if they dropped in for a second on their way to some other place. This sequence was quite long, taking more than eight minutes. It was accompanied by popular Taiwanese music from that period.

In the second sequence, the stage space was filled with bird songs, rush of the water, sounds of waves beating against the shore. The woman in white walked around as if in sleep or in a mad trance. Although surrounded by others, she seemed absent, looking far beyond herself and her environment. Her insecure movements which slowed down, halted or became tangled down were accompanied by solo dances by other women characters who seemed to remain in a fleeting relationship with her. At the end of the sequence, the dancers were tumbling and darting around the stage as if in a nightmare, imprisoned within their bodies which seemed to be tied to the earth.

The mood of the next episode differed dramatically, as it consisted of a light, humorous and cocky dance of a few young men in black suits, white shirts and black hats, surrounding their haughty and elegant queen – a red haired beauty who reigned over her male flock with her cool, dainty and nonchalant dance movements.

Then the tone changed again. The attention of the audience was drawn to a charismatic figure of a long-haired dancer in a white shirt and black trousers. The man was trashing uneasily on the floor, as if suffering a nightmare. Movements of women dancers in colourful tops and of men who accompanied them were insecure, uneasy, crouching, anxious and violent. Taiwanese critics pointed to the influence of Pina Bausch’s dance theatre aesthetics on Lin Huaimin during his work on *My Nostalgia, My Songs*. In mid-1980s Lin had an opportunity to watch performances by her Tanz Theater Wuppertal. Similarly to the German choreographer, Lin Huaimin was presenting a characteristic type of relationship between man and woman, marked with coldness, strangeness, rejection and lack of ties. Some dance scenes almost seemed to be quoted from Bausch’s choreography: a convulsively bent body of a woman dancer passionately, even aggressively and greedily desired to hug a

motionless dancer, who after some attempts pushed the woman away with equally mechanical and violent movement of his hand. After a while, the dancer in the white shirt performed a moving solo dance. Albeit surrounded by others, he seemed to be desperately lonely. Dejected, lying on the floor on his side, holding a hand stiffly against his body, he crawled away from the stage, against the background created by a row of dancers.

The appearance of the woman dressed in white who held a sparkler in her hand and a boy who gave her a toy drummer which rhythmically beat his tiny drum, changed again the mood of the performance. It was a prelude to a dance procession of men and women, full of lightness, joy and charming unpretentiousness. But the cheery mood did not last long, dispersed by five woman dancers in long gaudy dresses and impersonating representatives of world's oldest profession. They lifted up edges of their dresses and bent their well trained bodies in the gesture of temptation. Their impressive bodies, toned with many years' dance training, effectively ruined the illusion of reality, creating an unexpected comic effect. The audience simply saw muscled dancers playing roles of prostitutes. The sensuality of their dance evaporated unnoticeably, leaving only the cheap dresses, vulgar movements and an eerie sense of impoverishment and sadness. A girl in a red dress lifted her hem high up, showing large, laced, red underpants. She put her skirt over her head and was unable to take it off. Her angry friend in black brutally pushed her away from the stage. A display of erotic sensuality sadly ended with being clumsily stuck in one's own dress.

The final sequence began with a train whistle. The woman in white, with her hair set loose, fell on the floor of the back part of the stage with a dramatic bend of her body and remained motionless with her eyes wide open. The dancers entered slowly, just as at the beginning. It was snowing. Shiny snowflakes slowly covered the empty stage. Everything was dramatically quiet, as always during snowfall. Was it nostalgic and sentimental? Not really. Rather unsettling, quiet and lonely. Memories of the past are memories of adolescence, when moments of childlike, empty and fleeting joy clash with adult cruelty, cynicism, brutality and coldness.

### ***Portrait of the Families***

*Portrait of the Families (Jiazu hechang)* was the third of the "Taiwanese trilogy" of dance dramas.<sup>31</sup> It was created in 1997, nineteen years after the first night of *Legacy* and eleven years after *My Nostalgia, My songs*. It was completely different in character and dance style. *Legacy*, showing the hardships faced by founding fathers of Taiwanese community of today was the apotheosis of the spirit of community and cooperation, while *Portrait of the Families* was a settlement of accounts with the bitter history of the last century. The narrative was also different than in *Legacy*, in spite of obvious references and continuations. The performance was opened with a lion dance, performed by a dancer manipulating the lion's head with a piece of red silk attached to it. This dancing reference reminded the audience that they were in the same place on earth as in *Legacy*. However, after just a brief a moment they would realize without any doubts that the story that they

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<sup>31</sup> My analysis of the dance is based on a DVD recording of *Jiazu hechang/Portrait of the Families*, Jingo Records 2003, première: September 20, 1997, Taibei, Guojia Xijuyuan/National Theatre, choreography: Lin Huaimin, music: Arvo Part, traditional Taiwanese music, stage design: Ming Cho Lee, costume: Chen Wan-li, lighting: Lin Keh-hua.

were going to witness would be quite different. It would be a history built of tiny fragments, shards and broken pieces, full of cracks, breaks and empty places which make it painfully exposed. The history of human sorrow, suffering, painful sense of absence and memories of people who one day had disappeared without trace, never to be found again. The only sign which they had left on earth are the voices of their families who tell the histories of their fathers and husbands in subdued voices, without excessive emotions – in an ordinary way which is strangely moving.

Chen Ya-ping reminded them that the performance originated from a photograph exhibition staged in Jiayi by the Xingang Foundation for Culture and Education (Xingang Wenjiao Jijinhui), presenting about a hundred photographs which depicted the life of local community between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>32</sup> Old photographs, dug out from oblivion, considerably moved Lin Huaimin, as a record of the world which was no more and one of the few authentic traces of reality to which the photographed persons once had belonged. From that moment on, the choreographer began to collect old photographs and examine family stories related to persons and situations depicted on the photos. Soon the collection had almost two thousand of photographs. Two hundred of them were used in *Portrait of the Families*.

The performance was a settlement of accounts with the modern history of Taiwan, using multimedia technology. The story was told along three independent lines. One of them used black and white photographs of Taiwanese people, considerably enlarged and displayed on the back wall of the stage. They presented multi-generation families in traditional Chinese clothes worn at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, young couples with children, brides, schoolchildren, children during physical exercise, people resting on the beach, military people, landscapes, birds, old city buses and many others. The photographs documented the life of Taiwanese people throughout the past century, recording tiny, seemingly meaningless moments of everyday life. They were not arranged in any particular order, but rather displayed as a randomly set mosaic of life which consisted of solemn and trivial events alike; they would easily skip our attention, if not for the decision of the photographer. The technology and chance, or at times a conscious decision saved these ephemeral fragments of other people’s lives for us to savour. This combination of chance and conscious choice presented a picture of life which was utterly common, consisting of daily rituals, either thoroughly arranged (on family, school and military photos) or completely natural and spontaneous (landscapes, birds, city landscapes). An overhead projector was displaying these photos throughout the whole performance. Some were presented for a longer time, others disappeared faster similarly to the images of the world which surrounds us outside the theatre hall. Sometimes they showed things at close-ups, sometimes offered a view from distant perspective. The close-ups of human faces seemed to be of particular interest. However, as the models were posed, their faces were usually devoid of strong emotions. Or perhaps the expressionless faces were the result of conventions typical for the period and culture, which required that one should restrain feelings in the presence of a stranger and intruder, which was the camera. In spite of that, the posed photographs were moving and very human. They recorded people who passed away, clothes, items

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<sup>32</sup> Chen Ya-ping et al., *Yunmen – Chuanqi* (Cloud Gate. A Legend.), Taipei: Jing Keji Gufen Youxian Gongsi, p. 125.

which are available only in museums or old curiosity shops, recalling a nostalgic memories of a world which was gone with those people. Watching the photographs, the audience adopted the role of collectors of memories, experiencing the life of other people by watching the material evidence of the world which had floated away. However, it was not possible to approach such world directly any more, and such awareness filled the observers/spectators with melancholy. It was probably intended by authors of the performance who used the simple trick of projecting photographs to make the audience aware of the inevitable passage of time, ephemeral character of all our actions and remember them painfully that our short lives will not allow us to make up for many of our mistakes, foul actions and inactions.

The second story line was punctuated with short personal life stories told by old people, middle aged women and young people in various languages: aboriginal language of Taiwan, Hakka dialect, Mandarin and Taiwanese. They shared fragments of various family tales: a story of a father who disappeared without trace and was shot, as they discovered after many years; a story about a happy return of children, for which their mother was continually offering thanks to Goddess Mazu. The stories were often tinted with sadness, quiet resignation, the sense of impotence against the abstract and merciless history/politics which, nevertheless was created by individual people. Yet such history did not care about individual people and crushed them in the name of absurd ideologies and lowly political goals. The stories implicitly referred to Japanese occupation and to the events of February 28, 1947 and to White Terror. Although these references concerned recent history of Taiwan, they had universal meaning and conveyed a deep humanistic message on the highest value of human life, saying that there were no excuses for taking it, even in the name of the most elevated political reasons.

The third line of narration was developed along dance episodes. However, the choreographic sequences did not have any extensive narrative structure by themselves – at least not in the same sense as in *Legacy*. The dancers offered artistic interpretation of simple everyday activities: face and hair washing, teeth brushing, learning how to swim, performing physical exercises. However, they were not just copying everyday behaviour. The repetitiveness, violence and mechanical character of their movement emanated with unsettling autistic aggression. The audience was unable to perceive them as authentic and natural, but rather as eerily alienated behaviour. This sense of strangeness was amplified by their similar, brownish clothes which were sometimes cut in Western style, and sometimes reminded Chinese smocks. All these people had similar, icy and expressionless faces, indifferent and focused only on the precision and automatism of their movements.

The three story lines presented by old photographs, fragmentary stories and dancing actions were not tied by any obvious chronological links, yet they were related to one another, sometimes by overlapping, and sometimes from a distance. In the end, every spectator had to make up his own, coherent story out of the multimedia mix presented to him on stage. The story was unusual and dark. Nostalgic, almost pastoral images of people who were resting and smiling were juxtaposed with aggressive actions, symbolic acts of violence and attempts to resist it, visions of destruction and conflagration and finally of death, emphasised with making a chalk outline of a body of a dancer fallen on the stage. The seemingly quiet, everyday life hid terror. That terror lurked from behind dreadful, quietly told stories about murdered people who often accidentally fell victim to cruel and thoughtless regimes, but it could be also seen on the sad faces of the photographed

crowd, in mechanically repeated, dehumanised activities, in the absurd military drills of children brushing their teeth and in many similar details.

A special place in this dreary and dismal story was reserved for a womanly figure, and not without a good reason. Lin Huaimin personified Taiwan saying that the island was a woman.<sup>33</sup> Let us add, an extraordinary woman. Taiwan – a weak, maltreated lady, occupied and colonised throughout centuries, wielded a great power. It persevered, in spite of everything and against everyone, it never yielded, it fought for its own, just like a mother who had to fight for her children. The figure and symbolism of a woman was already emphasised in *Legacy*. However, at that time, the woman had archetypal characteristics of a child-bearing mother who ensured the continuity of generations. Sometimes she impersonated the gentle Goddess Mazu, protector of those who needed help and rescue; at other moments she proved to be as strong and determined as men. She used to be unyielding and tenacious, up to the point of losing her femininity. In *Portrait of the Families* the woman’s figure reappeared many times, but her image became more and more varied. She was not invincible, although she retained her tenacity, she also lost her sacred dimension, becoming more human and commonplace. In the third part, called “The Bride” (“Xinniāng”) she turned into the titular bride, wearing red and being tied with a rope. She wanted to free herself and pulled the rope along when moving forward and then tensed her body and the rope to the limits of endurance, and finally fell to the floor. An invisible force dragged her backstage. She fell again, rose and again made the effort to go forward. She showed her tied hands and gagged mouth to the audience. After a few minutes of vain and silent struggle, the invisible power finally dragged her backstage.

In the next part, “The White Dress” (“Baiyi”) the woman was wearing a simple white gown. Her body was torn by convulsions. She fell on the floor, only to rise again. She fell and got up once more. The more her balance was upset, the more determined was her struggle to get back on her feet. This part was accompanied by a story of a woman speaking in Taiwanese: “March 12, 1947. Father was taken away by plain-cloths policemen. Mother lost her will to live. Her spirit went away with Father. We took her to a hospital. Out of religious faith, Mother decided to live on. But she had one condition. All father’s belongings had to be burnt. Nothing was to be left”.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, in the seventh episode, “Peony” (“Mudan”) a woman ran into a crowd which stood against the background of photographs showing an army. She was followed by a man. After being caught, she was forced into a traditional dress and placed on a chair. A bunch of peonies was put in her hands. She was sitting motionless, slowly tearing the petals away, as if dazed. She slumped down in the chair for a moment, then straightened herself and returned to tearing the peonies, with increasingly aggressive motions. Then, in her madness, she put a flower in her mouth and hung limply on the chair, bending her body in an unnatural way.

However, the woman also turned into a mother who knelt praying to some deity, giving an offering by removing coins from one bundle into another. The sequence was performed

<sup>33</sup> Recalled after Chen Ya-ping et al., *Yunmen – Chuanqi*, p. 132.

<sup>34</sup> “Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, *Portrait of the Families*, Voices” (updated version, August 24, 1998), p. 3, a recording of texts spoken during the performance, provided by Cloud Gate Dance Theatre archive in Taipei.

against a story told in Taiwanese by a male voice, recalling how he was drafted in the Japanese army in 1943: "I was sent to Indo-China. My first younger brother was dispatched to Pan-Hu. The next brother, to an Air Force factory in Japan. With three of her four children drafted, Mother went to the temples to ask for blessings. She promised to do 100 kow-tows if we were returned safely. Mother was overjoyed when we made it home alive. So she went to the temple to do her thanksgiving. She was not good with numbers and was worried that she would lose count, thus insulting the goddess. So we prepared 100 coins for her; after each kow-tow she removed one coin from the pile. Mother had made promises at temples in Hsin-Kang and Bei-Gang, 100 at each. So at the end of the war, she did 200 kow-tows".<sup>35</sup>

The woman was also able to impersonate a shamanistic character. In the ninth episode, "Long Haired Girl" ("Changfa buhai") she was a black-haired beauty who performed a violent, unsettling, sensuous dance. A similar shamanistic woman figure reappeared in the twelfth part, "The Black Gown" ("Heiyi") in which the dancer in black, hidden behind a semi-transparent, black screen, performed an amazing dance of her right hand, lit with white light against the dark stage. The figure of the woman was reduced for the moment to a beautiful hand, naked forearm and arm which performed a sequence of harmonious, elegant movements. Suddenly, the movements changed into violence, and the hand began to shake convulsively. The black screen was lifted, disclosing a shamanistic dancer in black, with her long, jet-black hair. This sequence was the prelude for the most beautiful, unsettling and ominous fragment of the dance drama. Three semi-transparent screens were lowered on the stage, equipped with vertical, flexible wires, bending under the weight of dancers. Three dancers positioned behind those screens seemed as if they wanted to get through those flexible wires. However, the wires, shining with gold in the limelight, kept them on the other side of the screens, as if behind prison bars. The only accompaniment measured were, shallow beats, similar to the tolling of a bell or ticking of a clock which inevitably counted the remaining time. The screens went up and the dancers hung on them, pulling up their legs and hanging heads down, holding to the bottom frames. Finally, they fell down. There woman dancers entered the stage and made chalk outlines of their bodies. The ritual of cruel death was executed in almost complete silence. Only the measured, shallow beats amplified the terror. The previous part – dance of the naked hand – was accompanied by classical music, but now both the music and the narrative went dead.

Death and destruction were present also in other parts of the dance drama, including the dramatic eighth episode, in which a mother's prayer for her saved son clashed with a dance of men who pulled up their T-shirts covering their heads. Their bodies were bent, hands and legs moved as if tied with a rope. They fell to the floor, looking like shot convicts.

Dreary, fearsome sequences were intertwined with funny and absurd ones. During "Washing Faces I" ("Xilian I"), woman dancers washed their faces with quick, diligent movements of their hands, against the background of photographs of soldiers. This episode clashed with a story told by a man in Mandarin dialect, narrating how he, after many years, found the grave of his father who disappeared when the story teller was a child:

In the forties, my father ran a trading business in Shanghai, Taiwan and Hong Kong. In 1951, he left for Hong Kong, after spending Lunar New Year with us in Shanghai.

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 5.



We got a telegram from him, saying that he [is] leaving for Taiwan. We have never heard from him since. Because of the situation between China and Taiwan, we couldn't do anything about searching for my father. In 1984, I went to study in the States and started the work of looking for my father. In 1985 and «86 I ran ads in major newspapers in Taiwan. There was no clue at all. In 1987, a former colleague of my father's finally resumed contact with my mother. He said he had been sent to pick up my father at the harbour. He did not find my father. Ten days later, they learned that my father had been arrested. In fact, he was executed three months later.<sup>36</sup>

Episode ten was a comical scene of a swimming lesson. The next scene showed teeth brushing ritual performed with a military precision. Undisciplined and late participants were punished in a variety of inventive ways: they had to make jumps, bows, stood with their hands raised, or run around the stage.

The grotesque neighboured the absurd, the fun – with terror, the common, everyday life was set aside its monstrous, unnatural form. On one hand, the audience was terrorised by omnipresent death, images of massacred bodies and people shot without blink of an eye, on the other – they laughed and felt slightly embarrassed by the banal character of the present day life. A woman told a moving story about her wartime fate: “In 1944, the Americans start[ed] bombing Taiwan. Everyday, on my way to work, I could see bodies without legs, bodies without arms, or heads without bodies. I also saw burnt bodies being carried to the hospital. I would go to work with tears in my eyes. My colleagues and I were all young girls of 17 or 18. We were scared, so we decided to do something about it. Everyday, before going to work, we would put on make-ups: lipstick, rouge, perfume, everything. We were so young. We did not want to die, but we decided that if we were going to die, we would die beautifully”.<sup>37</sup> A contemporary teenager told about her day, showing a completely different image of the world, which can be called scary only in reference to the routine and regular rhythm of everyday activities: “My days are like this: I wake up early, and start studying after breakfast. Then lunch, and a little nap. Then I study some more before dinner. After dinner, I take a bath, then go on studying until midnight. Life is painful”.<sup>38</sup> The tragic sense of history, the drama of death which was a common thing for the generation of her parents was replaced with the deadly boredom of everyday life, accidental and momentary relations, dire problems with identity and trifle problems such as the fact that the telephone did not ring.

Towards the end of the performance it seemed for a moment that it would end similarly to *Legacy*, with some kind of folk fair. As if to confirm this some actors in red appeared, carrying some idol in a litter. Traditional Chinese music began to play and a crowd of dancers came out. But suddenly, the atmosphere changed. A dancer impersonating a medium with naked torso, face covered with thick theatrical make-up, in richly ornamented headgear appeared with burning incense sticks in his hand and began his unsettling trance dance on the stage covered with bodies. His dance, full of acrobatic figures and shamanistic dynamics was contrasted with slow movement of dancers walking on the stage as if in a dream. A huge photo of a colourful boat was projected on a stage screen; an equally colourful yacht moved against it, small as a toy. Then an image of conflagration would appear: a burnt ship

<sup>36</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

and black and white photo of a burnt car. The mad, oblivious dance of the medium was broken by two other dances who carried the medium away. The remaining dancers repeated the trance movements. Photographs in the background overlaid one another, so that only fragments were visible. A network of red ropes criss-crossed the stage. The measured beats began to sound again. The photographs disappeared and the audience could only see a tangle of ropes and lighted faces of a few actors seemed to be ghosts or ancestors, looking at the viewers from the other world. The faces were lighted with projectors held by dancers in their hands. After a while, they directed the light away from their faces and towards the audience. The light became a mysterious link between the viewers and those who passed away many years ago, but their unsettling presence was still felt among the living. They were unable to depart for good because their losses had not yet been made up for and no forgiveness was granted. It was necessary to complete the expiation ritual but would one empty gesture be enough? Women brought in basins with water. Actors who used to hold the projectors bent down and washed their faces; everyone could hear water splashing. A dancer started to speak but after a while her voice ceased to be audible. A male dancer followed her example, but he was not heard, either. He was just standing there with the basin in his hands, moving his lips. His voice became audible for a while, but then it went off, lost in the stage space. Then, the actor poured water over his head, as if performing the ritual cleansing. A girl came to the man soaked in water and extended her hand towards him. Colourful houses-lampoons entered the stage from the back. The girl took the boy by his hand, and they looked together into the infinite blue space of clouds, sky and water, visible between arcades in the background. The lampoons slowly moved across the stage. One of them stopped in the centre. The light darkened.

Chen Ya-ping pointed to the numerous sequences including water and bathing, washing one's hair, washing the face and brushing teeth in the dance.<sup>39</sup> Naturally, one can interpret them as everyday, common activities, but they can be also seen as purification rituals. They can also be associated with shamanistic and exorcist rituals, popular in the folk culture of South-Eastern China and Taiwan. Explaining the symbolism of a boat, Eberhard recalled the popular custom of letting boats made of paper and thin wood off into the sea and setting them on fire in order to prevent plagues.<sup>40</sup> According to Chen Ya-ping, the figure of the medium performing the trance dance belonged to the same tradition. The dancer was an exorcist who purified the space and made it sacred. He released evil powers from a place, obtained the approval of ancestors and deities for his people, made his people live in an orderly, harmonious world. The exorcisms were performed on stage to cleanse the historic events occurring on Taiwan during 20<sup>th</sup> century. The shaman expelled demons of evil, crime and injustice. The spirits of ancestors incarnated in people from old photographs and talked to the audience with voices of their closer relatives who told tragic family stories, hidden in memories for a long time. Ghosts haunted the living demanding atonement. The only thing which we could do for them was to retain them in memory and light lampoon houses for them. This symbolic gesture completed the purification and thanksgiving ritual which started an hour or so before, with the dance of the lion which was an animal of good omen.

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<sup>39</sup> Chen Ya-ping et al., *Yunmen – Chuanqi*, p. 136.

<sup>40</sup> See "Boat" entry in: Wolfram Eberhard, *Symbole chińskie...*, p. 143.

In *Portrait of the Families*, noble and trivial things existed side by side and the tragedy neighboured comedy, just as in everyday life. The more fear, scare and ugliness there occurs in real life, the more we dream about peace, order and beauty. The more we feel accidental and disposable, the more we wish for setting roots and learning about our origins. The stormy history of Taiwan – no man’s land, unwanted and appropriated so often – put together in the performance as if it were a collage made of fragments of photographs which recorded human life with all its ephemeral and accidental qualities, was actually the history of every man who was incessantly forced to seek his own place on earth. Perhaps this is the reason why the last story of a woman telling in Mandarin about her father stayed so long in the memory:

When Father was 91, I took him to his home town in China. That was his first homecoming in 59 years. We went to the field to pay respect to his parents’ graves. Suddenly Father said: “Let’s go home.”

“Home? Aren’t we already home?”

“No,” he said. “Our home in Ping-Dong.”

Throughout his life, he had been homesick. I was surprised he took Ping-Dong for his home.

After returning home, Father was calm and happy. Finally, I realized that Taiwan was the place he wished to have his body buried.<sup>41</sup>

“Let us go home” – these simple words of an old man are the wisest answer to recurring identity crises which torment the people of Taiwan, who in the last century were aggravated by constant changes of rulers, starting from Chinese emperor, including Japanese occupation forces, and ending with Guomindang’s dictatorship. In fact, the power is of no significance whatsoever. The only thing that matters is the place on earth which one accepts as his own and chooses to be the place of his rest.

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<sup>41</sup> “Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan, *Portrait of the Families, Voices*”, p. 8.



BOGDAN ZEMANEK

## War on the Empire's Periphery: Asymmetric Conflict in South-West China

### Abstract

The Han Chinese, who expanded from the Huang He basin, managed to conquer and assimilate the original inhabitants of what is now southern China. Their conquest of south-western (modern Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi) areas was much slower, because of the difficult terrain and opposition from aborigines. This conflict of the Chinese empire with Thai and Mong-Khmer tribes fits Andrew Mack's definition of an "asymmetric conflict", so great was the difference in war capabilities between the antagonists. Despite great costs of invasions and of subsequent quelling numerous uprising, the empire persevered in occupying the south-west; the decisive factors were: the need to protect the borders and to build a stable society in frontier areas; large immigration of the Hans into the area; strong belief of Chinese officials that their actions were morally right; the ability to use brutal and inhumane methods of warfare, including attack on civilians; lack of external constraints for the Chinese and lack of external help for the aborigines; and the aborigines' inability to influence Chinese public opinion. For these reasons, the Chinese political ability to wage war in the south-west was never undermined, which according to the theory of asymmetric conflict is the decisive factor in winning the war by the stronger of the combatants.

### Definition of asymmetric conflict

Andrew Mack<sup>1</sup> calls a conflict "asymmetric" when there is a great disproportion of power and resources between the belligerents. One of the sides possesses the necessary potential to invade the other; the second side cannot retaliate. The difference is not only in the level of technology, but mostly in the availability of power: the stronger side does not have to, and usually believes it does not need to, use its full potential in the conflict. Its being is never in danger, in opposition to the weaker side, which has to engage in the struggle all it possesses, because its very existence is endangered. If the risks involved on both sides are similar, then the conflict is "symmetric", even if there may exist great differences in their capabilities for war. Since the stronger power regards conflict as relatively unimportant, the conflict does not take precedence over regular functioning of the state, as fully-fledged war does. For that reason, such conflicts do not increase the cohesion of society, the nation does not unify, as it usually happens when it is in serious danger. There occur disagreements about the course of war, its costs and rationale, which erode the political will to continue the struggle. In the

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict", *World Politics*, Vol. 27, No. 2, February 1975, p. 175-200.

end, the war is lost not on the battlefield, but at home. More often than not, from a purely military point of view, the stronger side is winning, but it loses politically. A classical example is the Vietnam War, in which Americans inflicted 4 million casualties at the cost of their own 50,000, yet the American society was not willing to sacrifice any more of their members, while the Vietnamese were determined to sustain any number of casualties, if it only meant victory. As Henry Kissinger said “The guerrilla wins if he does not lose”.<sup>2</sup>

The key of Mack’s argument is that “insurgents can only achieve their ends if their opponents’ political capability to wage war is destroyed”<sup>3</sup>, no matter what kind of war is actually fought (guerrilla, urban warfare etc.). They cannot defeat the stronger party militarily; they can only do it politically, by destroying the will to continue the fight. Often it is the expenses of war and the economic problems it creates, which ultimately cause the change of policy and withdrawal of the aggressor.

Ivan Arreguín-Toft offers an alternative explanation of “How the Weak Win Wars”. He predicts the outcome of the conflict on the basis of the strategy employed by the combatants. The stronger side may ‘directly attack’ military objectives or use ‘barbaric’ means in order to destroy the enemy’s civilian population. The weaker side may ‘defend’ itself ‘directly’ or use ‘guerrilla strategy’. If both sides use direct combat methods, the stronger attacker will quickly win; however, it will lose if it attacks the weaker side indirectly (i.e. by targeting civilians, while the weaker offers regular military opposition). Barbaric acts aimed at the weaker side’s civilians will cause the stronger side to win, if the other side employs guerrilla warfare. The latter combat method, however, will probably be effective only if the stronger side uses regular military attack.<sup>4</sup>

I will use the theory of asymmetric warfare to discuss the Chinese subjugation of the area, which now consist mainly of the three south-western provinces of China: Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi, and adjacent territories (e.g. southern part of Sichuan province). I will call the area by a general term of “south-west (of China)”, because now they are the part of this country, as the effect of the historical process described below. This was a very long process in which the Chinese encountered many difficulties, and in a way, failed to achieve full success, as there still exist large non-assimilated populations in that area (for example, over 12 million Zhuangs in Guangxi, who constitute the largest national minority in the People’s Republic of China). For comparison, the conquest of the south-eastern coastal area started at about the same time, ca. 2000 years ago, yet these territories are now completely sinicized, and all their aboriginal inhabitants fully assimilated.

The costs of conquering the south-west, both in cash and in manpower, were enormous and were not equalled by profits from the newly acquired lands. Therefore, two questions arise: first, why it took the Chinese state so long to conquer the south-western areas and second, why the Chinese state persevered in its effort to subjugate these lands, despite the animosity of the local people, who first opposed the invasions and, after they had been incorporated into the Chinese empire, rebelled again and again, which resulted in huge casualties and causing enormous expenses for the war effort?

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<sup>2</sup> Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars...”, p. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 179.

<sup>4</sup> Ivan Arreguín-Toft, “How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict”, *International Security*, Vol. 26, No. 1, July 2001, p. 93–128.

First, it is necessary to understand the cause of the Chinese expansion – why the Chinese needed to go elsewhere. They were definitely the most developed group in Eastern Asia, which very early (ca. 1000 BC) achieved a high degree of technological and political advancement. The high agricultural skills allowed the Chinese population to increase quickly; after some time, the core areas in the Yellow River Basin became overpopulated. Their skills in warfare and statecraft were shaped and tested from 8<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, when many of their states fought against each other.

The final winner, the unified Qin empire, was in fact a superb war machine, but one that could not be stopped, as it could not transform itself into a peaceful regime. Finding no targets at home, it struck in all possible directions. As the Chinese were agricultural people, deserts and mountains, unsuitable for cultivation, blocked their expansion to the north and west. The north-eastern Manchurian region was a viable alternative, but it was endangered by invasions of the nomads from the steppes. The terrain in the south was hilly and the climate much hotter and humid than the one to which the Yellow River people were accustomed; but the land could be tilled and the people there were less warlike than northern nomads. For these reasons, it became the main area of expansion of Han people from the densely populated north, people who had the necessary tools of war, agriculture and statecraft to overcome the original inhabitants. However, these tools were almost insufficient to tackle the mountains and people in the south-west.

There is one more point which should be discussed before turning to the main subject. It can be argued that the theory of asymmetric warfare can be applied to the conflicts on China's northern border. The "northern barbarians", i.e. nomads of the steppes of northern and central Asia, were very few in number in comparison with the Chinese, and their socio-political organization was also much simpler. Their cavalry raid style of warfare was also sufficiently different from the Chinese one, which was mostly based on infantry, firepower and extensive use of fortifications. Therefore, the conflicts between them and the Chinese can be termed "asymmetric conflict". However, there is one aspect in which the situation on China's northern frontier was different from that in southern China. Due to their military prowess, the northerners were often able to strike at the very heart of the Chinese empire and even confirm their superiority by establishing an imperial dynasty. Therefore, the conflicts with the northerners were not asymmetric in Mack's sense – the interests of China, the stronger state, really were at stake. The very existence of the Chinese state (or at least the ruling dynasty), was often endangered.<sup>5</sup> The wars with the northerners were never treated lightly, as peripheral conflicts – on the contrary, the main military effort (offensive or defensive<sup>6</sup>) was usually directed towards the north.

## The mountains

The first and principal obstacle to anybody who wished to cross into what is now south-west China is the terrain. It consists mainly of high mountains, divided by deep-cut

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<sup>5</sup> Equalling a state with a dynasty may seem ridiculous, but in the pre-modern times the basic identification was with the ruler, not the (fluid) concept of the "state". Even China with its long history of statecraft, was in the times of subsequent dynasties called "the Great Ming" or "the Great Qing", rather than "Middle Kingdom".

<sup>6</sup> Famous Great Wall is the best known symbol of the latter.

river valleys. Except for Liangguang plain in the east and Yunnan-Guizhou plateau with Kunming at its centre, the area is extremely rugged. The province of Guizhou is the best example, with over 75% of its territory being mountainous (and 3% just bare rock).<sup>7</sup> The average height of the Yunnan-Guizhou plateau is between 1200 and 2000 m in Yunnan and western Guizhou. It goes down through the hills of central Guizhou and western Guangxi which are between 1000 and 1800 m, and further down to the lowlands of Guangdong and to sea level. There is very little arable land and even relatively flat areas are dotted with karst pinnacles (which make for impressive sights, but not for good farming). Limestone karst formations dominate the territory; the rock, easily eroded by water, allows rivers to form extremely deep and steep gorges.<sup>8</sup> Eroded rocks form a network of underground canals and caves, into which most of the surface water sinks. As a result, despite large rainfall (800–1300 mm per year), and humid climate, Guizhou is regularly endangered by drought.<sup>9</sup> But the climate remains very humid, with a large variety of temperature, which is why the province was a very unhealthy place. Soldiers brought from outside were prone to many local diseases, including malaria.<sup>10</sup>

Until recently, the transportation network was very limited. At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were four “official roads” in Guizhou, paved, but useless for carts, as they used steps for climbing the hills. British travellers noticed no carts whatsoever in the province,<sup>11</sup> and even in 1995, when I travelled by bus through Guizhou, one of the province’s main roads was still unpaved and muddy and in such a poor shape that trucks had to haul themselves up using tow-ropes hooked on stones and trees, so as not to slide down the slope.

The rivers, which in other provinces constituted main routes of communication in pre-modern China, flow very fast, are shallow and cut by many cataracts – therefore, only a few of them are navigable, but only for small craft and on short distances. As bad as the geographical conditions in Guizhou used to be in commerce, they were even worse for the military, as they created a logistical nightmare. Supply lines were stretched, prone to attack, and had very limited capacity. Getting supplies from outside was vital, since the local subsistence economy could not provide what was necessary.

The terrain of south-west China can be summed up in the words of the Chinese classic:

Country in which there are precipitous cliffs with torrents running between, deep natural hollows, confined places, tangled thickets, quagmires and crevasses, should be left with all possible speed and not approached.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Ronald D. Hill, “Guizhou”, in: *Berkshire Encyclopaedia of China*, Linsun Cheng and Kerry Brown (eds.), Great Barrington: Berkshire Publishing Group, 2009, p. 962.

<sup>8</sup> Herold J. Wiens, *China’s March Toward the Tropics; a Discussion of the Southward Penetration of China’s Culture, Peoples, and Political Control in Relation to the Non-Han-Chinese Peoples of South China and in the Perspective of Historical and Cultural Geography*, Hamden, Conn: Shoe String Press, 1954, chp. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Robert D. Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou: The “Miao” Rebellion, 1854–1873*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 20–25.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>12</sup> Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, chp. IX, sec. 15, tran. Lionel Giles (1910), Pax Librorum Publishing, 2009, p. 32.



## The people

Mack's original theory discussed the conflict between a modern, industrialized, rich and powerful state and relatively poor, often backward insurgents (who might, however, have access to modern weaponry). Imperial China was of course not an industrialized country (although during Song dynasty it almost made a breakthrough into full industrialization), but it was an enormous, centralised state, with a great ability to amass both large armies and huge amounts of material. Already in 742, the standing Tang army numbered almost half a million troops.<sup>13</sup> Later, in the years following An Lushan's rebellion (9<sup>th</sup> century), it grew to almost a million,<sup>14</sup> and then increased to 1,25 million in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and to 4 million at the end of the Ming dynasty (17<sup>th</sup> century).<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, these regular armies were well organized and composed of many different kinds of troops – even the infantry, the backbone of the army, was divided into many types, such as the crossbowmen, very valuable due to their heavy fire power. In Ming times, firearms and artillery started to play an important role. For example, 2000 hand gunners were used against the southern rebellion in 1388<sup>16</sup> in a typical use of technological advantage by the more developed contestant. The army was supported by a network of roads and depots, and the imperial bureaucracy could mobilise additional resources if necessary (the early Ming sea expeditions under admiral Zheng He, consisting of ca. 27 000 people on board of over 300 ships, are the best illustrations of China's capabilities).

In their south-west drive, Chinese were opposed by various aboriginal peoples, mainly of Thai and Mong-Khmer ethnicity. They were not so well organised as their adversaries. It seems that their states, like the kingdom of Nanzhao in Yunnan or Mu'ege in Guizhou, were modelled after the Chinese state. This does not mean that the internal organization of their states followed the Chinese example, but that the very idea of political organization higher than tribe or clan was borrowed from their northern neighbour. However these states, especially Nanzhao, were able to achieve remarkable cohesiveness and a great degree of power, which gave them not only defensive, but also offensive capabilities.

Most of the southerners, however, lived in tribes or clans, which were their basic social and military units. For purpose of war they sometimes created large, sometimes cross-ethnic, alliances. On the other hand, they were known for constant intra- and inter-ethnic skirmishes. Such fighting incurred loss of life, property and usually led to more violence; yet at the same time provided ample opportunities for getting hands-on war experience, which made up for lack of formal training.

Most of the southern peoples valued marshal prowess, often glorified in their songs and tales. The Chinese viewed non-Hans as violent and prone to fights, including attacks on officials, and at the same time gullible and easy to cheat by the unscrupulous Chinese. When they discovered they were cheated, they often resorted to violence; the culprits

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<sup>13</sup> David Graff, *Medieval Chinese Warfare, 300–900*, London–New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 210.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

<sup>16</sup> Chris J. Peers, *Soldiers of the Dragon: Chinese Armies 1500 BC–AD 1840*, Oxford–New York: Osprey, 2006, p. 181.

were not easy to catch in the mountains of Miao lands.<sup>17</sup> The 19<sup>th</sup> century descriptions of southern hill tribes like the Miao, written by European missionaries' and Chinese officials, differed greatly from each other, but both agree on the Miao being warlike and independent. The Miao raised their sons to be brave warriors; they engaged in hunting, which gave them some martial training.<sup>18</sup> The Chinese called the non-aculturated Miao *xiong* ("fierce"), which shows how they perceived the latter.

From the economical point of view, the aborigines benefited from being close to their resource bases (i.e. their own villages). Their economy was often relatively simple, based on slash-and-burn agriculture, producing little surplus necessary for waging a prolonged war, and it was vulnerable to loss of territory.<sup>19</sup> They fought near their own villages, which could be an asset, but also a liability. Fighting with their backs pressed to the walls of their homes, the tribal warriors were determined to win, but had no place to manoeuvre – their loss could very well mean the total annihilation not only of themselves, but also of their families and relatives. The Hunanese Miao uprising of 1735–36 is an example of both determination and annihilation: the tribesmen were in such despair that many of them killed their wives and children before going to fight against the Chinese, in order to be completely free in their action. For a moment they actually prevailed, as the Chinese generals and troops were helpless. However, the new emperor, Qianlong, reorganized the campaign and mobilised armies of seven provinces to fight the insurgents. When imperial troops crushed the rebellion, they killed no less than 18,000 warriors and destroyed over 1200 hill forts.<sup>20</sup>

### **From fighting local powers to asymmetric warfare**

The earliest to conquer southern China was the first unified Chinese dynasty – the Qin (221–206 BC), under the First Emperor. In the face of massive Chinese invasion, the southern tribes often resorted to guerrilla war, using their knowledge of the terrain, for example during great offensives by the Qin state. It was only when the Chinese ran out of supplies and their armies started to crumble that the Yue people took the initiative to defeat them. The Chinese had to mount yet another offensive before they were able to establish their administrative units in nowadays' Guangdong.<sup>21</sup>

After Qin collapsed in 206 BC, the Han dynasty, which followed it, paused to reorganize itself before it turned its attention to the south. Finally, under the extremely energetic emperor Wu (141–87 BC) it managed to reconquer the territories of today's Guangdong province, and pushed even farther to the south (into the Red River delta, now northern Vietnam) and south-west (southern Sichuan, Guizhou and Yunnan). The control of these south-western territories was rather weak – the historian Mark Lewis states that although

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<sup>17</sup> Donald Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier in the Eighteenth Century", in: *Empire at the Margins: Culture, Ethnicity, and Frontier in Early Modern China*, P. K. Crossley, H. Siu and D. S. Sutton (eds.), Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, p. 201.

<sup>18</sup> Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou...*, p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Slash-and-burn agriculture needs a much larger area to produce a given amount of crops than more developed kinds of agriculture. If the process of burning is repeated too often, the soil is quickly depleted and destroyed by erosion. This leads to dramatic decrease in agricultural output and often to starvation.

<sup>20</sup> Wiens, *China's March Toward the Tropics...*, p. 190.

<sup>21</sup> Hans Van de Ven, *Warfare in Chinese History*, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2000, p. 133–134.

the rulers of the local states of Yelang and Dian were granted titles by the Han emperor, the area was effectively outside the Chinese borders; the Chinese commanderies, which were set up there, consisted of small, dispersed garrisons.<sup>22</sup>

During Western Han dynasty rebellions were few, because the very small number of the Han Chinese in the south-west did not pose a threat to the aborigine people. It was only during the Eastern Han that a larger influx of Chinese settlers caused tensions: over 50 uprisings broke out during this period. What greatly changed the situation in south-west was the submission of several Ailao princes with their whole domains (over 550 000 people). They voluntarily accepted the suzerainty of the emperor, and some Tibetan princes did the same. The Chinese did not replace the original, native social structures with their own, so the princes retained a large degree of freedom. Since there was no large-scale Chinese colonization, it was the aborigines who became stronger and adopted some Chinese methods of government. After the final collapse of the Hans, the south of China was ruled by a succession of dynasties (first the Jin and then the so-called Southern Dynasties). All these states usually had no real control over large parts of the territories they claimed as their own in the south and south-west, where the native princes ruled and grew in strength. As the Chinese dynasties could not protect Chinese settlers who did not live close to the main cities, the colonization of the area was halted.<sup>23</sup>

The great Tang dynasty linked Yunnan and Guizhou to China proper with roads, but in the western part of the area a strong, independent kingdom of Nanzhao rose out in the territories formerly ruled by the Ailao princes. In Tang sources the south, scarcely populated by the Chinese, is described as malaria-ridden, exotic and dangerous, a place of exile for disgraced officials. During Tang times, many valleys and basins were slowly but steadily occupied by Chinese immigrants, who turned swamps into agricultural grounds using their superior technology.<sup>24</sup> At the same time, local non-Han chieftains from areas adjacent to the border pledged loyalty to the Tang, in exchange for access to Chinese markets. They all received official titles of various ranks, so the near-frontier land (on paper) looked as if it was governed according to the Chinese administrative pattern. These so-called haltered-and-bridled prefectures (*jimi fuzhou*), very numerous (over five hundred at a certain time) were in fact buffer zones, and the Tangs had no direct control over them, neither taxed them, nor received tribute from them. The Chinese court had even less control over six larger "prefectures", which lied behind the "haltered-and-bridled" zone. When the need arose, the Tangs enlisted the help of yet another type of allies, so-called "dependent kingdoms". All these layered buffer zones were useful in the almost incessant warfare between Tang China, Tibet and Nanzhao. The loyalty of these "prefectural lords" was fluid and often they turned sides, as the Tangs realized when they discovered large contingents of troops, belonging to their supposed allies, taking part in the Nanzhao invasion of China

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<sup>22</sup> Mark Edward Lewis, *The Early Chinese Empires: Qin and Han*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007, p. 151–152.

<sup>23</sup> Hans Bielenstein, "Wang Mang, the Restoration of the Han Dynasty, and Later Han", in: *Cambridge History of China: Volume I: the Ch'in and Han Empires, 221 B.C. – A.D. 220*, D. Twitchett and M. Loewe (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, p. 269–273.

<sup>24</sup> Mark Edward Lewis, *China's Cosmopolitan Empire: The Tang Dynasty*, Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009, p. 15–20.

in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>25</sup> The beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> century saw the collapse of both Tang and Tibetan empires and a change of rulers in Nanzhao, who established the kingdom of Dali. For a while there were no “strong actors” interested in south-western areas.

The pattern of establishing buffer zones was repeated during the Song dynasty, which followed the Tang. During this dynasty, population movements and the development of southern economic zones caused the centre of Chinese civilization to shift south, from the Huang He basin into the Yangtze basin. Large growth of population in Song times was temporarily halted by the Mongol invasion and plague, but it was resumed in Ming and Qing times. Following the movement of Chinese population centres further south, as well as the increase in Chinese population, the pressure exerted on the south-west also increased.

It was the Mongols who did the “dirty job” of destroying the kingdom of Dali and invading Guizhou and Guangxi. John E. Herman calls the Mongol invasion of Yunnan “a pivotal point of the history of the region”.<sup>26</sup> The invasion removed one remaining strong political actor, who could challenge the supremacy of the Chinese empire. It directly included Yunnan into the borders of the empire, although the actual control over the area remained weak. The Mongols were the first to impose taxation on some of the people there, and tried to establish more direct rule. Their number was much too small and their forces found themselves extremely thinly stretched, although they only tried to hold garrisons in key positions and posts along the most strategic routes and were often unable to cope even with relatively minor uprisings. In fact they were in the classical position of an army occupying too great an area of a hostile land with too few troops to do so. Therefore, they were under constant attacks from guerrilla fighters. The only thing they could do was to coerce and lure local chieftains, clan-leaders etc. to rule for them as “local officials” (*tuguan*). This was the beginning of the *tusi* system, which was further developed by the last imperial dynasties, Ming and Qing, which followed the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty.

The *tusi* system was developed in response to the need to administer huge and basically alien territory, without having the adequate number of troops and quantity of resources to do so. The Chinese concentrated their power in the key areas, allowing the natives to govern themselves in the less important ones. They acknowledged members of local elites as representatives of the empire and granted them official titles (sometimes with an allotted salary). The difference between the *tusi* and the earlier *jimi* areas laid in the degree of control: the Chinese at least tried to assess how large is the area ruled by any particular *tusi*, its population and tax-paying abilities; they could not do it with “haltered-and-bridles” prefectures.

The *tusi* system was a further step towards regular, direct rule by officials appointed by the emperor. Their titles were usually hereditary, or they were chosen by the local population, but they had to be confirmed by the emperor. They had different degrees of independence within their domains. The so-called civil *tusi* were under control of the Board of Civil Appointments and their titles mirrored the Chinese administrative degrees (chief of prefecture, county etc.). They operated in areas which already had rather large Han Chinese

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<sup>25</sup> John E. Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist: China's Colonization of Guizhou, 1200–1700*, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Asia Center, 2007, p. 32–36.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

populations and were under much stricter control of the Chinese officials. Over military *tusi*, supervised by the Board of War, the Chinese had very little control. Military *tusi* usually ruled in frontier areas: either outside empire boundaries, which they swore to protect (forming yet another kind of protective buffer) or in very remote areas inside China. These were "internal frontier lands" which may also be called "internal colonies" of the empire. Inside their domains, military *tusi* had full control and ruled according to their traditional customs.<sup>27</sup>

In the provinces where the Chinese presence was long established, civilian *tusi* were the norm. During Ming times, in Sichuan province 95% of the 343 appointed *tusi* were military ones; in Guizhou, 83% of 244 *tusi* were military ones, while for more sinicized Guangxi the reverse was true: 92 % of appointed *tusi* were civilian ones.<sup>28</sup> When Han Chinese population grew and/or the local people became more acculturated to Chinese ways, the state tried to change the status of *tusi*, from military to civilian. Next step was the policy of *gaitu guilu*, i.e. replacing the *tusi* by the Chinese officials. Establishing Guizhou province in 1413 (although it occupied only half of today's Guizhou) was a symbolic representation of the process. Sometimes the state did not "wait" for the influx of Chinese settlers, but acted more actively: emperor Hongwu of the Ming Dynasty actively induced (or simply forced) massive Han Chinese immigration into new province.

The more Han Chinese settled in the aborigine people areas and the more actively the Chinese state supervised and intervened in *tusi* affairs, or even tried to displace them altogether, the more native peoples tried to oppose the state. By Ming times, the powerful southern kingdoms (such as Nanzhao) had already disappeared. What remained were the domains of "hill tribes" and clan holdings, some of them quite large and well governed (and also able to field large armies). Such was the case of She *tusi* family, which during the so-called She-An rebellion raised a massive, 250,000-strong army; Guiyang was besieged for almost a year in 1622 and southern Sichuan (including the city of Chongqing) was sacked.<sup>29</sup> Most of the conflicts, however, had a more local character: the Miao, Yao or other groups were conducting guerilla-style war (the later part of She-An rebellion also turned into this type of war).

Even after 150 or more years of Chinese rule over the south-west, the Chinese only had a small degree of control in many territories. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century in western Henan, bordering with Guizhou, the authorities had to rely on military colonies to control "pacified" Miaos and blockade those who did not accept Chinese rule.<sup>30</sup> In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Hu Linyi, prefect in Guizhou, described it as a border region, extremely hard to control, because of the harsh terrain and warlike tribes, engaged in constant skirmishes.<sup>31</sup>

Local conflicts were very numerous. In Ming times there were no less than 90 tribal uprisings. In the early years of the Qing rule there were large rebellions in 1670s and 1680s.

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<sup>27</sup> Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou...*, p. 39–41.

<sup>28</sup> Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist...*, p. 108.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>30</sup> Philip A. Kuhn, *Rebellion and Its Enemies in Late Imperial China, Militarization and Social Structure, 1796–1864*, Harvard East Asian series 49, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1970, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

The second half of the Qing dynasty (1796–1911) saw 350 of them, and the real number was probably higher, as the officials preferred not to report smaller incidents, or to classify them as common banditry, in order to present their administration as more efficient. Their growth in number was caused by increasing population pressure, which led to stiff competition for scarce resources; the number of administrative units also increased, which led to more incidents being recorded.<sup>32</sup>

The rebellions were also extremely costly to suppress. The War of Great and Small Golden River in Eastern Tibet, which ended in 1749, cost the empire 80 million *taels*<sup>33</sup> of silver<sup>34</sup> and of course many soldiers and officers were killed. The great Miao uprising of 1795–1806 facilitated another rebellion of the White Lotus sect (1796–1805). The government spent 120 million taels fighting these wars, spending all the surplus the previous emperors had accumulated.<sup>35</sup> The draining of the treasury greatly weakened the Qing empire, which declined more and more further into the 19<sup>th</sup> century progressed. Interestingly, the definition of war did not depend on the severity or length of the conflict. Emperor Qianlong did not count suppression of three Muslim rebellions or eleven years long Miao uprising (1794–1804) among his Ten Military Victories, even though doing so would bring the number up to fourteen. These were internal struggles, unworthy of the name of war or commemoration.<sup>36</sup>

### Why China won?

Let us once more recall the most basic statement of Andrew Mack's theory: the weaker side can only win if it destroys the stronger side's political capability (or "political will") to continue fighting. This is exactly what the Miao, Yao and other groups never really managed to achieve. They won battles, even wars, but ultimately they lost.

Mack formulates three hypotheses concerning the factors which may cause the stronger side to continue its fight against the insurgents. The first factor is the degree of "openness" or "closeness" of the political system. In democracies, the public opinion has much to say, and dissenting voices, including those which question the legitimacy or the cost of the war, are allowed to speak. This weakens the resolution to continue the war. Mack notes that some of the asymmetric conflicts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were won by centralised, "closed" or simply totalitarian states. Imperial China was not a totalitarian state, but certainly an authoritarian one, with a strong tendency towards absolutism. Its "public opinion", if it existed at all, consisted mainly of the Confucian literati, many of whom were employed in the state bureaucracy. Therefore, as long as they supported the war effort and the strain on economy was not great enough as to cause peasant unrest, there was no "real" opposition to prolonged conflict. At the same time Confucian officials considered it as their duty to work for the benefit of the people; if war costs increased, their support for the conflict often diminished.

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<sup>32</sup> Norma Diamond, "The Miao and Poison: Interactions on China's Southwest Frontier", *Ethnology*, Vol. 27, No. 1, January 1988, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup> Unit of weight, also used a unit of currency; most often one silver *tael* equalled 37,5 g.

<sup>34</sup> Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou...*, p. 194.

<sup>35</sup> Bruce A. Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989*, London–New York: Routledge, 2001, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> Joanna Waley-Cohen, *The Culture of War in China: Empire and the Military Under the Qing Dynasty*, London–New York: I. B. Tauris, 2006, p. 23.

Donald Sutton presents a summary of the Miao-related policies proposed by high imperial officials in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century: although they differed on the issue of whether the Miao should be “quarantined” or assimilated (usually by bringing in more Han settlers), they unanimously opposed the idea that Han people, could on their own initiative cross into Miao territory, stay there and cooperate with the Miao. There was no question of “equality of cultures” – the path was one-directional, towards culture and civilization, understood as Chinese culture and civilization. People moving in the opposite direction were branded “Han traitors”. From this point of view, creating special zones, where Miao would govern themselves, and limiting their contact with the Hans, made sense. It was a way of containing the danger, “quarantining” the possible harmful influences.<sup>37</sup>

Arreguín-Toft disputes the assumption that authoritarian states are more effective in combat, stating that such states’ command economy is usually less effective than in democratic states, and their troops have lower morale because of the people’s generally low support for the state.<sup>38</sup> Although his arguments may be true now, one cannot apply them to Ming or early Qing China. The Chinese economy was then among the best developed in the world. The troops’ loyalty and quality was usually the best during the early years of dynasty and later it declined, but even then the army was supported by a relatively well organized state administration (until the middle Qing period it was probably the best administration of the world). There were hardly any countries, democratic or authoritarian, which could be favourably compared to China at the height of its imperial power.

The situation described above changed in 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the administration was corrupt, unwieldy and ineffective, which was one of the reasons why the dynasty was almost brought down by a series of rebellions. The most famous of them was the Taiping rebellion (1850–1864), but there were also strong ethnic movements of the Muslims from north-west (1862–1877) and Yunnan (1856–1873), and of the Miao in Guizhou (1854–73). The initial success of the latter can be mainly attributed to the poor quality of administration and troops, some of which were 70% under strength.<sup>39</sup> However, the Chinese empire had such an immense size and productivity, that when capable leaders did emerge, they were able to muster enough troops and resources to deal with the danger.

Mack’s second factor which may cause the stronger side to continue its fight against the insurgents is the strong presence of settlers from the metropolis, who wish to retain their links with it, in the territory where the conflict takes place. In southern China this was probably the key factor. First, the state encouraged Han immigration, and sometimes even coerced the Hans to go to the frontiers (as emperor Hongwu did in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century<sup>40</sup>). But even when the state withdrew its presence, the Han Chinese settlers were still immigrating into the area. Therefore, the number of Han people in southern China was steadily increasing. The Chinese empire could tolerate groups of non-Hans governing themselves according to their own customs, but not the groups of Hans outside imperial jurisdiction. As they had important technological and political skills, they could form

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<sup>37</sup> Sutton, “Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier...”, p. 201.

<sup>38</sup> Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou...*, p. 83.

<sup>40</sup> Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist...*, p. 87–91.

dangerous dissenting groups. On the other hand, many of the Chinese believed they have a right for being protected by the state, used to settle their legal matters in Chinese institutions etc. so they demanded that such institutions should be established. For these reasons, when the sufficient amount of the Hans settled in a given area, the state felt compelled to establish its governmental agencies there.

The encroachment of Han farmers onto the territories occupied (or claimed) by the non-Hans often caused local conflicts, which tended to escalate into larger ones, and Chinese state sometimes tried to curb Han migration by delimiting borders that Han settlers were forbidden to cross.<sup>41</sup> Such borders were also established in southern China, like the one defining the so-called Miao-frontierland in western Hunan: a wall built in Ming times and rebuilt by the Qing.<sup>42</sup> Usually, those frontier-defining efforts were in vain, and land-hungry Chinese peasants still wandered into other people's lands, often displacing the original owners. In the end, the bureaucracy had no other choice, but to follow the settlers and establish administrative institutions on these territories.

Mack's third factor is the protection of certain important interests of the metropolis endangered by the insurgents, even though the survival of the metropolis is never in danger. In case of south-western China (or Taiwan for that matter), such interest was possibly the protection of borders. All of these areas were on the fringes of the Chinese state, which always tried to organize a sort of "defence in depth" by wrapping itself in a multi-layer cocoon. The outer layer of this cocoon were the vassal states, followed by the *tusi*-ruled areas, then by military-governed commanderies (including military colonies). At the core of the cocoon were the inner lands of the empire, ruled by civilian bureaucrats. Strengthening control over the border areas made inner China more secure. The neighbouring (sometimes formally vassal) states were able not only to withstand Chinese attacks, e.g. Nanzhao troops massacred the invading Tang army in 754.<sup>43</sup> When China was weaker, its neighbours sometimes launched successful invasions into Chinese heartland, as did the above-mentioned Nanzhao when it besieged Chengdu in 829.<sup>44</sup> Sometimes, the *tusi* could also be dangerously powerful, as they proved to be during the so-called She-An rebellion, when Guiyang was invested for almost a year by an almost 250,000-strong army in 1622 and southern Sichuan (including the city of Chongqing) was sacked.<sup>45</sup> Such large scale conflicts fall outside the definition of an "asymmetric war", but I mention them because they provide a reason for the Chinese to take good care of protection of their frontiers.

Another of the important interests of the metropolis endangered by insurgents, and also one of strategic importance, was the establishing and upholding of a peaceful and orderly society in frontier areas, safe for both their native population and the incoming Chinese. In order to achieve this aim, expanding Chinese rule and changing it from indirect to more direct forms was seen as beneficial. The indirect *tusi* system was perceived as disorderly, and direct forms of government – as an expression of order and the emperor's

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<sup>41</sup> John R. Shepherd, *Statecraft and Political Economy on the Taiwan Frontier, 1600–1800*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1993.

<sup>42</sup> Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier...", p. 201.

<sup>43</sup> Van de Ven, *Warfare in Chinese History...*, p. 133–134.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

<sup>45</sup> Herman, *Amid the Clouds and Mist...*, p. 180.



benevolence.<sup>46</sup> Ideas related to social stability were expressed in various forms by Chinese officials, but never doubted in principle, even by these administrators who argued for (temporarily) slowing down the actual process of such administrative change.

Mack also raises the question of morality of the war. When the public opinion at home perceives the war as immoral, it will turn against it, thus diminishing the state's ability to carry on fighting until victory is achieved. In the case of China's operations against its minority groups, the action of certain officials could be condemned, but issue, whether it is moral or not to subjugate other people, and "grant them" Chinese style administration was never really questioned. The basic state structure, Confucian bureaucracy, perceived itself as inherently moral. Confucian bureaucrats also perceived the extension of Chinese rule as moral and beneficial to the people, even if the people might have been (temporarily) opposed to such extension; in such cases, according to Confucian officials, the people's opposition was due to the fact that they had no proper understanding of the social world. Overcoming (by force, if necessary) that opposition was justified, just as justified as a parent who forces his child to do something which child may perceive as unpleasant, but which ultimately will do it good.<sup>47</sup> It must also be noted that the opponents, often illiterate and/or with no knowledge of Chinese language, had basically no chance to present their story. Even if they had some knowledge of Chinese or even some classical Confucian education, there was no free press available to them in order to disseminate their views. The only form of "newspaper" in pre-modern China was the governmental gazetteer.

Hiyasuki Miyakawa discusses the role in confucianization (which to large extent coincided with sinification) played by Chinese who lived among southern "barbarians". He gives examples of officials sent to remote border areas, where they set up schools, instructed in proper customs, introduced Chinese-style marital customs and burial rites, sometimes actively persecuting shamans who resisted such changes and tried to defend native customs. The adoption of Chinese dress was also perceived as an important step towards civilization. The Miyakawa's study clearly shows that all these officials, across centuries, had remarkably consistent attitudes towards non-Chinese culture, treating it (at best) as worthless, at worst – as harmful.<sup>48</sup> They never really questioned their own stance on other cultures. Such deep conviction of one's own moral and civilizational superiority was certainly important in sustaining the civilizing efforts, regardless of how costly – or how bloody they might be.

There were also rather weak constraints on barbaric ways of warfare and targeting the civilians, which according to Arreguín-Toft are effective means of guerrilla-style warfare. As Bruce Elleman puts it, the Chinese generals would generally avoid war, but when it came to blows, they drew no quarter. No humanitarian laws and conventions were developed, and "in the Chinese way of thinking there was no universal law governing war, since the

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<sup>46</sup> Sutton, "Ethnicity and the Miao Frontier...", p. 218.

<sup>47</sup> The theory and nature of Confucian "civilizing project", as he calls it, including the metaphor of peripheral people as children, is more fully developed by Stevan Harrell in his introduction to *Cultural Encounters on China's Ethnic Frontiers*, Studies on ethnic groups in China, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1995.

<sup>48</sup> Hisayuki Miyakawa, "The Confucianization of Southern China." in: *The Confucian Persuasion*, A. Wright (ed.), Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1960, p. 21–47.

highest possible military and political goal was to achieve unity. As a result, the slaughter of innocent civilians and non-combatants was commonplace”.<sup>49</sup> Liang Qichao, one of the most enlightened 19<sup>th</sup> century Chinese thinkers, commented without much remorse on the outcome of the Miao uprising: “...the suppression this time had some characteristics of fundamental solution”.<sup>50</sup> To understand how fundamental the solution was, let us look at the assessment one of the officials compiled: 4,9 out of 7 million people died, private property worth 25million *taels* of silver was destroyed, and the costs of the war to the state amounted to ca. 80 million *taels* of silver.<sup>51</sup> The numbers are almost surely inflated, but the butchery was unquestionable.

In 1460, after capitulation of one Miao tribe, 1565 boys were castrated, 329 of whom died as a result. The governor was admonished by the emperor for his excessive cruelty, but the fate of the prisoners was not an unusual one. Seven years earlier, after another quelled aboriginal rebellion, the Chinese had too many eunuchs to be sent to the emperor’s court, so they were distributed among the regional officials.<sup>52</sup>

The last *tusi* offices were abandoned by the People’s Republic of China in the 1950s. Also at that time, some more warlike people, like the Nuosu Yi from Liangshan, were finally and fully subjugated (in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century they were still almost completely free of any state control, and often raided neighbours, capturing people for slavery). Such raids and short-lived uprisings against the land reform among the Yi and Yao, were the last acts of a several hundred year-long war between southwestern peoples and the Chinese empire, a war which more often than not was asymmetric in character. These last rebellions were quickly dealt with and regular, strong Chinese administration was established in those areas. The processes of Chinese immigration into non-Han territories and assimilation of the non-Han people, which were ultimately crucial to the overall Chinese victory, continue and even accelerate now, due to effective transportation (by both road and rail), mass media and popular culture, and of course, mass education in Chinese and with Chinese curriculum.

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<sup>49</sup> Elleman, *Modern Chinese Warfare, 1795–1989...*, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ssü-yü Têng, *China’s Response to the West; a Documentary Survey, 1839–1923*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1954, p. 268.

<sup>51</sup> Jenks, *Insurgency and Social Disorder in Guizhou...*, p. 164.

<sup>52</sup> Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *The Eunuchs in the Ming Dynasty*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1996, p. 16.

KARIN TOMALA

## China: Neuer Machtfaktor in der Welt Innenpolitische und außenpolitische Implikationen

### Abstract

Over the last decades, globalization has led to major geopolitical shifts. Western countries are not prepared for this scale of change. The majority of them consider their political and economic systems universally applicable in the context of development and transformation. However, the dynamics of development points to something else. As demonstrated, China's growth strategy combines tradition with the accepted necessities of modernity. The pragmatic and cultural approach towards the political and economic initiatives assumes the pivotal role in the analysis. It is increasingly believed that China's growth strategy may result in the emergence of a competitive model and create a kind of new model of global integration and cultural dialog. New lifestyle models, social mentalities and development models emerge, including changes in civilization's awareness and openness to globalization – with China already part of the decision-making. One of the key assumptions throughout the discourse of this study is that political and social change in China cannot be understood nor analyzed based exclusively on the Western, normative concept of both an individual and society at large. At the same time, it is emphasized that, in most cases, neither Western-type analysis of China's growth, based on native, country-specific experience nor its key premises describing the course of growth, cannot constitute a useful, universal yardstick for measuring social and political change in the Chinese modernization process. The study emphasizes the fact that despite all the changes that are taking place, the existing identity can still be described as cultural identity and state identity, however, increasingly open towards other civilizations.

### Einleitung

Vor über dreißig Jahren, Ende 1978, nur zwei Jahre nach dem Tode von Mao Zedong, wurde in China auf dem legendären III. Plenum des XI. Parteitages der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas ein komplizierter, gradueller Reform- und Modernisierungsprozess eingeleitet, um das Land nach dem Chaos der Kulturrevolution auf einen neuen Entwicklungspfad zu führen. „Anschluss an die Welt bekommen“ (*yu shijie jiegu*), so hieß damals die Entwicklungsdevise in China, worunter man mit der Welt die hoch entwickelten westlichen Industrieländer verstand. Die „Vier Modernisierungen“ (*si ge xiandaihua*) und die „Öffnung nach außen“ (*kaifang*) wurden zu Richtlinien der neuen Entwicklungsstrategie, besteht doch das Ziel chinesischer Entwicklung darin, und nicht erst seit dreißig Jahren, sondern seit den Opiumkriegen Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts, als China in eine Halbkolonie umgewandelt wurde, neue Stärke *fuyang* und die Wiedergeburt

*fixing* alter Größe wiederzuerlangen. Im 18. Jahrhundert, noch vor den Opiumkriegen, wurden in China 30% des BSP erwirtschaftet.<sup>1</sup>

Der Wandel verläuft in einem komplizierten und widersprüchlichen Prozess, in dem sich innere und äußere Faktoren immer wieder gegenseitig bedingen in einem pragmatischen Anpassungsprozess in der „spezifisch chinesischen Moderne“ (*zhongguo tese xiandaihua*), die entgegen früheren westlichen Paradigmas kapitalistische Entwicklung nicht behindert, sondern sie expandieren lässt. Der neuen Entwicklungsstrategie liegen verschiedene Faktoren zu Grunde, traditionelle kulturelle Elemente, wie auch Elemente globaler und westlicher Entwicklungsstrategien. Nach der Aufnahme diplomatischer Beziehungen im Jahre 1990 mit Singapur wurde der so erfolgreiche und wohlhabende Stadtstaat mit seiner Entwicklungsstrategie von Disziplin und Gemeinschaftswohl, die der konfuzianischen Ideenwelt zu Grunde liegen, zum großen Vorbild für das sich modernisierende China und zigtausende Studiendelegationen gingen nach Singapur, um zu lernen. Lernen wollte man aber auch von der westlichen Welt.

In dieser Studie wird versucht, das verflochtene Bild der aufsteigenden Macht Chinas mit seinen innenpolitischen Problemen vor dem Hintergrund der neuen Rolle in den internationalen Beziehungen zu beleuchten. Zahlreiche Kontroversen in China selbst wie auch im Ausland sind über die Rolle und den „chinesischen“ Entwicklungsweg entstanden. In der gegenwärtigen komplizierten Phase der Globalisierung könnte dieser Ideenstreit zu fruchtbaren Neuerkenntnissen führen. China wird weder das amerikanische noch das europäische Vorbild übernehmen. Der globale Aufstieg Chinas wird sich nicht automatisch fortsetzen, sondern wird abhängig sein von der internationalen wie aber auch von der innenpolitischen Entwicklung des Landes.

### **Von der Plan – zur Marktwirtschaft – Partner – Retter oder „Störenfried“**

Ende der 1970 Jahre kam es in China, als das neue strategische Entwicklungskonzept konzipiert wurde, nicht wie Ende der 1980 Jahre in den mittel- und osteuropäischen Staaten zum Systemzusammenbruch, sondern die neu etablierte Herrschaftselite initiierte die Modernisierungs- und Reformpolitik von oben mit dem Ziel, China wieder auf seinem „gebührenden Platz“ in der Welt zu führen. Mit der Reformpolitik und der Strategie der „Öffnung nach außen“ konnte ein erfolgreicher Prozess nachholender Entwicklung und der Transformation von einer Plan- zu einer Marktwirtschaft eingeleitet werden, offiziell als „sozialistische Marktwirtschaft“ bezeichnet. Die Wachstumsraten des BIP betrugen durchschnittlich 10% im Jahr, so dass sich das BIP innerhalb von drei Dekaden verzehnfachte und das Pro-Kopf-Einkommen jährlich anstieg, von 168 US \$ im Jahre 1978 auf etwa 3000,– US \$ im Jahre 2012. Die chinesische Entwicklung wurde von günstigen Wachstumsmotoren angetrieben, von den Investitionen staatlicher Betriebe, die privilegierten Zugang zur Kreditvergabe bei staatlichen Banken erhielten, von der Umgestaltung der Eigentumsformen, wo es im Privatsektor zahlreiche Neugründungen gab. Auch die Investitionen der Auslandschinesen *huaqiao* oder *huayi* und der gewaltige Strom ausländischer Investitionen, die zusammen mit neuen Technologien, Innovationen und modernem

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<sup>1</sup> Vergl. Yan Xuetong, „The Rise of China in Chinese Eyes“, in: *Journal of Contemporary China*, No. 10 (26) 2001, S. 33–44, Yan Xuetong, „The Rise of China and its Power Status“, in: *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, t. 1, 2006.

Management auf den chinesischen Markt drangen, verbesserten die Ausgangspositionen Chinas. Zum Wachstumsmotor wurde die exportorientierte Wirtschaftspolitik, wobei 50% des Exports aus Joint – Venture Betrieben stammten. Die günstigen Exporte Chinas in andere Länder verursachten ein billigeres Konsumangebot, doch die Kosten waren geringerer Wachstum und geringere Beschäftigung in diesen Ländern. China wurde zur globalen Werkbank mit seinem Heer billiger Arbeitskräfte vom Lande. Eine Migrationsbewegung vom Land in die Stadt wurde in Bewegung gesetzt, so dass es an billigen Arbeitskräften nicht fehlte. 2012 ist die Migrantenzahl ländlicher Arbeiter auf über zweihundertfünfzig Millionen angestiegen, wodurch durch die billige Arbeitskraft günstige Wettbewerbsbedingungen geschaffen wurden. So trug der billige Arbeitsmarkt zur Wachstumsdynamik bei. Viele ehemalige Hilfskräfte vom Land wurden inzwischen zu qualifizierten Arbeitern ausgebildet, und sie fordern höheren Lohn und bessere Arbeitsbedingungen, was zur Kostensteigerung der Produktion führen wird.

In den 1980er und 1990 Jahren verfügte China über eine ausgeglichene Leistungsbilanz. Die wirtschaftspolitische Strategie versuchte anhaltende Defizite zu verhindern, um sich nicht in außenpolitische Abhängigkeiten zu bringen. Ab Mitte der 1990er Jahre ging die Entwicklung einher mit Leistungsüberschüssen, die sich besonders seit Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts vergrößerten. So wurde China aufgrund seiner hohen Leistungsüberschüsse in den sich vertiefenden globalen Wirtschaftsbeziehungen zu einem gefragten Partner. Die Devisenreserven sind 2012 auf über drei Billionen US Dollar angewachsen, die meisten befinden sich in den USA, womit China jahrelang zum billigen Konsum des Landes beigetragen hat. Mit seinen Investitionen und dem Ankauf von Obligationen gilt China gegenwärtig als „Retter“ krisengeschüttelter Wirtschaften, zugleich aber auch als Störfaktor in der Weltwirtschaft, weil chinesische Handelspolitik nicht immer als berechenbar und die Innovationen nicht immer als fair angesehen werden. Hinzu kommt die chinesische Währungspolitik, die nach wie vor unterbewertet bleibt.<sup>2</sup> Unmut gibt es vor allem in der westlichen Welt über die Nichteinhaltung von Regeln gegenüber Vorschriften bezüglich der Sicherung geistigen Eigentums, und der Vorwurf lautet, dass die verlängerte Werkbank westliche Produkte veredelt und sie dann als eigene Marken auf den Weltmarkt anbietet.

### **Entwicklung eines widersprüchlichen Reformprozesses**

Erst nach dem Tod von Mao Zedong konnte der Weg für das chinesische „Wirtschaftswunder“ eingeleitet werden. Die langwierigen Beitrittsverhandlungen zur WTO und im Jahre 2001 die Aufnahme als Mitglied in die Welthandelsorganisation öffneten Tore für weitere Entwicklung. Mit großer Genugtuung schaut die chinesische Politik auf den bemerkenswerten Wandel im Lande, der zweifelsohne durch den Beitritt in die WTO einen gewaltigen Schub erhielt. In China ist das größte Laboratorium der Welt entstanden, wo sich alles verändert, wo man immer wieder dabei ist, ein neues Experiment in der Wirtschaft oder auch Politik in Angriff zu nehmen, das sich nicht unbedingt im Rahmen der WTO-Vereinbarungen bewegt, wenn es nicht im Interesse chinesischer Politik liegt. So fallen im Ausland die Analysen und Prognosen recht

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<sup>2</sup> Hansjörg Herr, „Das chinesische Wechselkurssystem“, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 7/2008, S. 28.

differenziert aus. Meinen die einen, das für die chinesische Politik der einzige Maßstab das eigene Wohl sei<sup>3</sup>, sind andere der Meinung, Chinas globale Integration sei die Voraussetzung zur weiteren Entwicklung im Lande. Natürlich kann die Frage heute noch nicht beantwortet werden, ob die chinesische Politik fähig sein wird, die Dimensionen ihrer Entscheidungen oder auch Nichtentscheidungen, wenn es um die Folgen geht, zu erkennen? Davon hängt letztendlich der Erfolg oder Misserfolg des Wandels wie auch die Stellung als Machtfaktor in der globalen Welt ab. Diese Maxime gilt natürlich nicht nur für Chinas Politik. Doch wir sollten uns bei all dieser Ungewissheit bewusst sein, dass die Entwicklung in China viel spontaner und unkontrollierter erfolgt, als das, was man in den offiziellen Verlautbarungen über die Anpassungen an das Regelwerk der WTO vernehmen kann.

Chinas Globalisierungsstrategien haben ihre eigenen Zielsetzungen, sie werden nach Anpassungskonzepten der Regierung umgesetzt, nachdem alles den historischen, kulturellen und somit nationalen Besonderheiten untergeordnet wird. Das bedeutet, die politische Klasse entscheidet, ob die eine oder andere Vorgabe der WTO den chinesischen Bedingungen erst einmal angepasst werden müsse oder nicht. Chinas „sozialistische Marktwirtschaft“ boomt, obgleich auch die großen nationalen Konzerne noch weiter vom Staat kontrolliert werden und nicht nur Marktgesetzen untergeordnet sind. Doch Chinas Management setzt mit seinen innovativen Geschäftsideen auf Erfolg, und wie die letzten Jahre zeigen, ist es auch erfolgreich. Die ersten chinesischen Weltkonzerne entstehen, die dabei sind, westlichen Konzernen Marktanteile abzugagen. Im Zuge der Internationalisierung erhöhen sich Direktinvestitionen und westliche Firmen werden übernommen. Dank moderner Ausbildungsstätten und jungen Menschen, die das Risiko nicht scheuen, entsteht in China eine moderne Wirtschaft, in der die Grundlagen für neue Dienstleistungen und Zukunftsindustrien in der Welt geschaffen werden.

Nach langen Verhandlungsrunden wurde China am 11. Dezember 2001 das 143. Mitglied der Welthandelsorganisation (WTO), wodurch zweifelsohne neue Impulse für die Reformbewegung gestartet und die Vertiefung der Integration mit der Weltwirtschaft beschleunigt wurde. Die chinesische Seite hatte jedoch von Anfang an bei den Verhandlungen darauf gedrängt, als Entwicklungsland anerkannt zu werden, um die Möglichkeit zu erhalten, die Umsetzung des in den Verhandlungen festgelegten Regelwerks zeitlich zu staffeln, mit der Begründung, sozialen und politischen Risiken, die sich im Transformationsprozess ergeben, entgegenzusteuern. Obgleich es zahlreiche Stimmen gab, die den Status Chinas als Entwicklungsland und damit der Vergünstigungen in Frage stellten, einigte man sich schließlich und erkannte diesen Status an. China erhielt als neues Mitglied der WTO bei der Umsetzung der von der WTO auferlegten Regeln lange Übergangsfristen. Ein wichtiger Faktor, Mitglied der WTO zu werden, bestand für China neben den Möglichkeiten, einen größeren Zugang zum Weltmarkt zu erzielen, auch in dem Wunsch, dass die Gewährung der Meistbegünstigungsklausel nicht mehr von der Menschenrechtspolitik abhängig gemacht wird. Wurde doch noch in den Jahren 1990–1996 dieser Status in den USA jährlich einer Prüfung unterzogen. Unter den Entwicklungsländern konnte China seit

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<sup>3</sup> „Chinas einziger Maßstab ist sein eigenes Wohl“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 29.09.2006.

1993 zum größten Empfänger ausländischer Direktinvestitionen werden, bereits 2005 betrugen sie über 60 Mrd. USD.<sup>4</sup>

Das Land öffnete sich weiter, sei es in der staatlichen Verwaltung oder bei der Liberalisierung des Handels. Eine große Wirtschaftsdynamik entfaltete sich im Tertiärsektor, vor allem im Handel, Tourismus und im Dienstleistungssektor. Mit dem Markteinstieg ausländischer Finanz-, Versicherungs- oder Beratungsfirmen verbindet man die Hoffnung auf eine weitere Aktivierung der Wirtschaft und der Beschleunigung der Reformen chinesischer Firmen. Mit dem Beitritt im Jahre 2001 wurden neue Akzente gesetzt. Man spricht nicht mehr von Plänen (*jihua*), die realisiert werden mussten, sondern von Richtlinienzielsetzungen (*guihua mubiao*). Die neue Terminologie spiegelt in gewisser Weise den Wandel wider, obgleich die großen Fünfjahrespläne zur Entwicklung von Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft beibehalten werden. Der Staat will nur noch bei 5% der Waren, die eine strategische Bedeutung besitzen, den Preis bestimmen, wie z.B. für Benzin. Seit dem Beitritt in die WTO wurde jährlich eine Wachstumsdynamik von über 10% erzielt, damit vergrößerte sich auch von Jahr zu Jahr das Handelsvolumen.

### Kontroverse Debatten über die Entwicklung in China

Nach all dem, was sich in den letzten drei Dekaden in China verändert hat, muss man sich nicht wundern, dass die Welt intensiver beginnt, auf China zu schauen. Entstanden sind vielfältige Chinabilder. Zweifelt die eine Schule an einem weiteren gesunden Wachstum und zeichnet ein zukünftiges Krisenszenario auf, sieht die andere Schule auch in der Zukunft ein dynamisches Wachstum voraus.<sup>6</sup> Wenn es um chinesische Prognosen geht, so steuert man zielgerecht auf das Jahr 2050 zu, wonach das Land den Entwicklungsstand von Industrieländern und die einst eingenommene alte Größe in der Welt wieder erreicht haben soll. Zweifelsohne scheint die Herrschaftselite in China infolge der Auswirkungen der Finanzkrise in der westlichen Welt an gewisse Grenzen zu stoßen, die das bisherige eigene Wachstumsmodell aufzeigt. Man ist an einer Kreuzung angelangt, an der über neue Entwicklungskonzepte nachgedacht werden muss. Der XVIII. Parteitag der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas 2012 gibt hier deutliche Signale. Das im Westen weit verbreitete Bild von einer allumfassenden kommunistischen Entscheidungs- und Kontrollmacht verdunkelt oft die Perspektive des Erkenntnisprozesses. Obgleich die Richtlinien zentral formuliert und vorgegeben werden, erfolgt die Umsetzung unterschiedlich auf verschiedenen Ebenen. Die Komplexität und Dynamik der Wandlung verdeutlichen die Anpassungsfähigkeit und die Gabe, sich immer wieder den Herausforderungen auf neue Weise zu stellen. In den westlichen Medien überhäufen sich negative Informationen über chinesisches Management, weil mit Hilfe von Raubkopien, sei es nun in der Informatik oder im technischen Innovationsbereich, Vorteile im Wettbewerb erzielt werden.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> S. Dougherty and R. Herd, „Fast-Falling Barriers and Growing Concentration: The Emergence of a Private Economy in China“, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 471, OECD Publishing, doi: 10.1787/470526613141, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Vergl. Minxin Pei, *China's Trapped Transition. The Limits of Development Autocracy*, Harvard University Press, 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Vergl. Jonathan Fenby, *Chiny: upadek i narodziny wielkiej potegi* (The Penguin History of Modern China. The Fall and Rise of a great Power, 1850–2008), Krakow: wydawnictwo Znak, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Maria Kruczkowska, Tomasz Gryniewicz, „Chińska draka w branży IT – Huawei Technologies i ZTE są groźne dla bezpieczeństwa narodowego i amerykańskie firmy powinny się trzymać od nich z daleka – brzmi konkluzja raportu Izby Reprezentantów“, in: *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 09.10.2012, S. 21.

Angesichts der neuen Rolle Chinas in der Welt wird viel debattiert und geschrieben, wobei es natürlich unterschiedliche Meinungen gibt. Dabei mangelt es oft an Wissen über die Entwicklungsprozesse, die in China vor sich gehen. Anhänger der Idee von der Überlegenheit des Westen auch im 21. Jahrhunderts scheuen nicht zurück, die Erfolge, die in der Olympiade in London 2012 erzielt wurden, als Beweis von der Überlegenheit des Westens vorzubringen. So heißt es in einem Kommentar der angesehenen deutschen Wochenzeitung *Die Zeit*, dass China angeblich in „Kürze die Weltherrschaft übernehmen“ solle und somit der Westen überhaupt von gestern sei, also durch China in seiner bisherigen Rolle abgelöst werde. Doch die Olympiaerfolge in London würden dafür keinen Beweis liefern. Die USA und Europa hätten nämlich zusammen vier Mal mehr Medaillen erringen können als China, zähle man Ozeanien und Kanada dazu, so ergäben das 385 Medaillen zu 87 Medaillen. Damit soll bewiesen werden, dass der alte Kontinent doch nicht so müde sei, wie er oft hingestellt werde. Warnungen gehen an Intellektuelle im Westen, die heute schon wieder einmal mit den Vorteilen „autoritärer Modernisierung“ hausieren gehen. Sie sollten ein wenig vorsichtiger agieren. Im Sport zeige sich doch das Beste, nämlich Vielfalt und Wettbewerb seien wichtiger als Auslese, wie es in China stattfände.<sup>8</sup> Brauchten die Deutschen, so die Argumentation für jede Medaille etwa zwei Millionen Menschen, so seien es in China fünfzehn Millionen Menschen gewesen. Obgleich der Kommentar als seriöse Analyse dargestellt wurde, kann so eine Analyse gewiss interessant und lesenswert sein. Sie zeigt aber doch auch, wie viel in China noch aufzuholen ist. Doch sie kann nicht als eine seriöse gesellschafts-politische Analyse über die neue Rolle Chinas in der Welt gelten. Im Sport ist der Westen noch professionell aufgestellt, die Schuldenkrise sowie die Eurokrise zeigen aber, dass alleine mit Wettbewerb und Vielfalt die Systemkrise nicht behoben werden kann. In der Sicherheitspolitik stehen die USA mit ihrer Präventionstheorie sowie mit dem Konzept, einen globalen Krieg gegen den Terrorismus zu führen, heute alleine da.<sup>9</sup>

### **Neue globale Entwicklungsstrategie? Beginn eines Systemwettbewerbs?**

Die beschleunigte Globalisierung hat nicht nur die geopolitischen Konstellationen verändert, sondern hat eine gegenseitig abhängige der Weltwirtschaft, und damit der Weltgesellschaft geschaffen, in der neue Sehnsüchte nach Schutzzonen im eigenen Raum entstehen. Die große Finanzkrise, die 2008 ihren Anfang nahm, verursacht durch die Verselbstständigung der Börsen und Banken in der westlichen Welt, hat zu Vertrauensverlust in die alternativlose Funktion von Marktwirtschaft und Demokratie als politisches System und zwangsläufig zu einer engeren Zusammenarbeit mit China geführt, dessen Entwicklung als entscheidender Pfeiler für die Entwicklung der Weltwirtschaft betrachtet wird. So wird in der nächsten Dekade für China weiterhin die größte Entwicklungsdynamik von jährlich sieben bis acht Prozent vorausgesehen. China nutzt die Krise als eine neue Chance zur Selbststärkung. Der größte strategische Rivale bleiben die Vereinigten Staaten. Die Rivalität ist gegenwärtig bereits im asiatischen-pazifischen Raum zu beobachten, wo Bemühungen dahin gehen, neue Einflussssphären für beide Seiten zu schaffen oder bilaterale

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<sup>8</sup> Josef Joffe in einem Kommentar unter dem Titel „Warum der Westen Weltmeister wurde“, in: *Die Zeit*, Nr. 34, 16.08.2012.

<sup>9</sup> Barry Buzan, „Dezentrierter Globalismus, Weltordnung ohne Supermächte“, in: *WeltTrend*, 86, September–Oktober 2012, S. 80.



Partnerschaften zu festigen. Durch den Aufstieg Chinas zur globalen Wirtschaftsmacht ist das „Reich der Mitte“ für die westliche Welt zur größten Herausforderung in ihrer Geschichte geworden, und diese Bedrohung wird vielfältig wahrgenommen. In den westlichen Medien wird die neue Position Chinas nach eigenen Wertungen thematisiert. Das politische Herrschaftssystem sowie die Menschenrechtfrage bleiben ein Problem, obwohl sich die abendländische Welt zum ersten Mal seit 200 Jahren gezwungen sieht, diesem Riesenreich, das auf eine 4000 Jahre alte Zivilisation zurückschaut, gewissen Respekt zu bezeugen. Obwohl Chinas neue Rolle in der Welt nicht mehr negiert werden kann, bleibt die Haltung gegenüber diesem Staat weiterhin zwiespältig und nicht immer angemessen. Anders verhält man sich gegenüber China in den Entwicklungsländern oder den aufstrebenden Schwellenländern, sei es in Asien, Afrikas oder auch Lateinamerika, die an globaler Bedeutung gewinnen und ein neues Selbstbewusstsein zeigen. Sie versuchen, sich politisch und ökonomisch mehr an China zu orientieren, das mit seinem Entwicklungsweg einen kometenhaften Wirtschaftsaufstieg erzielen und damit zu einer bedeutenden Macht in der globalen Welt werden konnte. In China werden gern Worte von Politikern aus Entwicklungsländern zitiert, die die chinesische Entwicklung als Entwicklungsmodell für unterentwickelte Länder sehen. Während eines Jugendkongresses chinesischer und afrikanischer Jugendlicher in Peking im Sommer 2012 wurde auf das Beispiel China, das viele Anregungen geben würde, verwiesen.<sup>10</sup> Die Beziehungen zu Russland oder auch Indien sind pragmatisch ausgerichtet, weil die Zusammenarbeit dem gegenseitigen Nutzen, vor allem jedoch die eigenen globalen Interessen sichern soll.

Infolge der neuen Entwicklungsstrategie, nach der China zum großen Exerzierfeld wurde, vermochte es von der sechsgroßten Weltwirtschaftsmacht (2000) zur zweitgrößten nach den USA (2010) und der größten Exportmacht vor Deutschland (2011) aufsteigen. Seit 2007 fließen die meisten Investitionssummen nach China, und der chinesische Markt ist immer mehr begehrt. Im Jahre 2012 wurde China zum größten Autoproduzenten der Welt, um nur einige vordere Positionen aufzulisten.

In der zweiten Dekade des 21. Jahrhunderts, nach über 30 Jahren Transformation, ist China jedoch in seiner Entwicklungs- und Reformpolitik an einem kritischen Kreuzweg angelangt. Das bisherige ökonomische Wachstumsmodell wird neu ausgerichtet. Gesellschaftliche Konfliktprobleme haben zu Unsicherheit in der politischen Entwicklung und Unzufriedenheit im Lande geführt. Die Ausrichtung eines neuen Gesellschaftsmodells, „Aufbau der Gesellschaft“ (*shehui jianshe*) und Schaffung einer „harmonischen Gesellschaft“ (*hexie shehui*) – so wird bezeichnet, soll der Stabilität des Landes und der allseitigen Entwicklung der Gesellschaft und des Landes dienen. Die politische Elite sieht sich zum ersten Mal herausgefordert, Debatten mit der Gesellschaft zu führen. Entstanden ist bereits eine Zivilgesellschaft (*zhongguo tese gongmin shehui*) mit chinesischen Merkmalen. So wurde eine engere Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Behörden und den zivilgesellschaftlichen Organisationen angekündigt, um gemeinsam an Problemlösungen heranzugehen.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> China's development model good example for African nations: CCM Vice-Chairman of Tanzania, in: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/ewalchina/2012-06/20\\_13665186.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/ewalchina/2012-06/20_13665186.htm) (aufgerufen 07.12.2012).

<sup>11</sup> Liu Zhenguo, *Jiakuai xingcheng xiandai shehui zhuzhi tizhi yujin zhongguo tese minban shehui shiye fazhang* (Beschleunigung des Strukturwandels der Formen zivilgesellschaftlicher Organisationen.

## Ende vom Demokratieinterventionismus – Ende der Dominanz des Westens

Die westliche Welt schaut gegenwärtig mit gewisser Unruhe auf China, weil dort in den letzten Dekaden monumentale Wandlungen stattgefunden haben, die die Position des Westens schwächen. In Prognosen wird vom Ende der Dominanz des Westen gesprochen. Die Demokratie in den westlichen Ländern dagegen, ein bisheriges Entwicklungsvorbild für Wohlstand und Effizienz und Menschenrechte, zeigt gewisse Risse, die mittels Reformen zu reparieren wären. Hervorgerufen wurde die kritische Situation durch eine unkritische Marktgläubigkeit und den Glauben an die Schubkraft der Finanzmärkte. Das Schuldenchaos in den USA und die Eurokrise haben diese Situation weiter verschärft. Diese neue globale Situation spiegelt sich in aktuellen Perzeptionen und Diskursen der Politikwissenschaften über Demokratie und Autoritarismus wider. Infolge des Aufstiegs eines autoritären Regimes zu einer bedeutenden Weltmacht ist in den vergleichenden Politikwissenschaften eine Debatte über die neue Attraktivität des Autoritarismus entstanden. Der nach Ende des Kalten Krieges Anfang der 1990 Jahre verkündete theoretische Glaubenssatz von der „dritten Welle der Demokratie in der Welt“, verkündet durch Huntington, und der damit verbundenen Gesinnungsethik und Euphorie vom „Ende der Geschichte“, verkündet durch F. Fukujama, sind damit zum großen Teil verstummt, auch wenn es in einigen Ländern nach wie vor an der Euphorie, Demokratie mit Hilfe von finanzieller Unterstützung und Aktivitäten oppositioneller Gruppen zu exportieren, nicht mangelt. So wird in einem Aufsatz über den neuen Autoritarismus generalisierend festgestellt: „Autoritäre Regime, gleich in welcher Form, gewinnen heute als politisches Modell an Attraktivität.“<sup>12</sup> Die globale Entwicklung zeigt, dass sie auch in westlichen Ländern zum Wohlstandsgefälle geführt hat, was in den Jahren zuvor nicht so ausgeprägt war. Es vertieft sich nicht nur in den Entwicklungs- und Schwellenländern, sondern weltweit. Meldungen über das Wohlstandsgefälle in China überhäufen sich, da das Land inzwischen an vorderster Front aufgestellt ist.<sup>13</sup> Die herrschende Elite in China, politisch, ökonomisch, kulturell und wissenschaftlich eng mit einander verbunden, handelt nach dem berühmten Leitsatz von Deng Xiaoping, dass man sich bereichern solle, weil zuerst doch nur einige reich werden können und sich bereichern glorreich sei. Der Staat, d.h. die Politik gehört in China noch immer zu den Kräften, die Wirtschaftsentwicklung antreiben oder auch blockieren können. Pressemeldungen in der westlichen Presse über den Reichtum von Politikern in China wurde dort als eine politische Provokation aufgenommen.<sup>14</sup>

Die westliche Welt zeigt trotz vielfältiger materieller Überlegenheit Anzeichen von Stagnation. Der britische Historiker Niall Ferguson verdeutlicht das in seiner Globalgeschichte über den Wettstreit der Kulturen, die er für den Westen im 21. Jahrhundert eher als pessimistisch

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Beschleunigung der Entwicklung gesellschaftlicher Unternehmen mit chinesischen Besonderheiten), in: <http://www.chinanpo.gov.cn/1800/59207/index.html> (aufgerufen 05.01.2013).

<sup>12</sup> S. Raimund Krämer, „Autoritarismus im 21. Jahrhundert. Gedanken zu einem aktuellen politischen Phänomen“, in: *WeltTrend, Zeitschrift für Internationale Politik*, 82, Januar–Februar, 2012, S. 33.

<sup>13</sup> Zheng Xin, *Pressures takes its toll on Beijingers: survey*, in: [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-10/26/content\\_15848105.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-10/26/content_15848105.htm) (aufgerufen 30.10.2012).

<sup>14</sup> J.M., „China's ruling families“, in: *The Economist*, 26 October, <http://www.economist.com/blogs/analects/2012/10/chinas-ruling-families?spc=scode...> (aufgerufen 30.10.2012).

einschätzt.<sup>15</sup> Die „Soft Power“ des Westens, das konkrete Vorzeigemodell von Entwicklung, Innovation und einem besseren Lebensstandard, hat an gewisser Anziehungskraft und Wirkung verloren. Das zeigt vor allem der Prestigeverlust infolge von geführten Interventionskriegen, der Finanzkrise und der Eurokrise. Es ist nicht einfach, eine Lösung für die selbstverschuldeten Krisen zu finden, da es auch unter den westlichen Staaten zu viele unterschiedliche Interessen gibt. Eine schuldenfinanzierte Wachstumspolitik, vom theoretischen Ansatz her, die globale Leitlinie für die Entwicklung im 21. Jahrhundert, kann nicht wie bisher weiter geführt werden, da die Geschichte des Führungsmonopols des Westens zu Ende geht. Doch dieser Machtverlust bedeutet nicht den Systemuntergang des Abendlandes. Angezeigt wird aber ein Ende des bisherigen Demokratieinterventionismus, der Rolle der Konditionalität in der Politik mit entsprechenden Auflagen in den internationalen Beziehungen. Der Politikwissenschaftler Reinhard Rode verdeutlicht das mit kritischen Formulierungen in einem Artikel wie folgt: „Zudem verlockt viele Staaten weiterhin der Aufstieg in die OECD-Welt. Doch hineinzwingen kann der Westen niemanden. Der harte Demokratieinterventionismus hat keine Konjunktur. Das ist für die Militär-Demokratisierer wie für die Scheckbuch- Zivil-Demokratisierer gleichermaßen enttäuschend.“<sup>16</sup> China dagegen kann sich damit rühmen, dass Wirtschaftswachstum weiterhin auf einem verhältnismäßig hohen Niveau zu halten, so dass es zu einem gefragten Investor geworden ist, aber auch ein Land, wohin weiterhin ausländische Investitionen fließen und das Volumen der größten Devisenreserven in der Welt anwächst, das durch den Export chinesischer Waren und dem bestehenden Handelsüberschuss mit zahlreichen Ländern der Welt entsteht.

### **Zur „spezifisch chinesischen Modernisierung“ (*zhongguo tese shehuizhuyi xiandaihua*)**

Obgleich die „spezifisch chinesische Moderne“ in Anlehnung an die Tradition und unter der selbst verordneten Führung der Kommunistischen Partei Chinas, die als eine Volkspartei agieren möchte, da sie den Anspruch erhebt, „alle Schichten des Volkes zu vertreten“<sup>17</sup>, unterschiedliche Folgen für die Gesellschaft und die Umwelt mit sich gebracht hat, führte dieses Entwicklungsmodell in einer historisch kurzen Zeit, in der die Bevölkerungsanzahl um über vierhundert Millionen Menschen angewachsen ist, zu einer Wirtschaftsdynamik, die einmalig in der Menschheitsgeschichte ist. China vermochte in nur drei Dekaden infolge beschleunigter Wirtschaftsentwicklung und den daraus folgenden Leistungsüberschüssen zu einer globalen Großmacht aufsteigen, von der Peripherie zum Centrum, was in der Welt zu Anerkennung, Faszination sowie aber auch zu Sorgen und Befürchtungen geführt hat.

### **Vielfalt der Modernisierungsmodelle in der globalen Entwicklung**

Der einst unterentwickelte totalitäre Staat entwickelte sich zu einem „aufgeklärten autoritären“ Staat, in dem der große, prosperierende Markt Magnet für die Wirtschaft aus

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<sup>15</sup> Vergl. Niall Ferguson, *Der Westen und der Rest der Welt* (Übersetzung aus dem Englischen *The West and the Rest of the World*), Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Reinhard Rode, „Noch ist der Westen nicht verloren“, in: *WeltTREnd*, 86, September–Oktober 2012, S. 58.

<sup>17</sup> Ding Jianzhong, *Zhong guo wei shema shengchu?* (Warum wird China siegen?), Beijing: Dangdai zhongguo chubanshe, 2011, S. 4.

der ganzen Welt geworden ist. Chinesische Entwicklungskonzepte, die in westlichen Ländern vor Jahren noch auf heftige Ablehnung gestoßen waren, werden heute differenzierter betrachtet. Beachtet werden die Unterschiede von Wahrnehmungs- und Denkmustern, nach denen sich in China die Entwicklung unter differenzierten kulturellen und historischen Bedingungen vollzieht, wie es chinesische Soziologen, Politikwissenschaftler oder auch Philosophen analysieren und in ihren Untersuchungen stets die kulturellen Bedingtheiten als Erklärungsansatz mit einbeziehen.<sup>18</sup> In Frage gestellt werden damit indirekt westliche Theorien, nach denen das Konzept westlicher Entwicklung als Kern universaler Zivilisation betrachtet wird. In China selbst werden die Entwicklungstendenzen als ein „Abgehen von der Verwestlichung“ zur „spezifisch chinesischen Modernisierung“ bezeichnet.<sup>19</sup> Entwicklungsländer schauen heute auf China und seine Entwicklungsstrategie zur Errichtung einer „sozialistischen Marktwirtschaft“, in die der Parteistaat je nach Ermessen der Umstände intervenieren kann.

In den kontroversen Debatten und Auseinandersetzungen sollte es nicht darum gehen, dass von der Chinawissenschaft in der westlichen Öffentlichkeit erwartet wird, die Entwicklung des autoritären Regimes in China allein von einer normativen Position aus zu analysieren, sondern es einer kritischen Reflexion zu unterziehen, die Analyse in einen historischen Kontext zu stellen und die Entwicklung nicht nur von den Wünschen her zu beurteilen, nach denen die ersehnte Demokratie Herrschaftsstruktur noch längst nicht in Sicht ist. Wenn es um die Entwicklung in normativer Sicht geht, so kann man diese nur skizzieren und analysieren, wenn man die Kontinuitäten wie aber auch den politischen und gesellschaftlichen Wandel mit beachtet.

Durch die sich vertiefende Globalisierung verliert der Westen als Ausgangsort der Moderne seine privilegierte Stellung. In China wurden westliche Theorien aufgegriffen, nach der die Moderne nicht ausschließlich westlich sein könne und die Entwicklung der Moderne im 21. Jahrhundert zu einer Verlagerung des Zentrums weg vom Westen in andere Regionen führe. Die Ideen vom „pazifischen Zeitalter“, die nach der liberalen Kulturdebatte, dem „Kulturfieber“ *wenre* in der zweiten Hälfte der 1980er Jahre wieder zur ideologischen Grundstimmung wurden, verdeutlichen das Wiederbeleben traditioneller Auffassungen. Gesprochen wurde damals vom Niedergang der westlichen Kultur.<sup>20</sup> Wurde während des „Kulturfiebers“ die eigene Tradition verworfen und der Ruf nach „Verwestlichung“ (*xihua*) laut, war nun der Pegel umgeschlagen. In den Debatten beschäftigte man sich auch mit den Thesen von Max Weber über das Beziehungsgeflecht zwischen Kapitalismus und Protestantismus. Hatte er doch damals angenommen, dass der Konfuzianismus unvereinbar sei mit der Moderne. Er hatte die Einmaligkeit der Modernisierung impliziert. Im gegenwärtigen chinesischen Diskurs geht man davon aus, dass es viele Modernisierungsmodelle geben könne, sowohl eine kapitalistische Moderne, wie auch eine Moderne, die sich auf die chinesische Tradition stützt. Es könne auch zu einer Verbindung von östlicher

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<sup>18</sup> Luo Caiqu (ed.), *Xiandaihua xinlun. Shijie yu zhongguo de xiandaihua jincheng* (Neue Diskurse über die Modernisierung. Der Modernisierungsprozess in der Welt und in China), Beijing: Shangwu yingshuguan, 2004, S. 494.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., S. 417.

<sup>20</sup> Ji Xianlin, *Dong xi fang wenhua de zhuanzhedian* (Wiedererstehen der östlichen Kultur), Ershiyi shiji (Das 21. Jahrhundert), No. 3, 1991, S. 4–5.

und westlicher Moderne kommen.<sup>21</sup> Kommt es zur Verschmelzung der chinesischen Kultur mit der westlichen würden jedoch Werte, wie die „Harmonie und die Gemeinschaft“ wichtige Pfeiler der „anderen Moderne“ erhalten, damit die Schwächen der westlichen Kultur abgedeckt werden könnten, da „die rationale Beherrschung der Welt (Protestantismus)“ im Gegensatz „zur rationalen Anpassung an die Welt“ (Konfuzianismus)<sup>22</sup> zu zahlreichen Disharmonien geführt habe, wie zu Kolonialismus, Kriegen oder Zerstörung der Familienbande und der Moral.<sup>23</sup>

### **„Modernisierung mit chinesischen Merkmalen“ (*zhongguoxing xiandaihua*) – Sinisierung der Entwicklung (*zhongguohua*)**

In Ostasien entstand eine nichtindividualistische Version des Kapitalismus. Prinzipien der Solidarität in der Familie und in Gemeinschaften, Disziplin und Loyalität gegenüber Autoritäten bilden Pfeiler der Wirtschaftsentwicklung. Auch in China durchziehen traditionelle Wahrnehmungsmuster die Reform- und Modernisierungsideen, die „Modernisierung mit chinesischen Merkmalen“ (*zhongguoxing xiandaihua*), wie ein roter Faden. Besonders krass ausgedrückt wird es, indem man betont, dass die Modernisierung des autoritären Regimes in China einer Sinisierung (*zhongguohua*) bedürfe.<sup>24</sup> Die meisten chinesischen Intellektuellen vertreten die Auffassung, dass zwar die Modernisierungsideen aus dem Westen gekommen seien, doch sie einer kritischen Übernahme (nur der positiven Elemente) bedürfen. Deshalb bedeute die Modernisierungspolitik in China auch keinen Bruch mit der Tradition.<sup>25</sup> Die Entwicklung im modernen China wird als eine „positive Fortsetzung des Traditionellen“ verstanden.<sup>26</sup> Die Debatte über den Autoritarismus im 21. Jahrhundert zeigt, wie der „chinesische Entwicklungsweg“ Raum für Marktwirtschaft und Wohlstandsziele einräumt, obgleich Kriterien der allgemeinen Solidarität und einer nachhaltigen gesellschaftlichen Entwicklung in der praktischen Umsetzung bisher nur mangelhaft befolgt wurden.

Der Diskurs über die „spezifisch chinesische Moderne“ wird auch außerhalb Chinas geführt. Unterschiedliche Positionen werden vertreten. Interessant geht es jedoch im Diskurs über den Autoritarismus in Anlehnung an das chinesische Modell, das, wovon man ausgeht, sich auch weiterhin erfolgreich entwickeln werde. Die große Euphorie, die nach dem großen politischen Umbruch in Mittel und Osteuropa sowie in den westlichen Staaten Ende der 1980 Jahre ausgebrochen war, ist längst verstummt und eine Technokratisierung von Politik, zunehmender Einfluss der Macht von Medien und Finanzen

<sup>21</sup> Guangming Ribao, 20.07.1990, S. 2.

<sup>22</sup> Max Weber, „Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. Konfuzianismus und Taoismus“, in: *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie*, I, S. 534.

<sup>23</sup> Mo Mingzhi, „Yanjiu chuantong wenhua, cujin xiandaihua jianshe“ (Erforschung der traditionellen Kultur), in: *Kongzi yanjiu*, 4, 1988, S. 92.

<sup>24</sup> Luo Rongqu (Hrsg.) *Cong xihua dao xiandaihua - wu si yilai youguan Zhongguo de wenhua qu xiang he fazhan daolu lunzheng wenxuan* (Von der Verwestlichung zur Modernisierung- ausgewählte Schriften zur Diskussion über Tendenzen und Entwicklungswege der chinesischen Kultur seit dem 4. Mai), Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 1990, S. 30–35.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., S. 33.

<sup>26</sup> Vergl. Zhang Liwen, *Chuantong wenhua yu xiandaihua* (Traditionelle Kultur und Modernisierung), Beijing: Zhongguo Renmin Daxue chubanshe, 1987.

ist zu beobachten, und unterschiedliche Krisensymptome sind weit verbreitet. Das Dogma von der Interdependenz liberaler Wirtschaftsordnung, sprich Kapitalismus und Demokratie, verliert zunehmend an Gültigkeit. Prof. Raimund Krämer von der Universität Potsdam formuliert es knapp und bündig, dass Kapitalismus nicht der Demokratie bedürfe, das zeige ein Blick in die Geschichte.<sup>27</sup>

Obgleich die Mehrheit der Staaten gegenwärtig bereits allgemein als Demokratien bezeichnet werden, darunter sich aber zahlreiche Halbdemokratien befinden, zeigen sich im 21. Jahrhundert vermehrt Tendenzen zur Autokratie, nicht nur in den Entwicklungsländern, sondern auch in entwickelten Staaten, charakterisiert durch technokratisches Management. Wenn es um die Anzahl der Menschen geht, so leben die meisten Menschen weiterhin unter autokratischen Herrschaftsstrukturen, auch in angeblichen Demokratien. Hier erfolgt die politische Machtausübung elitär im Zusammenwirken von unterschiedlichen politisch und wirtschaftlich institutionellen und sozialen Akteuren. China mag hierfür ein gutes Beispiel sein. „Sozialistische Demokratie“ (*shehuizhuyi minzhu*), wie das Herrschaftssystem offiziell bezeichnet wird, hat wenig mit den Grundzügen einer westlicher Demokratie oder auch einer sozialistischen Herrschaftsstruktur gemein. In China hat sich ein spezielles oligarchisches System herausgebildet, ein Zusammengehen und Zusammenwirken von Politik und Wirtschaft.

Verlagert sich infolge des Machtaufstiegs Chinas nun die Weltzivilisation nach Osten? Man sollte solche Prognosen nicht als unabwehrbar sehen, denn die abendländische Zivilisation weist trotz vieler Schwächen weiterhin viele Stärken auf. Seit Jahren wird in verschiedenen Kreisen in China sowie in Asien über die Verlagerung der Weltzivilisation nach Osten orakelt. Es fehlt nicht an chinesischen Wissenschaftlern, die davon träumen, dass die östliche Zivilisation zur Entstehung einer „wahren Solidargemeinschaft“ in der Welt beitragen könnte.<sup>28</sup> In der Publikation „Prognosen für China im 21. Jahrhundert“ werden Ansichten von Optimisten wie auch Pessimisten dargestellt. Die Optimisten gehen weiterhin davon aus, dass sich im 21. Jahrhundert die Weltzivilisation nach Osten verlagern werde, die Pessimisten dagegen glauben, dass trotz Wirtschaftsentwicklung China sich weiterhin außerhalb der freien Welt befinden werde.<sup>29</sup> Diese gegensätzlichen Auffassungen bestimmen auch den Diskurs über die Rolle Chinas in der Welt. Euphorische Prognosen, nach denen das asiatische Wertesystem die Welt retten könne, werden als gefährlich betrachtet, da man nicht die wahre Realität im Blickwinkel habe.<sup>30</sup> China bräuchte die „Demokratisierung“ zur weiteren Entwicklung und nicht nur die moderne Technologie wird Träumern geantwortet.<sup>31</sup> Das Bild über die „spezifisch chinesische Moderne“ und die Rolle, die daraus global erwachsen könne, wird also sehr unterschiedlich wahrgenommen. Die politische Elite in China deklariert dagegen in ihren Programmen die Notwendigkeit der Schaffung einer multilateralen Welt mit Dialogen und einer friedlichen Entwicklung.

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<sup>27</sup> Raimund Krämer, „Autoritarismus im 21. Jahrhundert. Gedanken zu einem aktuellen politischen Phänomen“, in: *Welttrend*, Nr. 82, Januar–Februar 2012, S. 27.

<sup>28</sup> Luo Rongqu, „The Historical Definition of Modernization and a New Understanding of Modern World's Development“, in: *Social Sciences in China*, Beijing No. 3/1996, S. 92–100.

<sup>29</sup> Ma Lin (ed.), *21 shijie zhongguo da yuce* (Prognosen für China im 21. Jahrhundert), Beijing: Gaige chubanshe, 1996, S. 15.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., S. 694.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., S. 701.

Nationalistische Tendenzen könnten jedoch, falls sie die Oberhand gewinnen sollten, solche Zielvorhaben leicht sprengen und Zugeständnisse könnten schwer zu erreichen sein.

Angesichts der zahlreichen Krisensymptome in der Welt und der daraus resultierenden Unsicherheit ist ein Kommentar der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* über die Situation und die Zukunftsentwicklung in China von Interesse. Aufmerksam gemacht wird auf eine Studie der deutschen „Bertelsmannstiftung“, nach der immer mehr Deutsche auf das autoritäre Regime in China als auf den demokratischen Rechtsstaat Japan vertrauen würden. Deshalb bemühe sich die Bundesregierung, heißt es, spezielle Beziehungen zu China zu entwickeln. Früher sei so eine Beziehungen nur den USA oder Großbritannien vorbehalten worden. Doch heute entscheide der ökonomische Erfolg über alles. Und das ist der Punkt. Gewarnt wird angesichts solcher Entwicklungen vor der Bewunderung Chinas, weil das „naiv und gefährlich“ sei. Man wirft China vor, alles nur dem Wachstum zu opfern. Es sei einfach falsch, heißt es in dem Kommentar, sich vom Aufschwung blenden zu lassen, denn so ein autoritärer Staat könne schnell die Kooperation einstellen, wenn es nicht mehr die entsprechenden Gewinne bringe. Der chinesische Staat wird als unberechenbar bezeichnet. Daher sollte Deutschland, dass von der chinesischen Wirtschaft besonders abhängig sei, gewarnt werden, da es für Erpressungsversuche besonders anfällig sei.<sup>32</sup>

### **Geopolitische Machtverschiebungen – China – Nutznießer der Globalisierung**

Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts beobachten wir Machtverschiebungen in der globalen Konstellation, die in der Vergangenheit meist mit Konflikten oder Kriegen einhergegangen waren. Die letzten beiden Dekaden sind bereits durch die beginnende Auflösung unipolarer Weltherrschaft gekennzeichnet, hervorgerufen durch zahlreiche Krisensymptome in der westlichen Welt, vor allem in den USA und den Aufstieg neuer Mächte, die, wie China, gegen alle Formen imperialer Machtpolitik Widerstand leisten. Nach dem großen systempolitischen Umbruch Ende der 1980 Jahre träumte man vom „Ende der Geschichte“, vom weltumfassenden Sieg der Demokratie, und kaum jemand wagte damals vorherzusagen, dass es zu so gewaltigen geopolitischen Konstellationsveränderungen kommen könnte. China beeinflusste maßgebend diesen Wandel. Dank seiner Entwicklung ist es zu einem neuen Machtfaktor geworden. Francis Fukujama, der Autor des Bestsellers „Ende der Geschichte“<sup>33</sup>, musste sich in seiner Auffassung korrigieren, doch erst viele Jahre nachdem er seine euphorischen Prognosen, die gegenwärtig überholt sind, veröffentlicht hatte. Gegenwärtig sieht er die globale Welt mit anderen Augen und der einstige liberale Visionär ist gezwungen anzuerkennen, dass es infolge traditioneller Wahrnehmungsmuster unterschiedliche Wege zur Modernisierung gibt. Der Westen, so Fukujama, sollte die Staaten, die ihre eigenen Wege in die Moderne gehen, nicht stören, wenn sie in ihrer Tradition ihre neue Identität mit ihren neuen Entwicklungskonzepten in Zeiten der Globalisierung suchen. Er geht sogar so weit, zu behaupten, dass die globalen ökonomischen Faktoren der einzelnen Gesellschaft nicht irgendein Modell aufzwingen sollten. Als negatives Beispiel wird die amerikanische Politik im Irak.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Christian Geinitz, „Riskantes China“, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 8.11.2011, S. 11.

<sup>33</sup> Vergl. Francis Fukujama, *Das Ende der Geschichte. Wo stehen wir?*, München: Verl. Beck, 1992.

<sup>34</sup> Francis Fukujama, „Zaufanie w globalnej gospodarce“ (Vertrauen in die globale Wirtschaft), in: *Dziennik*, 25–26.08. 2007.

Mit Hilfe der hoch entwickelten Industrieländer des Westens wurde China zum größten Nutznießer der Globalisierung. Die Zusammenarbeit vollzog sich zum gegenseitigen Nutzen in einem bilateralen und multilateralen Beziehungsgeflecht, ermöglicht durch Investitionen und Know How aus dem westlichen Ausland. Die große Finanzkrise hat zahlreiche Staaten der verschuldeten westlichen Welt erreicht. Sie führte nicht nur zur Infragestellung der bisherigen Weltordnung, in der bisher die westlichen Länder einen universalen Entwicklungsweg vorgeben konnten, sondern es hat sich bereits ein multilaterales Modell mit verschiedenen Machtfaktoren herausgebildet. Die große Herausforderung für China besteht jedoch gegenwärtig nicht in der Stärkung seiner globalen Position, sondern in einer neuen Ordnungspolitik, um die vielen Probleme im Lande zu regeln, indem die rechtlichen Grundlagen für die unterschiedlichen gesellschaftlichen Bereiche klarer formuliert werden müssten.<sup>35</sup> Erst wenn China seine Ziele erreicht haben sollte, stark und mächtig geworden ist, könnten viele Probleme anders als gegenwärtig in Griff genommen werden, betont Kerry Brown, Direktor des Chinazentrums an der Universität Sydney, in einem Artikel. Falls es jedoch China nicht gelingen sollte, seinen Großmachtstatus zu erringen, werde nicht nur für China, aber für den Rest der Welt eine schwierige Zeit beginnen.<sup>36</sup>

Die Zeiten im 21. Jahrhundert sind global nicht mehr so über überschaubar und vorhersehbar wie noch in den Jahren zuvor. Unterschiedliche Konflikte breiten sich aus, geprägt von fundamentalistischer Politik, neuen außenpolitischen Grundsätzen, wie von der Notwendigkeit, Präventivaktionen oder – kriege infolge historisch ungelöster Hinterlassenschaften oder eigener Machtansprüche zu führen. Diese neue Situation zeigt, welche Rivalitäten entstanden sind, die bereits die politische Landkarte zu verändern beginnen. Die Welt ist nach den großen Systemveränderungen in den letzten Dekaden nicht sicherer geworden, wie einst viele Anhänger demokratischer Umwälzungen hofften. Die alte Maxime „Wo es ein Ziel gibt, gibt es auch einen Weg“ scheint heute durchlöchert zu sein, und man müsste sie umbenennen in die Maxime „Wo es ein Ziel gibt, müssen viele Wege immer aufs Neue ausprobiert werden.“ China hat mit seiner Entwicklung und Wandlung von Staat und Gesellschaft maßgebend an der Entstehung der neuen Realität beigetragen. Spricht man in den westlichen Ländern immer häufiger von der Postdemokratie, die entstanden sei, so wird auf der anderen Seite jedoch weiterhin versucht, autoritär regierten Ländern das alte demokratische Modell aufzuzwingen. Einem Land, wie China gegenüber, wo der Staatsdirigismus von ungewöhnlichem Wirtschaftswachstum begleitet wird, ist man dagegen angesichts der großen Finanzkrise mit den Ratschlägen und Patentrezepten zurückhaltender geworden.

Der chinesische Staat besitzt in der Wahrnehmung der übergroßen Mehrheit der Bevölkerung immer noch höchste Priorität. Die Patentrezepte der Entwicklungspolitik der westlichen Länder vermochten in den Entwicklungsländern nicht zu den erwarteten Erfolgen führen. Auch das große Zukunftsprojekt der vertieften Integration der Länder der Europäischen Union scheint brüchig geworden zu sein. In einem Gespräch mit Altbundeskanzler Helmut Schmidt während seines Besuchs in Singapur im September 2012 gab der ehemalige Ministerpräsident des Stadtstaates Lee Kuan Ye zu verstehen, dass er die Zukunft der EU sehr pessimistisch einschätze, weil dieses Unterfangen zu schnell

<sup>35</sup> Ding Jianzhong, *Zhongguo wei shema shengchu?* (Warum wird China siegen?), *ibid.*, S. 4–6.

<sup>36</sup> Kerry Brown, „China’s tensions and Hu’s great gamble“, in: *New York Times*, 08.11.2011.



expandierte und deshalb von Anfang an falsch konzipiert worden sei. Für Asien stelle es keinen Modellcharakter dar. Asien habe dagegen andere Probleme. „Das Problem in Asien ist die Vormachtstellung Chinas. Auch das Problem der Amerikaner... wird China sein“.<sup>37</sup> Das Problem des Westens ist gewiss eine Art Hochmut, der sich infolge der erfolgreichen Industrialisierung und der materiellen Entwicklung herausgebildet hat. Der Altkonfuzianer aus Singapur formuliert das auf eine ganz besondere Weise: „Der Westen hat das Bedürfnis, sich einzubilden: Ich bin erleuchtet worden, ich will, dass du auch erleuchtest.“<sup>38</sup>

### **China: Konkurrent und größter Rivale der westlichen Welt**

Am Anfang des 21. Jahrhunderts hat der Wandel dazu geführt, dass die aufsteigende Wirtschafts- und Regionalmacht China immer mehr in den Blickwinkel der internationalen Politik rückt. Nicht nur Staat und Gesellschaft sind im Wandel begriffen, sondern China beginnt eine Rolle in der Welt zu spielen und ist dabei, seinen „gebührenden Platz“, den es viele Jahrhunderte lang bis Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts als größte Wirtschaftsmacht inne hatte, in der Völkergemeinschaft wieder einzunehmen. Das „Reich der Mitte“ ist zu einem gefragten Partner in Politik und Wirtschaft wie aber auch Vermittler in Konfliktsituationen der internationalen Politik geworden, es gilt mit seinen Krediten und Investitionen als „Retter“ verschuldeter „freiheitlicher“ Länder. China betritt als neuer Konkurrent und größter Rivale der westlichen Welt, in erster Linie der Vereinigten Staaten, die globale Bühne in der Politik und in Wirtschaftsfragen. Die chinesische Politik kümmert sich wenig um die Empfindlichkeiten des Westens und geht in der Rohstoffpolitik, bei der Bildung von politischen Partnerschaften, bezüglich von Entwicklungskonzeptionen oder als neu entstehende maritime Macht eigene Wege. Der Westen sollte hinterfragen, ob er nun seinen eigenen großen Rivalen herangezogen hat, weil man die langfristigen strategischen Absichten schwer durchschauen konnte? Zwar gibt es ununterbrochen Versicherungen der politischen Elite Chinas, die Entwicklung friedlich zu gestalten, so könnten aufbrechende Konflikte das verändern.

Zeitungsüberschriften verkünden, dass der Wettstreit um die wirtschaftliche Vorherrschaft im 21. Jahrhundert härter, d. h. aggressiver werde.<sup>39</sup> Der globale Wettbewerb wird Formen der Rivalität annehmen. Dieser Wettbewerb wird begleitet von der Rivalität der Systeme. Obgleich die Rivalität sich vertieft, werden massenweise weiterhin Maschinen, Geräte und Ideen aus den entwickelten Ländern nach China geliefert. Die große Frage heißt „Wie wird diese Rivalität ausgehen?“ Unterschiedliche fallen die Antworten aus. Meinen die einen, dass man China bekämpfen müsse, raten die anderen eine handlungsfähige EU zu schaffen und die Wirtschaft und das politische System weiter zu reformieren. Doch wie konkret diese Reformen verlaufen sollen, erfährt man nicht. Eine Übernahme des westlichen Modells wird von der chinesischen Politik abgelehnt und von Anfang an als unrealistisch für die Bedingungen in China und seine Kultur erklärt, auch wenn man einige Entwicklungselemente vom Westen übernimmt.

Die Publikation von Kishore Mahbubani „Die Rückkehr Asiens. Das Ende der westlichen Dominanz“ erregte großes Aufsehen, weil der Autor aus Singapur auf die neue geopolitische

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<sup>37</sup> Matthias Nass, „Wie chinesisch wird die Welt?“, in: *Die Zeit*, 6.09.2012, S. 8.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., S. 9.

<sup>39</sup> Uwe Jean Heuser, „Der Westen kann mithalten. Doch im Wettbewerb mit China müssen Deutschland und die USA ihre Demokratie reformieren“, in: *Die Zeit*, Nr. 21, 30. 09.2012.

Situation in drastischen Worten aufmerksam machte. So bemerkt er in seiner Schrift, dass man nicht darüber nachdenken sollte, ob das postamerikanische Zeitalter bereits angebrochen sei oder anbrechen werde, weil es doch bereits angebrochen sei. Amerika, so der Autor, gelte heute in vielen Regionen der Welt nicht mehr als das Leuchtfeuer der Freiheit und Demokratie. Vor allem unter den 1.2 Mrd. Muslimen, insgesamt unter den über fünf Mio. Nichtamerikanern und Nichteuropäern hat sich das Ideal der einstigen Strahlkraft in Skepsis und Abneigung verwandelt. Die Welt sei in ein neues Zeitalter eingetreten und den USA werde es schwer fallen, zu den alten glorreichen Zeiten zurückzukehren. Die Kernthese lautet, dass die Vorherrschaft der USA und Europa sich dem Ende neigt.<sup>40</sup> In einem Interview verweist der Autor, dass die Wirtschaftsexperten und Firmenchefs Chinas sehr oft in den USA ausgebildet worden seien und dabei seien, die Gesellschaft im Lande zu verändern. So fragt er, was dem Westen die moralische Autorität gebe, den Rest der Welt mit Belehrungen zu gängeln, wenn vieles, was im Westen geschieht auch Unrecht gewesen sei?<sup>41</sup> In einem ähnlichen Ton verfährt der amerikanische Politologe F. Zakaria in seiner Publikation „Der Aufstieg der Anderen. Das postamerikanische Zeitalter“.<sup>42</sup> Robert Kagan erinnert an die Euphorie in Amerika nach der Beendigung des „Kalten Krieges“, als Präsident H.W. Bush 1991 die Entstehung einer neuen Weltordnung prognostizierte, in der die Staaten gemeinsame Verantwortung übernehmen für Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit.<sup>43</sup> Mehr als zwanzig Jahre später haben viele eingesehen, so Kagan, dass der unerschütterliche Glaube an das liberale System, das zum weiteren Triumph der Entwicklung der Menschheit führen könnte, an der Realität vorbei ging.<sup>44</sup>

Die chinesische Politik reagiert auf solche Prognosen eher verhalten und nicht triumphierend. Zusammenarbeit mit allen Ländern, vor allem jedoch mit den entwickelten Industrieländern und Rohstoffländern sowie Stabilität sind für die weitere Entwicklung notwendig. Die Erhaltung des Friedens, der Harmonie und die Vertiefung der internationalen Zusammenarbeit gehören zu den wichtigsten Herausforderungen der modernen Zeit, hieß es in den Berichten auf dem XVIII. Parteitag der KPCh im November 2012.<sup>45</sup> In dem auf dem novellierten Parteistatut der KPCh wird auf die Dringlichkeit der Erhaltung des Friedens und der weiteren Entwicklung gezeigt, weil nur das die Voraussetzung für eine erfolgreiche Vollendung des großen Modernisierungsprogramms sei.<sup>46</sup> Nach traditionellem Muster gehören Stabilität und Harmonie zur obersten Priorität. Die großangelegte Wirtschaftsentwicklung hat jedoch zur Instabilität und Disharmonie in der Gesellschaft geführt. So

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<sup>40</sup> Kishore Mahbubani, *Die Rückkehr Asiens. Das Ende der westlichen Dominanz*, München: Propyläen Verlag, 2008, S. 44.

<sup>41</sup> <http://nachrichten.t.online.de/kishore-mahbubani-im-interview-wie-die-welt-im-jahr-2...> (aufgerufen 06.01.2013).

<sup>42</sup> Vergl. Fareed Zakaria, *Der Aufstieg des Anderen. Das postamerikanische Zeitalter*, München: Siedler Verlag, 2009.

<sup>43</sup> Robert Kagan, *Powrót historii i koniec marzeń* (Übersetzung aus dem Englischen), Poznań: Dom Wydawniczy Rebis 2009, S. 11.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., S. 112.

<sup>45</sup> Zhang Shengen, *Shiliu da dao she ba da de zhongguo* (China zwischen dem XVI. und XVIII. Parteitag), Beijing: Renmin chubanshe, 2012, S. 307.

<sup>46</sup> „Zhongguo gongchangdang zhangcheng“ (Statut der Kommunistischen Partei China), angenommen am 14. 11.2012, in: *Renmin Ribao*, 19.11.2012, S. 1.

muss man sich wundern, dass es angesichts der kritischen Lage euphorische Stimmen gibt, die die Entwicklung anders bewerten und den „Sieg Chinas“ preisen, weil letztendlich Chinas Zivilisation besondere Stärken aufweise und der westlichen Kultur überlegen sei. Solche Glaubensbekenntnisse kann man u.a. in der Publikationen „China wird gewinnen“ lesen, in der die „glorreiche menschenfreundliche Ideengeschichte“ des „Reichs der Mitte“ und der Volksrepublik China dargestellt wird, die der westlichen Ideengeschichte auf Grund seiner ethischen Kriterien weit überlegen sei.

Die bilaterale Rohstoffpolitik führt zu engeren politischen Beziehungen, wie es die Entwicklung mit einigen afrikanischen Staaten zeigt. In der letzten Zeit überhäufen sich die Berichte in westlichen Medien über die Expansion Chinas in Afrika. Diese spiegeln wider, wie sich der Westen in seiner Wahrnehmung bedroht fühlt, weil seine Vorherrschaft in Frage gestellt ist. Im Westen wird China als neue imperiale Macht angeklagt, die bereit ist, im Bunde mit Diktatoren Abkommen zu schließen wie im Sudan oder Simbawe. Das ist eine sehr einseitige Sicht, die die Interessen anderer Mächte beschönigt. In Afrika dagegen sieht man neben der Expansion Chinas als Wirtschaftsmacht auch neue Möglichkeiten, die durch die chinesische Afrikapolitik entstehen.<sup>47</sup> Die Rohstoffversorgung für die eigene Volkswirtschaft gehört heute zur Sicherheitspolitik und zum wichtigsten Wettbewerbsfaktor, und das nicht nur in China. Für die geopolitische Position Chinas ist die Beschaffung von Rostoffen unumgänglich, da die weitere Wirtschaftsentwicklung auf Rohstoffimporte angewiesen sein wird.

## Schlussbemerkungen

Nach Beendigung des Kalten Krieges gab es große Hoffnungen auf eine bessere Welt, die die Menschen weltweit bewegten. Über zwanzig Jahre danach ist die globale Welt erneut vor großen Herausforderungen gestellt und in Bewegung geraten. Die einzige Gewissheit, die auch in Zeiten von Krisen geblieben ist, ist die, dass sich alles wandelt, *panta rhei*, weil alles im Fluss ist und sich ständig bewegt. Die Frage bleibt offen, wohin sich die Entwicklung bewegt. Trotz unterschiedlicher Rhetorik stehen Macht und Wirtschaftsinteressen weiterhin im Vordergrund. Politik und Wirtschaft eines jeden Landes stehen in diesem Wandel vor der Komplexität einer noch nie so vernetzten und beschleunigten globalen Welt, in der sich die Staaten neu bestimmen müssen, politisch global und ökoglobal.

Der größte Wandel findet gegenwärtig jedoch in China statt. Die globale Finanzkrise scheint den Aufstieg Chinas zu beschleunigen. Die Frage steht im Raum, ob dieser Aufstieg unaufhaltsam ist oder die mannigfaltigen Probleme im Lande, die diesen Aufstieg begleiten, gefährden können. Aufgrund der Dimensionen des Landes, vor allem angesichts der größten Bevölkerungszahl in der Welt, findet hier eine wahrhaft unikale Entwicklung in der Menschheitsgeschichte statt, die nicht frei von Krisengefahren ist. An diesen Gefahren könnte der weitere Aufstieg scheitern, falls die politische Elite die brennenden Probleme nicht zu lösen vermag. Der beschleunigten ökonomischen Wirtschaftsdynamik folgte der globale Machtaufstieg. Im Lande selbst jedoch hat die Entwicklung zur Instabilität und zur Verunsicherung der politischen Klasse geführt. Chinas Rolle in der Welt hängt nicht nur

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<sup>47</sup> Stephen Marks, „Chinas Sicherheitspolitik in Afrika“, in: *Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft*, Nr. 1, 2009, S. 74.

von der globalen Entwicklung, sondern auch von der Entwicklung und Wandlung des Landes ab. Die Versuche, Chinas neue Position in der Welt zu beschreiben und zu erklären, scheinen sich ins grenzenlose auszubreiten, wobei die unterschiedlichsten Meinungen vertreten werden. Der wirtschaftliche Aufstieg Chinas hat zu globalen politischen Veränderungen geführt, die zweifelsohne die Entwicklung der letzten Dekaden prägen. Übereinstimmung herrscht allgemein darin, dass Chinas Einfluss in der globalen Wirtschaftsdynamik sowie in den internationalen Beziehungen weiterhin wachsen wird. Differenzen gibt es dagegen in der Einschätzung über die langfristige Entwicklung zu einer Hegemonalmacht, ob diese friedfertig oder mit Spannungen und Konflikten einhergehen oder ob man zusammen mit anderen Weltmächten in einer multilateralen Ordnung den „unbeirraren Weg der friedlichen Entwicklung“, wie ständig offiziell deklariert, eine neue Weltordnung geschaffen werden kann. Spannungen, Konflikte und Kriege würden die Umsetzung der großen Zielvorhaben gefährden. Doch in China hat sich eine „patriotische“ Welle ausgebreitet, die in ihren nationalistischen Emotionen unberechenbar werden könnte.

Die westlichen Länder haben keine Alternative, als mit China zusammenzuarbeiten, um die anstehenden globalen Problem zu lösen und gemeinsam eine globale Politik zu betreiben. Es geht im 21. Jahrhundert nicht mehr um Demokratie und Totalitarismus oder Autoritarismus, sondern um eine gute oder schlechte Regierungsführung. Zweifelsohne ist China ein erfolgreiches Land, das von einer Partei, die sich auch noch Kommunistische Partei nennt, geführt wird. In der chinesischen Elite gibt es keinen Konsens über die zukünftige globale Rolle des Landes. In der offiziellen Politik steht man gegen jeglichen Hegemonismus und strebt nur eine „gebührende“ Stellung in der Welt an. Von der Supermachtstellung wird dagegen nicht gesprochen. Es ist jedoch nicht zu übersehen, dass die nationalistischen Trends im Lande, in denen stets auf die einstigen Demütigungen, die China erleiden musste, verwiesen wird und zum Paradigma der Politik gehören. Gegenwärtig wird der friedfertige Aufstieg beschworen. Der Stolz auf die Erfolge des Landes schafft neue Identität, die eigenen Interessen noch härter und kompromissloser zu vertreten.

TERUJI SUZUKI

## Some Characteristics of Corporate Culture and Governance in Japan

### Abstract

Corporate governance in Japan may be characterized as a harmonious model of management based on lifetime employment, a seniority wage system and a harmonious relationship between management and trade unions. However it is facing difficulties with more and more serious influences of “global standards”, namely an Anglo-American model of corporate governance.

Historically observed, the reasons of why corporate scandals often reported since the 1990s should be analyzed. Due to a strong position of management shareholders are relatively weak. Although a reform of corporate governance is requested by introducing the US model of corporate governance, the situation is complicated and it is not easy to reach a single conclusion because the ethical principles of management and the other stakeholders towards work and company involved in Japanese society are different from that of the West. Corporate culture has long been shaped by traditional Confucian ethics.

### 1. Debate on corporate governance in Japan

The notion of corporate governance became attractive as a way to gain control over the management of a corporation by stockholders in the 1990s. This was because most of individual stockholders demanded some reforms of the stock exchange system, which was vital to affect the recession of the market. The reform oriented criticism against the established system claimed to introduce the American type of corporate governance in Japan,<sup>1</sup> which were also debated between the governments as a problem of structural adjustment of socio-economic reforms in Japan since 1989.

Despite such a political climate, however, it was not easy to reach a common goal on a system of corporate governance.

### 2. Background of moral hazard

A Japanese corporation mainly in the form of joint stock company (the only form of a limited liability corporation due to the amendment of the Commercial Law in 2005) is formally established based on ideas on corporations historically shaped in Europe, and has long

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<sup>1</sup> James C. Abegglen, *21<sup>st</sup> Century Japanese Management: New Systems, Lasting Values*, Tokyo: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004; Dennis C. Mueller, “The Anglo-Saxon Approach to Corporate Governance and its Applicability to Emerging Markets”, *Corporate Governance*, Vol. 14, No. 4, July 2006, p. 207.

sustained in its principle without any changes. However, it is true to say that although the formal institution was not changed, it has cultivated a unique corporate culture since its transplantation at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to the law, despite the fact that legal institutions like general meetings of stockholders were established as the superior organ among other institutions within a corporation, management, namely the board of directors being subjected to the general meeting, has actually secured its stable and monopolistic position in making policy decisions and the execution of them in corporations.

Corporate activities were monitored by various institutions *de jure* (inside) such as the general meeting of stockholders, auditors, the board of directors but at the same time *de facto* (outside) organs such as collective “Mochiai” – a group of companies associated with cross holding of stocks and banks (the main banks) or groupings of corporations called as “Keiretsu” which are associated within production and technology development, and additionally, the authorities of the Stock Exchange, if they were listed there. Those all functioned till the end of the 1990’s. Therefore, corporate culture, which focused on stable management for a long time, could be characterized as a significant element of corporate culture in Japan until the 1980’s.

Why was the notion of the American form of corporate governance was forcibly introduced into Japan in the 1990’s? It is true to say that since corporate culture had thus traditionally been fairly well developed, the management was considering its moral responsibility relating to its business activities, at least to some extent. During the 1980s, it was then, called “corporation society”, which all stakeholders including managers, trade unions and other associated units were involved with it for this purpose.

Therefore, it was a opinion that there was no need to apply corporate governance of the US type to control the management.

However, as it has been told that since business people with tremendous success during the economic boom in the 1980’s were full of conceit in their behavior at that point, they inclined to lose foresight of their fair management, namely because of moral hazard. Coincidentally business scandals have often been reported since then. There have been several types of illegal performances reported since the 1980s. Many of them are related with accounting based on false reports, in particular on its bad debts due to business failures. Management tended to abuse their capacities and they could not maintain fair principles by concealing documents.

Then, a question of who could control such a false performance of the management?

### **3. The difference between Japanese corporations and the US model of corporate culture**

American corporate culture was cultivated since its independence of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, followed by high economic growth. In particular, it was characterized by the “frontier spirit”, which is well known as ambitious and aggressive behavior in business, spiritually based on Protestantism. Contrary to that of Japan, which was cultivated after the long lasting feudal socio-economic environment, it was very much self-restrictive. In addition there were obvious differences between the two. In Japan it was shaped under the pressure of commands of feudal lords influenced by their religious culture of Confucianism inherited from patrimonial traditions. For example, modern corporate institutions such as “Zaibatsu”, which existed as a form of big family capital corporations before the war, were regulated by

not only official state law but also internal house laws. Based on them Zaibatsu's were shaped as modern form of holding corporations of a similar type to "komanditgesellschaft" or "ohne Handelsgesellschaft" in German law. While it is difficult to say to what extent traditional elements are included in them, it is a matter deeply depending on the socio-economic conditions of Japanese society. The problem indeed coincides with what a German sociologist Max Weber had once conceived and which was, then called "patrimonial piety" in the relationship of family and society in general.

According to his explanation the notion, "patrimonial piety" is a permanent loyalty to family relationships and so, a negative element for modern corporate culture, which is in principle based on contractual relationship of freedom and equality. However, in the case of Japan it has played a significant role as a specific form of a corporation.<sup>2</sup>

#### **4. The process of transplantation of "Societe" or "Company" in Japan**

When the capitalistic economic system was first introduced in Japan at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (between 1870 and 1900's) capitalist business people emerged as leaders of the newly modernized Japan. Since no modernized merchant class of people (adequate term for "bourgeois" in the strict sense of the term) existed before, new leaders were created from the enlightened and ambitious samurai class of people (before the lower middle class but at least among educated people), so they could be called "merchant-samurai class". One of the pioneering leaders of business, Eiichi Shibusawa who belonged to this type of a leader, was first sent to Europe and shocked by the Western economic system of growth during his first stay as a member of the Shogun mission to France in 1867–1869. He was particularly impressed by "societe" as a legal entity of business in France. Soon after returning home he did indeed introduce it into Japan as a key institution of economic reform of the Meiji Restoration. According to his understanding a "societe" or "company" would play, (instead of the feudalistic private entity under the command system based on feudal lords) a dominant role in capitalist Japan. In addition, he noticed the fact that a new private entity should function as a social stabilizer and the core element of social development. He often stressed that the societe (company) should be introduced not only for profits gain by investors, but it should be treated as a social institution for a new era of Japan.<sup>3</sup> Since then, when corporate issues were discussed in Japan, the notion of a corporation or company has always been understood as an entity associated with various functions in the society. Shibusawa had first started his carrier as deputy minister of finance, despite his background as a farmer business activist (quasi-samurai) related with the Shougun (politically opposite side of the Meiji Restoration Reform regime).

He, then, succeeded in establishing the first central bank of Japan. Soon after that success, however, he resigned from the official post in the government because he considered that capitalist Japan should first develop a private sector of economy which was more important than the public sector. He had willingly accepted proposals of private business circles for new business. Since then, he became an initiator and a

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<sup>2</sup> Max Weber, Max Rheinstein (eds.), *Law in Economy and Society*, Harvard University Press, 1954.

<sup>3</sup> Teruko Craig, *The Autobiography of Shibusawa Eiichi: from Peasant to Entrepreneur*, Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1994.

founder of private corporations by establishing nearly 500 corporations in various fields of industry and finance, including the first private bank, “Daiichi Bank” (the first private Bank = “Mizuho” at the present). He was also interested in the social function of business professionals (not investors) who should be the main players in shaping of corporate culture in capitalist Japan. Then he took an initiative to establish the first Chamber, “the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industries”, which he was elected for the first president and then, the presidency was kept for more than 30 years until 1931. Shibusawa’s propagation of business culture was known as moral management based on Confucius thoughts. One of the debated known as the Shibusawa vs. Iwasaki (the founder of the Mitsubishi Zaibatsu) debate at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the two leaders discussed as follows; While Iwasaki emphasized on the dominant role of individual leadership in business decision making, particularly the relationship with government, on the other hand, Shibusawa insisted on the importance of collective decision making as the members of board of directors in a corporation, who have to be professionally trained in business as the agency theory explains.<sup>4</sup> Since for him corporation had a social responsibility in the broadest sense, it was also important to promote the educational system, in particular by establishing a business school. Shibusawa took the initiative to open a business school supported by the government, the first business school in Japan (today, it is called Hitotsubashi University). His philosophy which was based on Confucianism often relied on some fragments of Confucius sayings, which were to some extent, similar to those of egalitarianism or stoicism in European philosophy, and claimed that business leaders should behave morally.

(It is very interesting question whether Shibusawa knew at that time about Adam Smith’s books, both “The Theory of Moral Sentiments”, published in 1759 and “An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations”, published in 1776, or not? His son-in-law, prof. Hozumi was one of the first law scholars who studied in the UK during the 1870’s and became the first dean of the faculty of law at the Imperial University of Tokyo in 1882. From him Shibusawa had fairly good information on the British literature.)<sup>5</sup>

However, Shibusawa emphasized moral sentiments based on Confucianism. For instance, it was often quoted by him as the Confucian wisdom that “the richer people should be acknowledged that they could dispose of their wealth as a result of the business success at the latest turn after the associated people all did enjoy”.<sup>6</sup>

Although the influence of Shibusawa was a decisive element in corporate culture before the war, in the 1930’s, after his death, many organizations and non-governmental associations influenced by his idea were gradually taken over by governmental agencies and consequently, their leaders became officials of the government because of the war time administration.

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<sup>4</sup> Taichi Sakaiya, *The Twelve Men Who Made Japan*, Tokyo: Kodansha, 2003, p. 174; There are many writings of Shibusawa on Confucian sayings (see: Shinnichi Sano, *Shibusawake sanndai*, Tokyo: Bungeishinnjuu, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> Hozumi, Nobushige (1856–1926). Among his publications economic issues were also included. (Housouyawa and other works published between 1885–1892).

<sup>6</sup> Masato Kimura, *Shibusawa Eiichi*, Tokyo: Chuo Koronsha, 1991; *The Collection of Works* written by Seien Shibusawa.



On the other hand, the strong Zaibatsu like Mitsubishi, Mitsui or the like became predominant in economy and collaborated with the government. Their characters were different from what Shibusawa emphasized on before.

## 5. Legal foundation

As far as institutional aspects are concerned, corporations in various forms were legally defined by civil and commercial codes at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which were greatly influenced by European laws. Principally similar to the notions of European model of corporations, for instance French and German corporations, the legal form of corporations was defined and the terms were included as a part of the modern commercial code of Japan, which was enacted at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1899). According to the laws it was possible to create business entities with various forms that could do business as natural persons. In addition, from the practical points of view, the notion of “limited liability” is significant since individual investors could take part in business activities of a corporation on their own risks. The legal principles of the created institutions have not been changed until recently, although some marginal amendments were introduced after the Second World War.

In a corporation (company) in particular in the case of a joint stock company similar to the German “aktiengesellschaft”, notions and functions of institutions such as stockholders, board of directors are precisely defined. Although stockholders as the owners of a corporation are legally superior to others and their function through general meetings. It is generally accepted that stockholders and management are in principle separated from each other (although it is needed to indicate that a new trend such as stock option practices in the USA, may change the relationship). However, stock option practice, which was introduced in Japan through US corporations operating in Japan is yet premature.

(The tax office authorities of Japan treat it as a part of personalized income like ordinary wages, but not a dividend.)

## 6. Fragmentation of ownership and decreased role of shareholders

The relationship between ownership and management was explained by the so called agency theory which considered the management was to function as an agent for the shareholders.<sup>7</sup> According to the theory management acting as an agency for stockholders has to function within the capacities assigned to it by general meetings, namely for corporate interests as a whole. Put into a modern context it does not necessarily mean its exclusively for stockholders. When corporations were dominantly owned by private founders in the beginning the agency theory seemed adequate, but its ownership structure and social character has changed since then. (An average stockholders in practice tends to maintain his ownership in Japan for several months only). Besides, it is particularly important to see that the structure of ownership has changed in Japan since the 1950's in line with the rapid economic expansion. The capital structure of a corporation has changed not only through free transactions of stock (democratized and liberalized activities of the stock exchange), but also through mergers and large scaled

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<sup>7</sup> Magdalena Jerzemowska, Kevin Campbell, “The Limits of Agency Theory as a Framework for Analysis of Corporate Governance, Współczesne Problemy Analizy Ekonomicznej”, *Prace i Materiały Wydziału Zarządzania Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, Wydział Zarządzania Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego, Vol. 1, 2006, p. 153.

acquisitions. The structure of stockholders in most cases is then fragmented by large or small portions of shares. For instance, even in the case of the once family dominant corporation of “Panasonic” (Matsushita), the company, which was established as a small business with a small capital of Kounosuke Matsushita, with his personal shares (nearly 100%) in the beginning before, his share decreased dramatically by a successive increase of additional investment by issuing new stocks at the stock exchange and increase of number of the other investors with its fast capital demands path. After 70 years operations of the business Matsushita’s personal stock value tremendously increased, but his share decreased by nearly one percent of the total shares of the corporation.<sup>8</sup> Consequently, it can be said that the character of a corporation has changed in its property structure from a personally owned corporation based on family property to that of the various and scattered individual owners or otherwise owned legal entities. From this point of view it may be correct to say that capitalism can be called as “people’s capitalism” because the fragmentation of shares was indeed seemed to say so. Taking the developing process into consideration, it can be said that corporate structure and its feature has been modified from what was called “corporation shared by ownership” to “that of management or the other stakeholder governed”. Therefore, if a stakeholder such as a management is once succeeded to be *de jure* nominated as a member of the board of directors by the general meeting of stockholders, authorized by the highest organ of a corporation, it could play a definite role in decision making and its execution of policies. Then, the strong management could *de facto* govern the corporation instead of stockholders. It was indeed a general trend in Japanese corporations until the 1990’s.

## 7. Social responsibility and gap between company law and practice

However, there was no adequate provision of commercial code adjusting such a situation, namely, a gap between formal law and the practical reality which needs to be regulated. The problem is in other words that some discrepancies between laws officially enacted and rules in function obviously had existed in business practice. Some criticized company law arguing that it became fictitious due to the fact that instead of the general meeting and management, that the board of directors will play the strongest role. In theory, management should be responsible only for the implementation of policies based on decisions and recommendations from the general meeting, but it is practically unrealistic to believe this because management is subjected to only the time of the general meeting, which is not a standing organ, but it summoned once or twice a year.

Besides, stockholders, who in the case of an exceptionally influential investor, usually large scale stockholders like some pension funds, tended to demand value up at the stock exchange, disregarding the other issues of the corporation. Indeed, there are other stakeholders, whose interests and demands are also inevitably important for the corporation.

Future plans such as Research and Development (R&D) projects, to sustain good human relationships between management and skilled workers are decisively important for long run policies.

Collective group investors have tended to claim higher dividends in short periods of time, in particular to ask for a dividend based on financial reports each quarter of the year.

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<sup>8</sup> Ajit Singh, Ann Zammit, *Corporate Governance, Crony Capitalism and Economic Crisis: Should the US Business Model replace the Asian way of “doing business”?*, ESRC Centre for Business Research, University of Cambridge, 2006.

It is an inevitable trend that management who is nominated by the general meeting of stockholders has, to a large extent been forced to accept such short sighted claims of stockholders.

In such circumstances a kind common ground between the management and stockholders has been shaped to sustain stock value at the stock market and balance of accounting and then, so called “crony capitalism” started.<sup>9</sup>

However, a corporation should not only be evaluated by its stock value on the stock market, in particular we need to take the social role into consideration, but also the other stakeholders stances. Some argue that a corporation has some social duties such as a social mission to sustain a good relationship with workers employed, associated corporations (Keiretsu and sub-contracted entities) and to have adequate investments for R&D based on long term policies of the corporation, which also influences the local economic development in the area, where the corporations factories are located.

There are two approaches to the problem; in the case of the American corporate governance, which is predominantly influenced by stockholders, the most important element for the management is stock-value. The other stakeholders views such as relationships with trade unions, future investment strategies are taken as a complimentary choice. Therefore, management is forced to provide a short sighted policy in order to increase the stock value. It is indeed the case of GM, for example. At a time of financial difficulties management tended to take a short sighted policy without alternatives in order to improve the stock value by saving of expenditure, for example, by laying off a large number of workers and by disregarding an investment budget of R&D for future technology.

Although there may be some criticism inside of a corporation, for instance between the R&D department and the general manager, the management in such a situation is reluctant to take another choice, namely a policy for future. Then it should concentrate on improving first of all financial conditions of the corporation in the short term and then, the plan for R&D investment is prolonged or treated as a secondary issue.

There is an additional tool for governance of management by introducing an “outside member of directors”, who have to check the decision making process of the executives in order to maintain objective and comprehensive views on management decision making, which originated from American business practice. However, “outside-directors” are usually persons chosen from good “friends or intimate people of the executives” and consequently, they are not always so strict and objective in monitoring corporate governance, which you can see in the case of the ENRON in the USA(2006), for example.

Such a short sighted decision of management is indeed a response to demands of speculative stockholders, who tend to appreciate the effectiveness of management that could quickly adjust stock market quotations indicated day by day such as Dow-Jones or NIKKEI, for example.

Although such a short term policy of the management may improve the stock value for a while, it is criticized by experts like Peter Drucker, who was once a consultant for GM.

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<sup>9</sup> When the ENRON case was disclosed and the ex. executives were sentenced as guilty, many people considered that without ethics in society, capitalism would fail. Even President Bush who has been intimate with the ENRON people, said that there is no capitalism without conscience. There is no wealth without character. (President George Bush).

According to his statement, the GM type of management, for example, would be continuously faced with a critical situation in the long run because of lack of future feasible strategy of management including technology development and so on.<sup>10</sup>

When we discuss the second alternative, we should consider the question of whether a corporation as a legal entity is only functioning for profits gained by stockholders or not? Furthermore, why are the other stakeholders, labor, R&D issues disregarded? When do we consider the modern role of a corporation at the age of civil society, what the other elements of a corporation are also vitally important for big corporations, in particular production corporations with employment of a huge number of workers, and many group firms associated as capital related or sub-contracted partners (Keiretsu)?<sup>11</sup>

## 8. Corporate culture from “Zaibatsu” to “Mochiai” or “Keiretsu”

Corporate governance in Japan has been differently cultivated at different stages.

As mentioned above, some alternative ways were discussed in the pre-mature period of Japanese capitalism. However, then, the historical trends were interrupted by the state centralization policies during the war (1938–1945).

Most of the unique ways of management in Japan were fundamentally shaped in the post war period, partly encouraged by the liberalization and democratization policies of the Occupation Authorities. Then, under the 1955 socio-political system, which political scientists prefer to call a stable socio-political system, in particular between 1960–1980, not only in business circles but also labor unions integrated as centralized unions in the form of federation which have been shaped a balanced socio-political powers to the management associations.

With a strong recommendation for “democratization” by the Occupation Authorities “Zaibatsu” (a kind of holding company<sup>12</sup> was totally liquidated and no family controlling economic entities existed any more after the war). Besides, a large scale state procurement business after the liquidation of the state military industries was not possible.

It was also significant from the point of view of the domestic policy during the occupation period that a tight economic policy was applied to preserve a balanced economic development. No foreign capital investment was admitted by the government between 1950–1980’s.

Consequently because of shortage of capital almost naked corporations tended to integrate as groups of corporations called “Mochiai” by cross holdings of stock.

In the beginning it was based on the framework of ex-Zaibatsu group corporations. Cross holdings of stock had to be a marginal portion of stock of the other corporation because there were legal restrictions of the anti-monopoly law of 1947, which prevented one corporation from having influence on another, in particular financial institutions from hegemonic capital control over another company such as a holding company (Zaibatsu) before the war.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Peter Drucker, *Concept of the Corporation*, New York, 1946 and 1993 Transaction Publishers; Reprint edition; R. J. Gilson, “Globalizing Corporate Governance: Convergence of Form or Function”, *American Journal of Comparative Law*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 2001, p. 329.

<sup>11</sup> Teruji Suzuki, “The Case of Japan’s Limited Pluralism. Some Premises for Understanding the Socio Economic Problems of Japan”, *International Review of Sociology*, No. 1, 1988, p. 143; Teruji Suzuki, “Przedsiębiorstwa w Japonii”, *Studia Prawnicze*, Vol. 1, 1990, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> Shigeaki Yasuoka, *Zaibatsu no keieishi* (History of Zaibatsu), Tokyo: Nikkeishinnsho, 1978.

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem.

The first merit of Mochiai is to be granted financial privileges from the main bank, a member of the Mochiai,<sup>14</sup> and the second, to protect management from surprise takeover from outsiders. Naturally after the establishment of Mochiai the managers should be directly or indirectly committed to take joint actions as a single group of corporations. A Mochiai member, in particular manufacturing corporation is, at the same time formulated as a group of Keiretsu. Strictly speaking there are two types of Keiretsu.<sup>15</sup> For the purpose of financial cooperation Keiretsu based on friendly corporations of the former Zaibatsu is formed as a group of corporations of different branches like a bank, heavy industries, trade and services in parallel form.

Second, in the case of division of labor and specialization in a production system, “Keiretsu” which is one of the characteristics of the industrial production system in Japan, is usually shaped as a gigantic group of corporations, composed of technically specialized corporations. A Member of Keiretsu has to specialize in a definite part of production and then, the whole complete production in e.g. automobile industries has to be assembled by Keiretsu group corporations based on a precisely organized division of labor system (The main auto manufactures in Japan like Toyota have about 20–30% share in the total production. The other parts are manufactured by their Keiretsu). Therefore, Keiretsu is associated with various corporations different in scale and forms of capital relations.

In some cases only sub-contractually related firms are included. The number of corporations in a Keiretsu is usually a few hundred or more, which are a pyramid type of the organic shape headed by the main corporation, closely associated with the main bank.<sup>16</sup>

Since the laws on Fair Trade Commission of 1947 (theoretically independent from the government) strictly monitor all activities concerning mergers or capital transactions like acquisitions, the principal character of Mochiai or Keiretsu is to hold a small portion of stocks (permissible limits of stock share around 7% until the amendment of the law in 1997) of the other member corporations (cross holding) in order to avoid such a restriction of the Commission. Consequently stockholder structure is, in general, composed of not so many private investors but a large part of it is shared by corporations, most of them friendly corporations. The positive side of it is that the member could be financed on friendly terms and the management is protected from the fear of a takeover bids.

After all the corporate governance of stockholders over management may be weak because the representatives of stockholders from other Mochiai or Keiretsu corporations are not necessarily interested in monitoring the management in their friendly corporations.

However, it is also emphasized that the bank within Mochiai or Keiretsu, which is usually called the main bank and is operating as a traditional universal bank functions as an indicator of corporate governance through its consulting. The main bank is not only vitally important for any member of Mochiai or Keiretsu because of its friendly terms of financing but also consulting based on its general survey and analysis on a given corporation. From the corporate governance point of view it has been observed that

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<sup>14</sup> Masahiko Aoki, Hugh Patck (eds.), *The Japanese Main Bank System: its Relevance for Emerging and Transforming Economies*, Oxford University Press, USA, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Ronald J. Gilson, Mark J. Roe, “Understanding the Japanese Keiretsu: Overlaps Between Corporate Governance and Industrial Organization”, *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 102, No. 4, 1993, p. 271.

<sup>16</sup> Hiroshi Okumura, *Houjinshihonshugi* (Corporate Capitalism), Tokyo, 1984.

instead of the general meeting recommendations through consulting are the key point in corporate governance.<sup>17</sup> In addition, the main bank has to take an initial role at a time of financial difficulty such as in the case of an issue such as bad debts in a corporation (not legally responsible but full commitment required) to reconstruct the whole management. For that purpose the bank has always to monitor and consult operations of the Keiretsu group corporations. Besides the members of Keiretsu, if it is faced with difficulties, which cannot be solved, have to accept the recruitment of personals from main bank to act as urgent relief managers.

That may be the reason why individual investors involved in the stock exchange in Japan are not so active in comparison with the other leading stock markets oriented countries. (For instance in 2000 private investors' share was 25% in Japan, and 50% in the USA)<sup>18</sup>. Consequently a large portion of stockholders are corporations, and so, stock exchange transactions are mainly operated by friendly corporations, who are not necessarily interested in dividend and stock price at the stock exchange.

It was reported that the 64% of the total transactions registered were conducted by banks and other friendly corporations during the 1980s. That is the reason, as some criticize, why the Japanese stock market system is not so friendly and not open to individual investors but it is for corporation. This corporate stockholders domination phenomenon is often called "corporate capitalism".<sup>19</sup>

In addition, as Okumura analyzed it, the management and the employed workers, including trade union, which is a single company based union (not like union shop in the USA), are integrated in a single unit called "corporation union" and they are psychologically to commit themselves in conformity with corporate interests as a common goal, which may be the strongest spiritual genesis for the competitiveness of Japanese corporations. In such a situation the relationships between "you", managers and "us", trade union, which are common in the trade union movement in the West based on the class conflict ideology, are indispensably disgraced. They all concentrate their efforts on corporate goals. Okumura called it "corporate society based on corporate capitalism".

Besides, the management of a corporation is mutually monitored among Keiretsu group corporations and consequently it is asked to behave in harmony with the other members of Keiretsu, who always take common strategy into account.

Good harmonious relationships with the other members of Keiretsu and trade unions are important in cases of joint strategic actions for future R&D as a long term plan. As a result the stock value is not the highest issue for management in Japan. We can also see good harmonious relations in the market policy, namely those with consumers.

As far as market strategy is concerned, the maximum profit policy, which is common among the Anglo-American type of corporation, is not applied in Japanese corporations. When the setting the market strategy Japanese corporations prefer to get a stable share by considering the fact that low profit policy is usually accepted by consumers. Until the

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<sup>17</sup> Aoki, Patrick, *The Japanese Main Bank System...*

<sup>18</sup> The situation has recently been changed because of the Heisei Reform. See: "Japanese Individual Shareholders Flex New Muscle to Thwart Deals", *The Wall Street Journal*, Feb. 23–25, 2007; According to the information the individual stock investors' share has raised from 25% to about 50% just recently.

1990's this type of corporate culture prevailed and was appreciated by business circles in Japan.

However, since the 1990's there has been criticisms against Japan's model of corporate governance which is actually controlled by the management, "too strong management" influenced by Mochiai or Keiretsu culture, and consequently a weak function of governance over management by stockholders. In particular when the government of Japan declared a liberalization of capital investment many foreign investors asked about global standardized regulations on stock exchange rules.

In addition some corporate scandals relating to false accounting statements submitted to the general meetings were reported, which were formally due to lack of precise legal provisions based on obscurity of accounting, e.g. lack of legal assignment of auditors, but mainly were due to collapsed moral standards of business people concerned because it is impossible to regulate such problems by laws.

However, it is indeed a permanent question to what extent, it is possible to restrict corporate governance by laws. It is true that business activities should be conditioned by several fundamental rules such as unified commercial conduct between partners, unified rules on unified commercial laws, common understandings of social rules, mutual trust and so on, but it is not necessarily regulated by laws or statutes enacted by state. Rules and conducts including commercial customs have been cultivated by historical traders as "lex mercatorium", and, later some of them have been established by state authorities as commercial laws. Therefore, it is quite natural that there is a discrepancy between law and *de facto* commercial practices, even though modern rules which are predominant in the age of globalization are regulated by state organs as an unified code in harmony with the international standards.

## 9. Relationship with employees (Trade Unions)

Then, another question of who owns corporations today, is a fundamental one.<sup>20</sup> As we have recently seen in France (the amendment of labor law in 2006), an amendment of labor law which, from the employers' point of views, means that a corporation manager is able to make a decision to layoff workers easier than before as in the cases in the USA. For French corporations it is necessary to have such capabilities in order to be competitive in global markets, but from the workers point of view, losing jobs by managers decisions based on easy (or one sided) reasons have raised serious social problems. Controversies and criticism not only by the trade unions but also many people who are associated with workers indicate a keen reaction over the issues of corporate governance. The relationships between management and workers or union are a vital issue today because most people are inevitably involved in business with a corporation as a partner or its worker for some time of their lives. To find a harmonious rule to settle it is only a way to create a precondition of civil society, which we are going to build.

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<sup>19</sup> Hiroshi Okumura, *Kaisha honnishugi wa Kuzureruka* (Could Corporate culture of Japan be converted from the Corporate centralism to liberal one or not?), Iwanami, 1992.

<sup>20</sup> Ronald Dore, *Stock Market Capitalism: Welfare Capitalism; Japan and Germany versus the Anglo-Saxons*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Legal reforms during the occupation encouraged trade union movements, particularly the 1949 law on trade union, the 1947 law on labor standard and related laws which protected the rights of workers and encouraged them to strengthen their positions. They are a legal basis for relationships between management and workers in a corporation today. However, it is worth to mention that some preparatory conditions were created during the war time command system in the 1940's. For the purpose of an economic concentration policy for the war the government of Japan in 1938 made a declaration which ordered one integrated national system in the fields of socio-economic and political activities, called "Yokusanntaisei". Under this order most private corporations including management and workers together were organized as a patriotic organs cooperating with the government on a national scale, with the membership more than 5 million in 1942. Although the leaders and the people who were deeply involved in it, were all purged by the democratization policy of the Occupation Authorities after the war, it was easy for workers to follow the practices and the experiences of pseudo labor movement of the war time.

Thus, after the war as the result of democratization policies in the field of socio-economic activity, ownership of capital was scattered by the liquidation of Zaibatsu and the reformed stock exchange system, on one hand and on the other hand, because of liberalization of the trade union movement, trade unions and workers became stronger. Soon after the 1949 law on trade union had been passed, more than 17,000 unions were organized before the end of the 1940's.

One of the characteristics of corporate culture in Japan is that management-worker relationships are harmonious.

Corporate governance, which has been raised as a question by American business circles, is a one-sided aspect of the problem which is based on the interests of stockholders. A corporation as an economic entity is naturally functioning in order to make profits but at same time existing as a social entity with a large number of committed people and associated economic entities.

According to the OECD report of 1999 (OECD Principles of Corporate Governance)<sup>21</sup> the notion of corporate governance is understood comprehensively and it includes not only stockholder's view but also that of the other stakeholders, i.e., "the full set of relationships among a company's management, its board, its shareholders and other stakeholders". Besides, the report has emphasized on the role of a monitoring system in given environments. Since then, interesting reports on corporate governance have been published and debated on by various academic and business circles. It seems that most of the European studies are willing to accept the stance of the OECD.<sup>22</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to survey further the issue of existence of a corporation which has to achieve dual goals, namely competitiveness for profits and social function under their own circumstances.

In response to this, the Keidanren, Japans Federation of Economic Associations, which is composed of big corporations in Japan and which has been said to reflect the opinion of Japanese business circles, has conducted research on corporate governance by asking

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<sup>21</sup> *OECD Principles of Corporate Governance, Ad-hoc Taskforce on Corporate Governance, S/G/CG 5, Paris: OECD, April 1999.*

<sup>22</sup> G. Lenssen, W. Gasparski, B. Rok and P. Lacy, "Corporate Responsibility and Competitiveness", *Corporate Governance*, Vol. 6, No. 4, 2006, p. 324.



member corporations about their opinions and actual status of it in their corporations since 2005 and as a result the *ad hoc* report was published on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006.<sup>23</sup>

In the report most of the replies show that Japanese firms are conscious of the importance of corporate governance, which is to protect the needs of various stakeholders, including not only stockholders but also consumer, interests of the local community, workers employed, trade partners (Keiretsu firms) and so on. However, there is no definite conclusion about the tool to conduct it because stakeholders of each corporation depending on its field of business activity are differently shaped.

From legal point of view the problem has been partly regulated by the amendments of the commercial code (1974, 2001, 2002, and 2006). Then, it is also emphasized that disclosure principle, prohibition of hidden information by management, namely all information should be revealed to stockholders and other stakeholders.

Otherwise, the controversial issue of relatively poor participation of individual investors in the stock exchange (the stock exchange of Japan is dominated by trade of corporations) could not be improved. The report has concluded that despite the difficulties due to different corporate culture depending on corporate activities in the given fields, management should accept a liberal stance toward investors from outside, and the stock exchange should also be operated flexibly in the era of globalization.

There should be some common ground for corporate governance to protect interests of stakeholders, not only for stockholders but also other stakeholders. Also the fact that there has been a harmonious relationship between competitiveness and good corporate governance for the long run, should be approved of.<sup>24</sup>

## 10. How to improve moral standard of business practice?

There have been several amendments of the commercial code successively introduced since 2000. However most of them have been marginal and there have been discrepancies between business practices of a corporation, in particular a large scale joint stock corporation and its legal regulations.<sup>25</sup>

The corporate culture has been influenced by expansionism, ambitious and simultaneously arrogant behavior of management, which was especially obvious during the bubbled economy of the 1970–1980's. It is naturally observed that the moral standards of conduct of managers have been damaged sweepingly by those practices. Alongside this management used to be involved in inadequate practices, and the corporate culture was indeed eroded by the moral hazard phenomenon at the same time. There were several alleged cases reported concerning false accounting and financial reports. There were scandals of the arranged general meetings by executives with professional arrangers for

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<sup>23</sup> Keidanren (Japan Federation of Economic Associations) is the most influential economic organizations whose membership are mainly composed of large scaled corporations.

<sup>24</sup> J. Emmic Ricart, M. Angel Rodriguez, P. Sanchez, "Governance: Sustainability in the Boardroom", *Corporate Governance*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 2005, p. 24.

<sup>25</sup> Nobuo Nakamura, "The Revision of Japanese Company Law and its Modernization", *Waseda Bulletin of Comparative Law*, Vol. 24, 2004, p. 1; Makoto Ishida, "The Changes in Enterprise Organization and Labor Law in Japan: An Historical Exploration", *Waseda Bulletin of Comparative Law*, Vol. 23, 2003, p. 1.

general meetings. These arrangements were paid by the company money; it was known as unfair “sokaiya” scandals. Those could be the reasons why the reform of commercial law was urgently demanded by both legal professionals and business circles. The commercial code was finally revised in 2005.

The amendment of 2005 is aimed to change the fundamental legal system of a corporation. The law on corporations as a part of a commercial code has not changed in principle since its promulgation at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, corporation is a main organization of business of Japan and has continuously developed since then. In 2004 among all registered corporations the number of “Kabushiki Kaisha”, corporations limited by shares are dominant with 1,837,900 registered (99.7% of the total corporations in Japan). Why are corporations limited by shares dominant in Japan? First, it is a form well elaborated legally, rationally arranged by accounting and so the operation is to be opened for investors. Frankly speaking, from the view point of the tax authorities it is also highly recommended because of its clear accounting requirements. According to the laws, corporations limited by shares are requested to appoint at least three directors at the general meeting, without any regard to size. Then, the directors have to form the board of directors, which should appoint one or more representative directors who have the authority to make transactions on behalf of the corporation. The daily management is delegated to the representative director or directors, but some important business such as an issue of new shares or selling material assets of the corporation need the decision of the board. Although some issues are regulated by the board itself, the board has to play the role of a supervisor over the representative director and the other executive directors through the exercise of the powers to decide and approve significant business and to remove executives. The purpose of the amendment is to strengthen the role of the board of directors, particularly its monitoring function over daily activities of the representatives, CEO.

Besides, all corporations limited by shares have to appoint at least one statutory corporate auditor to monitor and ensure that the corporation is managed in accordance with both relevant laws and regulations and the provisions of its memorandum of association. The amendment of 2005 added that a corporation with a large capital is obliged not only to appoint three or more directors to form the board of directors but also to have an external auditor. On the other hand in the case of a small corporation, the appointment of an auditor is voluntary.

In addition, the law of 2005 amended the ground for directors’ disqualification by repealing the ground for director’s bankruptcy and the conviction against the director for breach of the security exchange law or insolvency laws as a new ground for director’s disqualification.<sup>26</sup>

It is indeed a step further to regulate corporate governance in Japan. However, the fields which are regulated by the new law are yet a small portion of the corporate governance issues. Most of the commercial conducts are yet largely dependent on the people who are involved in management and stakeholders as a part of the neo “Lex Mercatorium”. In practice the relationship between business realities and legal regulations looks like a see-saw and left uncompleted.

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<sup>26</sup> On what is called as “Heisei Reform”, see: Rokumoto Kahei, “Law and Culture in Transition”, *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, Vol. 49, No. 4, 2001, p. 545.

Today an open market system prevails everywhere as through a world fashion of apparently unified rules. However, each society or nation state as a result of historical evolutions exists formally independently. (Mentioning on the cultural aspects, its plurality is obvious). The relationship between law (in particular national law) and *de facto* functioning social rules is complicated as a problem of official law of state organs and unofficial rules. As legal sociologists emphasize, we should continuously discuss the relationship between official law and social realities, in particular in commercial practices. However, it is true that with legal regulations developed in parallels, the mode of commercial activities including that of corporate capabilities based on rules could indeed be harmonious, and it is obvious that orderly and fair trade would possibly prevail. Then, we have to remember another fact; commercial people are, at the same time known as human beings too clever to be regulated by the limitations of enacted laws. The relationship between law and commercial activities like that of a see-saw will be modified continuously.

Then, at last it might be found as a hybrid type of balanced rules on the relations.

### 11. Specific issues of small business in Japan

A small business is another chapter of the corporate culture in Japan. More than 10 centuries ago some business entities operated and some of them have survived even today. Most of them were shaped or permitted by the authorities to be organized for doing business in a limited way. According to the recent Funabashi's empirical research on long life corporations,<sup>27</sup> there are more than 4,000 corporations of that type actively operating for over 100 years since their foundations in Japan. Although their capital ownership composition and legal form as a entity are different from the initial ones, one of the characteristics of these corporations that survived is to sustain their management philosophies related with family traditions from the beginning. Today nearly one million corporations may be classified as small and medium corporations, which are much or less founded by their family property and managed by their own traditional philosophies or ideals.

According to the basic law on small enterprises of 1963, they can be classified as juridical persons or individuals falling under the following categories:

- a) A company capitalized at 100 million yen or less, and having no more than 300 employees, engaged in industry, mining, transportation, etc..
- b) A company capitalized at 30 million yen or less, and having no more than 100 employees, engaged in whole sale trade.
- c) A company capitalized at 10 million yen or less, and having no more than 50 employees and engaged in retail sales or service business<sup>28</sup>.

However, before the law was introduced, there were several historical steps, which we should know. The concept of a skilled manual trade had no longer existed in Japan since the Provisional Commercial Code of 1868, which abolished the guild system in the skilled manual trades of the Tokugawa period (16–19<sup>th</sup> century).

However, individualistic enterprises (in terms of the modern business entity) were not specially encouraged to be created by the governmental policies during the Meiji

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<sup>27</sup> Haruo Funabashi, *Timeless Ventures*, New Delhi, 2009, in prologue.

<sup>28</sup> Suzuki, "Przedsiębiorstwa w Japonii...", p. 201.

period. Since then, the situation had not changed until the war period. Just after the war the government took the issue as one of the urgent reform policies, but it took a time to be realized.

The government's white paper on the national economy published in 1957 recognized frankly the fact that there is a "dual structure" as a characteristic of the Japanese economy, referring to the simultaneous existence of advanced and less developed economic entities within the country. Since then, a vigorous debate has taken place on the problems of this dual structure in order to solve it. Although Japan has been quickly industrialized since Meiji, traditional land ownership, petty farmers or peasants and small entrepreneurs were preserved. Major corporations emerging as a big corporation were financially much or less supported by the government or their main banks. So that, they could take advantage of using cheap labor or subsidies. In this economic structure small businesses were given their characteristic place in the Japanese economy before the war. In addition, the narrowness of the domestic market imparted a militaristic and expansionist character of Japanese capitalism, small business were forced into the role of producing export goods to pay for the import of raw materials for industries. As industrial capital was immature (no foreign capital was permitted to invest directly in Japan) the hegemonic position was taken by commercial capitals like *Zaibatsu*. Small businesses were exploited under the wholesaler – dominated domestic manufacturing system.

The dual structure of Japanese capitalism was a prime candidate for modernization under the occupation policy. Agricultural land reform, the changes in family law and basic laws of labor relations of the 1940's have all improved cheap labor structure because the traditional family and social relationships in rural communities were linked with those feudalistic elements.

It is said that after all these reform measures, modern relationships were established in rural areas, in particular relationships between big business and labor which were enable to create labor market. Since the 1960's industries with technological innovations were looking for new labor force due to a shortage of young labor, the differentials between wages in enterprises between big and small almost became marginal. A certain extent some people were inclined to think that the dual structure has been dissolved.

The legislation of 1963 on small and medium enterprises is not simply the implementation of protective policies for small business like that which prevailed immediately after the war. It is a complex legal system corresponding to the structural changes in the economic environment, reflecting not only the reclassification of small business, but also the advancement of systematization and the reorganization of subcontractors under leadership of the government.

Corporate governance in these small entities is different from what big corporations are doing in practice because small and medium enterprises are usually based on family property, in which ownership of shares are exclusively hold by some members of the family or their associates and at the same the management is carried out by the similar staffs. Therefore, the principle of clear distinction between ownership and management is not strictly applied, which is different than in the case of a big corporation. The important element for good management is an intimate human relationship among members of management on the basis of mutual trust. Contrary to the notion of a joint stock company in a big corporation, for management it is easy to make decisions and to be responsible for all duties relating to

risk, even though the company is legally registered as a limited liability corporation. Some argue that such human relations may be defined psychologically as a status of “Amae” (dependence), which from the point of view of the modernization theory is not always acceptable.<sup>29</sup> German sociologist, Max Weber analyzed it as a “patrimonial piety” in which one should be subjected to another. So, it can simply be called a feudalistic relation. However, according to the empirical research of Funabashi on the long life of enterprises, business success is largely dependent on these elements.<sup>30</sup>

After the new law on small enterprises was passed in 1963, small business has faced a problem of choice how to survive in the competitive market as a subcontractor or an independent entrepreneur. Since most of the small businesses have already experienced difficulties with banks in further investment, they prefer to establish a cooperative relation with large industries.

According to the law special state bank was established for the exclusively small business in order to encourage innovative investments. However, these chances were limited, in particular cases of smaller enterprises. On the other hand, large corporations have, through their favorable cooperation with the main banks, decided to introduce ambitious expansion plans in production and marketing and to organize a large scale cooperation network in the 1960's. That is the main reason why these large industries could successfully establish a group of “Keiretsu” by utilizing many subcontractors as their members.

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<sup>29</sup> Takeo Doi, *Amaenokouzo* (Structural Meaning of “Amae”), Tokyo, 1969.

<sup>30</sup> Haruo Funabashi, *Timeless Ventures...*



BEATA KOWALCZYK

## ‘Travelling’ between *Sakaribas* in Contemporary Tokyo

### Abstract

The origins of tourism in Japan, claim Japanese scholars such as Araki Hiroyuki or Yoshimi Shunya, are intrinsic to pilgrimages to various sacred places, shrines and temples, practiced on a broad scale in Japan during the Edo period (1603–1868). Given this, an infrastructure developed around centers of religious cults, where the faithful could take a rest and relax after a long trip. Along with the city sprawl, these so-called funfairs, defined in this paper with an emic concept of *sakariba*, were quickly incorporated as a part of an urban structure where they used to play a role of an entertainment district (Asakusa or Ryōgoku in Tokyo). Today most traditional *sakaribas* have disappeared or have been replaced by their modern form, represented for instance by big railway stations (Tokyo-eki, Shinjuku-eki or Shibuya-eki in Tokyo).

This paper will focus on the question of ‘travelling (in)-to *sakariba*’ in contemporary Tokyo, regarded first of all as a substitute of tourism, practices observed within the space of large *sakariba*-like railway stations (travelling in the present time), as a nostalgic return to one’s home town (recalling the time of idyllic past) in such districts of Tokyo as Asakusa or Shinjuku of the sixties. Finally, ‘touristic’ visits at *sakariba*, as it will be suggested, resemble an imaginative trip into the realm of individual and/or group dreams or plans, which might become true one day (Ginza, Roppongi).

### Introduction

A tradition of travel in Japanese culture, or *tabi* in Japanese, a term which denotes an act of leaving one’s home and moving to some other, distant place to stay there for a limited period of time<sup>1</sup>, can be traced back to the Edo period (1603–1868) when religious visits to shrines and temples were practiced in a particularly vivid mode. Japanese scholar Kanzaki Noritake explains that the boost of pilgrimages in this era should be related to severe restrictions regarding freedom of travel – and generally speaking these didn’t apply to travels of religious purposes – imposed by the *bakufu* government on common people.<sup>2</sup> Travellers, gathering in a sacred place to offer donation and prayers, became a good marketing target for smaller merchants, who offered visitors a manifold goods and services. In this way a simple pilgrimage, enriched with an element of play, could satisfy not only the need of broadening one’s knowledge about the world outside home, but it also provided travellers with entertainment and thrilling experience.

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<sup>1</sup> Shinmura Izumi (ed.), *Kōjien* (Wide Garden of Words), 6<sup>th</sup> edition, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Noritake Kanzaki, *Sakariba no minzokushi* (The Anthropology of Sakariba), Tokyo: Iwanami Shinsho, 1993, p. 196.

The infrastructure, developed within areas adjacent to popular centers of religious cult<sup>3</sup> along with its festive atmosphere, which was created and then sustained by the hustle and bustle of assembling masses, spontaneously formed something described in Japanese humanities with an emic term of *sakariba*. The phenomenon of *sakariba* was constituted then by two elements, accordingly to the semantic composition of the word itself. Namely, in the first instance these were people swarming in a joyful atmosphere, which can be linked to the meaning of the adjective *sakan na* (vivid, prosperous, vigorous, active). The second prerequisite condition of *sakariba* was the noun *ba* indicating (place) and its infrastructural organization: stalls, street artists, tea rooms. Today these are also pachinko parlours, drinking bars, gambling places and the like.<sup>4</sup> Given this, we may presume that *sakaribas* were to be found mainly in large urban agglomerations and that they designated the busiest parts of the city, such as amusement districts or entertainment quarters. On the one hand, according to the dictionary of Japanese language *Kōjien*, *sakaribas* in big towns in the Edo period were coming into existence impromptu in open spaces either initially intended for refuge in case of a fire (*hirokōji*), or next to the large Edo – predecessor of Tokyo – bridges, which served as a transshipment of merchandise and where also naturally were formed kinds of markets, for example around Ryōgoku bridge, on the Sumida river side (*kawara*).<sup>5</sup> On the other hand my Japanese interlocutors when inquired about *sakariba*, associate it mostly with *hankagai*, small and narrow shopping streets radiating from the station, a sub-centre of the city.

Most of the traditional *sakaribas* of modernizing Tokyo disappeared like the one in the Ryōgoku district. *Sakaribas* in Shinjuku or Ueno were transformed and in addition to that, modern types of *sakaribas* emerged for instance between Shibuya and Harajuku, but also around major Tokyo railway stations such as Tokyo Station, Shinagawa Station or Ikebukuro Station. However, what has not changed since Edo is the habit of travelling to *sakariba* in order to celebrate the time for relaxation and entertainment, even though the practice itself has evolved substantially.

This paper discusses concepts of travel and tourism so to speak, in contemporary Japan from the perspective of travelling around the city and more specifically around *sakaribas* of Tokyo. I shall argue that legal restrictions controlling the flow of people in the Edo period have been replaced today by a specific socio-economic context of existence in large urban agglomeration, originating principally from rapid economic growth, this country noted in the second half of the last century. Among key features which create this context we can distinguish – for the purpose of this paper – stress related to instability of employment, raising social inequalities and hence enforced longer and more intense working

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<sup>3</sup> Along with the process of Edo – predecessor of Tokyo – sprawl some temples were absorbed into the urban areas, such as Asakusa for example, thus becoming a part of the city.

<sup>4</sup> Yoshimi mentions: *yose* (comic show, vaudeville), *misemonokōya* (provisory stage for small spectacles, shows sometimes with the uncanny of human physiognomy as the main attraction, like midgets for instance), stalls with medicines and other goods or tea houses some of which also functioned as geisha house and the like. Shunya Yoshimi, *Toshi no dramaturgi. Tōkyō sakariba no shakaishi* (Dramaturgy of the City. The Social History of Tokyo's Sakariba), Tokyo: Kawade Bunko, 2008, p. 163.

<sup>5</sup> Shinmura (ed.), *Kōjien*...



hours, including time sacrificed for maintaining proper relations with company colleagues and management, plus commuting considerable distances. These socioeconomic conditions significantly delimit the choices in the form of leisure, especially when considering such time-consuming entertainment as travel, be it abroad or at home.

The system has solved this problem developing easy-accessible entertainment districts and leisure facilities, substitutes of touristic resorts within the city and in particular on the way from work to home, that is nearby important transfer points. Scholars analyze these places in terms of modern *sakariba*.<sup>6</sup> Besides, Paul Waley notices that some academics go as far as to apply the term of *sakariba* to the entire structure of the Japanese capital city.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, Tokyo with its own Statue of Liberty and Tokyo Tower recalling Eiffel Tower, is comparable to a world condensed in a nutshell. "All these districts produce different races, distinct bodies, a familiarity new each time. To cross the city (or to penetrate its depth, for underground there are the whole networks of bars, shops to which you sometimes gain access by a simple entryway, so that once through this narrow door, you discover, dense and sumptuous, the black India of commerce and pleasure) is to travel (...)" claimed Barthes fascinated by cultural diversity of this organism.<sup>8</sup>

This essay pays attention to three types of *sakariba*'s tourism, practiced in Tokyo. By the so-called *sakariba*'s tourism I understand here not only an act of wandering around different *sakariba*-like parts of the city in quest for impressions, attractions and experiences which are usually referred to as a leisure travel, providing travellers with "the pleasure of immersing oneself in another environment, and the fascination with little differences in the materiality of the world", to use John Urry's words.<sup>9</sup> Here, touristic activities are also considered to be intrinsic to the mundane universe of everyday life<sup>10</sup>, overlapping in particular with commuting or travelling across the city. In this perspective 'tourism' and 'travelling' are presumed to be metaphors of life conducted in liquid modernity<sup>11</sup>, being at the same time involved into trajectory of life.

<sup>6</sup> Refer to: Kanzaki, *Sakariba no minzokushi*...; Sepp Linhart, "Zone of 'evaporation' between work and home?", in: Joy Hendry (ed.), *Interpreting Japanese Society. Anthropological Approaches*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 231–243; Kōei Terui, *Sakariba no toshi shakaigaku* (Urban Sociology of Sakariba), Tokyo: Hekitensha, 2005; Yoshimi, *Toshi no dramaturgi*...

<sup>7</sup> Paul Waley, "Re-scripting the City: Tokyo from Ugly Duckling to Cool Cat", in: *Japan Forum* Vol. 18, No. 3, 2006, p. 371.

<sup>8</sup> Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, English Edition, translated from French by Richard Howard, New York: City Hill and Wang, 1982, p. 39–40.

<sup>9</sup> According to World Tourism Organization *travel/tourism*: "refers to the activity of travelers. A traveler is someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration. The visitor is a particular type of traveler and consequently tourism is a subset of travel." *Tourism* "is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon which entails the movement of people to countries or places outside their usual environment for personal or business/professional purposes." World Tourism Organization, [www.Media.untwo.org/ja/node/28110](http://www.Media.untwo.org/ja/node/28110) (accessed 15.11. 2011). John Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies. Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century*, New York, Oxon: Routledge, 2005, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5–6.

<sup>11</sup> Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid modernity*, Oxford, Cambridge and Malden: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 2000.

In spite of the stated preponderance of space over time in a globalizing world<sup>12</sup>, my analysis of *sakariba*'s tourism is organized upon three main time categories: past, future and present. For travelling to *sakariba* denotes a trip to a place which is a manifestation of time, a stop within time and remembrance of time.<sup>13</sup> If roaming across *sakariba* may be compared to a time travel, it is because its specific infrastructure and atmosphere stimulates human senses, opening a possibility for an imaginary 'touristic escape' from the present. Thus some *sakariba*'s travellers seek there after nostalgia for home and an idealized past, enclosed in buildings, objects, people and nature. For others a trip to *sakariba* can mean peeking at the future of their dreams and social aspirations. Ultimately, what draws masses to *sakariba* is likewise a sheer need to relax in an environment different from work or home. Actually, the primal function of *sakariba* was once channeling social tensions and conflicts into a frenzy of festive play celebrated by a community consisting of actors who during this time shared an equal status of both a traveller and a believer, regardless of the existing social hierarchy.

### Travelling alone

*Sakariba* does not exist without a community of people. On the one hand *sakariba* is created by this community and on the other *sakariba*'s characteristics predispose it to exert an important role in sustaining communities and strengthening social bonds or social networks. Araki Hiroyuki reminds his readers that traditionally travelling in Japan was practiced as an event concerning the entire community even though in fact only one person was leaving for a trip.<sup>14</sup> The custom of offering souvenirs brought from a trip dates back to the period of pilgrimages, continues Araki and this gesture had two meanings.<sup>15</sup> With a small present, a traveller could pay back his debt to the community and express his gratefulness for help with the preparation and for symbolic amount of money (*warajisen*) he received from his relatives and neighbors in order to purchase straw sandals.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, in addition to material gifts, a traveller was also bringing knowledge and news from the outer world, contributing to the community's social capital in a way as though in exchange for the skills he had been equipped during his childhood.

Japanese, living in the area of contemporary Tokyo, spend their long commuting hours alone on a crowded train. Diluted ties with one's vicinity and most probably also with one's family push everyday travellers toward pint-sized, ephemeral communities formed over a couple of drinks in one of the *sakariba*'s bar.<sup>17</sup> Repetitiveness of visiting a place on a regular basis to meet there the same faces generates a feeling of stability and safety,

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<sup>12</sup> New technologies and modern means of transport debilitate presupposed relation between time and space and hence people can manipulate with the time required to cover a certain distance. Moreover, it can be said that time-space compression stems from increased mobility as notices John Urry. Mimi Sheller, John Urry, *Tourism Mobilities. Places to Play, Places in Play*, London: Routledge, 2004, p. 3–4.

<sup>13</sup> Yi-Fu Tuan, *Przestrzeń i miejsce* (Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience), Polish Edition, Warszawa: PIW, 1987, p. 224.

<sup>14</sup> Hiroyuki Araki, *Nihonjin no kōdō yōshiki* (Japanese Patterns of Behaviors), Tokyo: Kodansha Gendaishinsho, 1973, p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 48–49.

<sup>17</sup> It is symptomatic that such small drinking communities, so to say, composed in bars are not amorphous gatherings, but hierarchically organized structures where guests are ranked upon the

undermined by the fact that actors are in a constant multifaceted move not only in terms of endless travels and places change, but viewed also as instability of continuously (re)defined identity.<sup>18</sup> The need of repetitiveness comprised in almost compulsory behaviors such as shopping, playing pachinko or visiting bars observed at *sakariba* may be interpreted by the same token as what Giddens calls an "inability to escape from the past".<sup>19</sup> Regular coming backs to the reality of *sakariba* sustain regular contacts with tradition, for "there are ordinarily deep emotional investments in tradition (...); they come from the mechanisms of anxiety-control that traditional mode of action and belief provide".<sup>20</sup>

Hence the salience of travelling to *sakariba* located in districts of Asakusa, Ueno Hirokōji or Shinjuku's Kabuki-chō, where actors (re)discover traditional order through a partially stylized arrangement of streets, old-type cafés or bars, served food, snacks, music and leisure. Rituals evoking tradition, such as eating traditional food, karaoke-singing of old Japanese songs or participating in *matsuri* [festivals] held in local shrine, are practiced together with other travellers, which confirms participants' affiliation with the community through sharing similar habits and culture. A trip to *sakariba* enables an individual to reunify him-/herself with the society based on shared values, customs, mode of life similarly as it used to be in historical, long-established villages. Research conducted by Kanzaki Noritake demonstrates that the phenomenon of people gathering at Asakusa and Shinjuku particularly originates in the industrialization era of pre-war Japan. Newly coming inhabitants of Tokyo would travel to aforementioned districts in order to find company of their peers from the countryside, who seemed to be the only ones capable of understanding this feeling of profound longing for home.<sup>21</sup> These very fertile assemblies of people who could find hardly any appropriate place in the social structure in the capital city, alleges other Japanese scholar Yoshimi Shunya, contributed to a formation of an original avant-garde or *angura* (underground) culture in the late sixties, represented by Hijikata Tatsumi, Kara Jurō, Terayama Shūji, Nagisa Ōshima, Moriyama Daidō to name only a few artists.<sup>22</sup> Traces of this art still attract public today, when Kara Jurō puts up his enormous red marquee *Aka Tento* next to Hanazo-no temple for instance. Besides, one can also come upon 'refugees' in one of the minuscule jazz bars (*jāzu kissa*) crammed in Kabuki-chō district.

Finally, significant encounters with the past in Tokyo take place when crossing Tokyo Station (*Tokyo-eki*), currently being renovated. Commuters, who cross the station on a daily basis, have most probably 'incorporated the place' to the extent that the legibility of the symbolic image of the building's red-brick part in particular, which faces the imperial palace, occurs unconsciously. Everyone realizes its historical value, albeit only few are

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inner code. Eyal Ben-Ari, "At the Interstices", in: *Japan at Play. The Ludic and the Logic of Power*, Joy Hendry and Massimiliano Raveri (eds.), London and New York: Nissan Institute/ Routledge Japanese Studies Series, 2002, p. 129–152.

<sup>18</sup> Refer to: Bauman, *Liquid modernity*...; Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1991.

<sup>19</sup> Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society", in: Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1997, p. 56–110.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>21</sup> Kanzaki, *Sakariba no minzokushi*..., p. 320.

<sup>22</sup> Yoshimi, *Toshi no doramaturgi*..., p. 277–281.

able to fully explain the reason underlying this common conviction. Furthermore, crowded as the station may be in general, its historical site remains unusually empty, since it is somehow impractical to get out of the station and perceive oneself to be on the road leading straight to the imperial palace. Therefore the whole life concentrates in the underground part of the station or on the opposite, modern Yaesu side, which thrives with shops, restaurants and other business-leisure facilities.

Travelling to or through Tokyo Station, recalls a trip into the history of modern Japan, interwoven of two aspects. The first one could be described as a quiet red-brick construction from the Meiji era (1886–1912) tightly bound with the palace or imperial past of Japan. The second feature would be modernization almost equal to westernization embodied in a busy contemporary glass and metal part of the station. *Sakariba* sprawling wildly inside and outside of the Tokyo Station is comparable to time vehicle, where the bridge between remote past and undetermined future runs through underground passages and alleys high up to the top of Sapia Towers or GranTokyo Towers. Nevertheless, the future aspect of *sakariba*'s tourism may be looked at also from a different angle.

### **Dream about the Future**

According to scholars who studied a formation process of Tokyo, Ginza owes its present posh look in large measure to foreigners who in the Meiji era used to cross this district, when going home from Shimbashi station toward Tsukiji, where most Westerners dwellings were located.<sup>23</sup> Poor wooden constructions were bringing discredit onto the honor of a modernizing country and therefore the Meiji government spared no effort to transform the main streets of Ginza into more representative passages. First two or three storey brick buildings with cafés and department stores shining with glass windows appeared after the Tsukiji area burnt to the ground in 1872, upon which a great part of old wooden housing was destructed. Refreshed Ginza resembled a world exhibition with its unusual architecture, Western products exposed in the shops' windows and new type of Japanese, manifested in Western-style dressing as well as behavior of *mobo* (modern boy) and *moga* (modern girl)<sup>24</sup>, who would devote themselves to *flânerie* along new, fashionable alleys. Visits at Ginza meant for Tokyoites of Meiji and Taishō era (1912–1926) a trip to a Western world or a 'gaze' into the future of modern Japan, compares Yoshimi.<sup>25</sup> All Japanese supposedly dreamt one dream about their country, where art of life in all its socio-cultural and economical aspects would be perfected to such extent so as the final results would prevail the initial target of mere adjustment to Western standards.

A unified vision of the country's future dispersed into millions of individual yearnings, hopes and ambitions once Japan became one of the world largest economies. This turn towards the private dimension of existence occurred within the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It concerned a generation of baby-boomers, who wanted their children to profit from their parents' hard work and to more freely create a trajectory of their life. According to Japanese sociologists, this kind of liberalization of *seken*, which I understand here as a

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<sup>23</sup> Jinnai Hidenobu, *Tokyo. A Spatial Anthropology*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995, p. 150–151.

<sup>24</sup> The term was coined on the basis of Tanizaki Jun'ichirō 's 1924 novel entitled *Chijin no ai* (Naomi).

<sup>25</sup> Yoshimi, *Toshi no doramaturgī...*

system of commonly shared values and opinions, should be implicated into a set of features which prompted in consequence an enlargement of a group of youths somehow excluded from the main flow of social coexistence.<sup>26</sup> Some of them stay at home (*hikikomori*) travelling via internet, larger part practice 'tourism' around Tokyo desperately seeking for their chance of lifetime, deluding oneself that almost any destination may be easily reached, if only the will to do it is strong enough.

Chase for mirages recalls travels into the future, which is a world constituted by dreams, wishful thinking and the unknown. This 'tourism' is comprised of actions such as visiting fortune tellers, who offer their services in 'classical style', like old stylized women with cards or glass ball in Ginza or Shinjuku district, but also in modern style as it is in case of young men wearing a suit and tie and conjuring up images of one's future using a laptop. Modern, 'professional' fortune tellers wait for clients sitting in their boxes located at the staircases of popular department stores of Shibuya or Harajuku for instance. However, there are also other methods of unraveling the mystery of one's fate.

Another form of future travel which would similarly be related to attempts at dissipating the opaque curtain of the future may be represented by visits in temples and shrines, Tokyo abounds with, in order to pray and to purchase *omikuji* (written oracle) or *omamori* (charms or amulets). These practices are to help people to determine the direction of possible changes which might influence their fate.<sup>27</sup> This uncertainty of one's fortune can be observed while travelling around the capital of Japan, where scenes from the 'plight' of homeless roaming around large nodal centers of transport (Ikebukuro Station, Tokyo Station, Shimbashi Station etc.) to frantic consumption of the upper class, which ensures well-being of such infrastructures as Roppongi Hills, Tokyo Midtown or network of major department stores (Takashimaya, Matsuya, Matsuzakaya, Seibu etc.), debunk ultimately the myth of Japanese classless capitalism.<sup>28</sup>

Given the unstable condition of one's social position in the era of liquid, mobile modernity it is symptomatic that the notion of the future or a trip into the future gains in importance in a culture which has attached hardly any significance to 'what will come'. Japanese intellectual Katō Shūichi in his study about time and space in Japanese culture highlights that the society which had been deprived of hope for any shifts in social order did not feel the necessity to speak about the unknown. Hence it did not develop linguistic forms to express the future tense. Nor was it interested in creating artistic visions which would depict the ideal of the future or utopias.<sup>29</sup> The situation differed significantly in the Meiji

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<sup>26</sup> Here I refer to various social phenomena named with terms such as: *NEETs*, *freeters* or *parasite singles* which indicate groups of young people whose difficult economic situation blocks their attempts at starting independent life or having a family.

<sup>27</sup> It would be interesting to verify whether the ratio of visitors of temples and shrines is correlated with their age, gender and social position and also how this ratio fluctuated over the last two decades to answer the question about possible interrelation between higher level of religiousness and particular events such as the economic crisis of 2008 or earthquake disaster from March 2011.

<sup>28</sup> David H. Slater, "Social Class and Identity in Postwar Japan", in: *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*, Victoria Lyon Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor and Akiko Yamagata (eds.), New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2011, p. 103–116.

<sup>29</sup> Shuichi Katō, *Nihon bunka ni okeru kikan to jikan* (Time and Space in Japanese Culture), Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007.

era and further waves of change came right after the war or in the time of bubble economy, when as aforementioned youths encouraged by their parents believed that dreams may shape one's trajectory of life.

If trips into the future, into the realm of dream feel unreal, they nevertheless still mobilize travellers in sensuous encounters with the physical world and places as destination of one's travel are not only intersected then, but are performed through embodied play. An example of a place performance in the universe of Tokyo would be cultural phenomenon of youth *cosplay* (costume play) observable on the Jingū Bridge, a trespass between the park surrounding Meiji temple and colorful, garish Harajuku district. This bridge, or a mere piece of pavement, would remain indiscernible if it weren't for dressed-up in the most awkward way young people who use to gather there in order to share with others the experience of expression of the 'self', which on a daily basis have to be submitted to a dress-code and a set of manners. On the one hand, these people become tourists who chasing their dreams arrive at Harajuku where they can put into play such cultural distinctions as gender, age, social role and *seken* or national habitus, materializing through costume potential future image of their 'self'. Yet on the other hand, with their outlook and behavior they transform this space of few square meters into a tourist attraction, an object of tourism which is enlisted in Tokyo's guidebooks as one of the must-see.

Through the case of Harajuku's Jingū Bridge we can examine the process of (re)creation of the place, emerging as a result of travels to a certain destination and interdependent character of relation between the place and its visitors. Harajuku highlight, such as depicted above, embodies an imaginative travel concerning dreams about the self, yet constant spatial transformation is provoked likewise by a simple everyday vivid mobility of population inhabiting the area of Tokyo. Admittedly, a fickle flow of daily tourism shapes the space, but it is also shaped by the changing space. In the next part of this paper I would like to focus on how the notion of mobility is worked and reworked through everyday travels around Tokyo and its *sakaribas*.

### **Towards society of nomads**

As I have already argued inhabitants of the Japanese capital city spend an overwhelming part of their time travelling, changing trains, platforms or stations. For people commuting from suburbs, getting to work, school or university means often two hours both ways.<sup>30</sup> Long working time, scarcely any holiday and hours spent on trains, these factors influence disposition of leisure time of an average citizen of Tokyo area.<sup>31</sup> Sepp Linhart in his essay about "Popular leisure" quoting the data from a comparative research conducted by *Rengō Sōken*, the research institute of Japanese trade unions' association, concludes that "While Germans enjoyed 4:15 free hours in an average working day, the Japanese had to cope with only 2:28 hours, or nearly two hours less".<sup>32</sup> Two or three hours of freedom between work

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<sup>30</sup> Refer to: Tōkyō Toshiken Kōtsū Keikaku Kyōgikai (Tokyo Prefectural Public Transport Council), [www.tokyo-pt.jp/press/h1111\\_04.html](http://www.tokyo-pt.jp/press/h1111_04.html) (accessed 12.11.2011).

<sup>31</sup> The same conclusion is most probably applicable to Japanese living in other large Japanese cities, however in this paper I would like to concentrate the discussion particularly on Tokyo.

<sup>32</sup> Sepp Linhart, "Popular Leisure", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, Yoshio Sugimoto (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 221.

and family life is not sufficient to take up sophisticated and time consuming hobby or to set out on a journey. However, these precious minutes may as well be enjoyed at the station while waiting for the train. Increasing clientele of the station entails an accelerated process of transformation of railway stations and especially big Tokyo terminals into *sakaribas*, an environment which owing to its extensive infrastructure and festive atmosphere substitutes touristic resort and appeals to travellers practically by the same token as other urban destinations of touristic journeys.

That is the case of *Tokyo-eki* (Tokyo Station), which after reconstruction has been transformed into a miniature of a city what is suggested even in the very name of the new complex that is Tokyo Station City. Yet, if the area of Tokyo Station City is to remain attractive for everyday 'tourists' then its life should pulsate incessantly, driven by constant changes such as regularly organized seasonal events (ex.: Christmas lighting on the Marunouchi site, art expositions in the Daimaru museum or seasonal sales etc.). The impression of visiting a city is intensified by the fact that corridors, passages and alleys located under the station have been designed in conscious emulation with real streets, some of them in Japanese style (ex.: Kitamachi Horoyoi, Kurobei Yokochō) others recalling foreign alleys (ex.: Keiō Street, Kitchen Street) and both integrating traces of the past with present achievements.

Such place can provide different affordances. Those who roam throughout the *sakariba* of Tokyo Station City are set in motion by "mobilized gaze".<sup>33</sup> In other words, rather than following a certain deliberately designated itinerary these commuter-*flâneurs* sway to the enticing effects of the atmosphere of this kind of *sakariba* and let themselves be choked or consumed by every subsequent shop, stall, event. They are subject of consumption and simultaneously its object likewise. The situation of the everyday-tourist in Tokyo seems akin to the standard touristic condition in terms of consumption and also the use and the flow of one's time. Both factors are interrelated in a way that on the one side consumption sets the commuter apart from its actual status of a commuter struggling with problems such as rush-hours, crowded trains, business matters, work etc. Yet on the other side, an idle time spent on consumption runs in a certain opposition to the counted-down time of Taylorism, production or work process.<sup>34</sup> That is just like in the case of tourist who thrown into an exotic environment and liberated from mundane matters, disposes of 'all the time in the world' to get the balance of her/his mind and body right and to be able to take up everyday effort again after the trip ends.

Another element contributing to touristic landscape of Tokyo Station City, this large terminal station but also the Japanese capital city as a whole, is hotel or I should rather say motel. Why motel? Well, there is nothing special about urban space abounding with hotels as long as some of them, namely capsule hotels, are intended by principle for those who did not make the *shūden* (last train). Incidentally, it seems curious though that one of the largest cities in the world, where life never dies out, hasn't developed a 24-hour public transport, forcing late-working *sarariman* (white collars) and all the others, who lost the sense of time in a vast space of the capital, either to take a taxi or to stay in a hotel. That is

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<sup>33</sup> Ewa Rewers (ed.), *Miasto w sztuce – sztuka miasta* (City in Art – Art of the City), Kraków: Universitas, 2010, p. 677.

<sup>34</sup> Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies...*

why I tend to call them motel, for in spite of their urban location, they serve as a pause for the people who are actually *On the Road*. I purposely recall the title of Jack Kerouac's novel since the condition of inhabitants of Tokyo's suburbs resembles in a way that of characters created by American writer. Both parts may be depicted as nomads, moving incessantly from one destination to another without longer stop in any of the crossed places.

Furthermore, mobility of nomads circulating around Tokyo can also be related to deleuzian term of *deterritorialization*, denoting extirpation or debilitation of ties with a place, a process which is not followed by *reterritorialization* as it is in case of migrants for example.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, despite the fact that these people are registered in a specific place for temporary or permanent residency, in reality they spend hardly any time at what is called their official home. In this respect, it can be said that major part of Tokyo population falls into category of 'dweller-in-transit'<sup>36</sup>, victims of the vicious circle of mobility. The world, 'mobile people' exist in, is depicted from the perspective of a constant movement and in such a world, claims Tuan, people are prevented from developing a sense of place, for the place represents an ordered universe of signs and essentially should be regarded as a static notion.<sup>37</sup> Shall Tokyo<sup>38</sup>, a city under incessant construction, be nonetheless considered as a static place?

Instability, an inherent feature of the cityscape and city order, enables denizens of the Tokyo area to (re)discover streets and districts of Japanese capital anew, each time they visit it. With cramped, tightly packed into narrow streets housing, Tokyo cannot be considered friendly for those who wish to dwell in its central parts, stresses Yoshimi.<sup>39</sup> Therefore Tokyo is being continuously (re)transformed in order to drag its citizens out of their "rabbit hutches"<sup>40</sup> and invite them for a trip throughout its vast space. According to Foucault such place or space which possesses the "power of juxtaposing in a single real place different spaces and locations that are incompatible with each other" may be analyzed as *heterotopia*.<sup>41</sup> The Japanese capital city is equipped with many of such places with Tokyo Station (City) as a flagship example. The

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<sup>35</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie 2. Mille plateaux* (Capitalism and Schizophrenia 2, A Thousand Plateaus), Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980.

<sup>36</sup> Even though admittedly Japanese workers devote themselves almost entirely to work, this environment cannot be perceived anymore as a stable element of their nomadic lifestyle, especially after deregulation of labour law and progressive disappearance of life-employment (*shūshinkoyō*) practices after the end of bubble economy. Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies...*, p. 63.

<sup>37</sup> Tuan, *Space and Place...*, p. 224.

<sup>38</sup> It is needless to say, that advanced transport network and global business relation intertwine large urban agglomeration such as New York, London, Paris, Moscow or Beijing with ties of relational mobilization of ideas, human and material objects, as shows Saskia Sassen in her researches (Refer to: Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991; Saskia Sassen, *Cities in a World Economy*, California: Pine Forge Press, 2000). However, here I would like to focus rather on literal mobility or instability of Tokyo's architecture for instance, which may be transformed overnight, also due to the fact that the city is constantly affected by earthquakes.

<sup>39</sup> Yoshimi, *Toshi no doramaturgī...*

<sup>40</sup> Ann Waswo, "Housing culture", in: *The Cambridge Companion to Modern Japanese Culture*, Yoshio Sugimoto (ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 285.

<sup>41</sup> Michel Foucault, *Des Espace Autres* (Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias), translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec 1967, <http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html> (accessed 21.08. 2011).



latter used to be a splendid railway station and its past can be admired and meditated through the form of the red-brick building facing imperial palace on the Marunouchi side. Nowadays, Tokyo Station is still a major node on the country's transport map, however this function has been encased with such a manifold attractions that the meaning of the main purpose of this construction has changed significantly. Hence the station is not only a mere point of neither departure nor arrival but 'touristic pause', implying possibility of all the activities a tourist normally abandons herself/himself to when being on tour.

*Heterotopias* in Tokyo intertwine with *sakaribas* composed very often in areas adjacent to popular transport station or temples (Sensōji temple in Asakusa). With a wide array of infrastructure serving leisure, such 'heterotopical' places are subject to constant (re)transformation and this process may occur on the sensuous level of the passer-by, who on the way from work to home, enters in a role of tourist who travels away or escapes from the daily rhythm – at the station it is facilitated by the presence of real tourists – to shake off the stress of the day. The station or any other Tokyo's *sakariba* becomes in this case a materialization of the 'urge' to be elsewhere with the whole context it implies. On the other hand Tokyo's *heterotopias* change physically as regards buildings and their ephemeral urban purposes and thereby sustaining touristic dimension of everyday travels – be it on foot, on bicycle, by metro, train or bus – throughout the city.

## Conclusion

Tourism seems, at least here, to be inextricable from everyday life in Tokyo, where it takes a form of travel as an act of covering vast distances between home and work, school, hospital and other urban facilities, but also as a pure joy derived from giving oneself to touristic leisure such as shopping, visiting museums, discovering places while idle walking across *sakariba*, especially those sprawling inside and outside of major railway stations. This approach aims at delineating a frame of a relatively recent phenomenon in Japanese society, which I would define as 'tourisation' of everyday life. This would be a process whereby citizens of large urban agglomeration such as Tokyo, or rather its suburbs, are being progressively disembedded from local groups – family, neighborhood, friends etc. – they belong to, since home and hometown become a mere stop in their daily travels around the city and thus they start playing a role of a visitor or tourist in their local communities.

Transformation into a tourist in a city one is acquainted with, is enabled by potential of change contained in this supposedly well-known space, by mimetic operations of recreating some of its districts in emulation with popular touristic destinations (New York, Berlin, Paris, Rome etc.) and by re-adjusting the form and highlighting the significance of transport nodes, which orchestrate Tokyo's map. Railway stations, owing to extensively developed infrastructure, largely substitute the city itself and this emphasizes the impression of touristic journey, evoked by the travel between these 'rail-district-universes'. Another factor that stresses the feeling of being a tourist, which ordinary commuters might have, is the presence of real tourists in the space of the station – analyzed here in terms of the emic concept of modern *sakariba* – and in particular at the Tokyo Station (City).

If this paper is largely focused on the case of the station as *sakariba* and thus as a main element in 'Tokyo's tourism', it is because located-on-the-way-from-work, school-to-home stations are easily and quickly accessed places, providing commuters sometimes with the only chance to separate themselves from mundane matters for a moment and partake in

touristic pleasures with actual tourists. In this sense so-called stations' tourism helps to channel destructive emotions such as stress, anger, loneliness or despair. Namely, the station-machine abounds in stimuli which stimulate senses and thus allow mental mobility or escape from the real present into imaginative present. However such imaginative travels may also take a direction of the future or the past and then are meditated through dreams, hopes about the ideal 'self' as well as 'bright future' on the one hand, or through memories about the past on both levels individual and national one on the other hand. Here we are suggested another curious conclusion that even though this essay has been organized around time axe, time may actually be subdued to space, when considering travelling around Tokyo. Predominance of place over time is closely related to some features of physical organization of a certain place, which presupposes potential skewing of the direction and the form of one's time course.

What we think conventionally of as 'tourism' and 'travel' is by and large connected with an act of crossing boundaries of one's homeland in search of the unknown, fresh incentives, new experiences and encounters.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, a discourse, proposing to modify this perspective by redirecting tourism into the community of the traveller, may illuminate some of the social and cultural issues, which have to do with the question about how a constant fickle flow of commuters-tourists reconfigure the city itself and more importantly how it reshapes and undermines endogenous social structures as well as processes of their reproduction. In this essay the notion of *sakariba*, presented as a form of place performance or a materialization of people 'urges' to find themselves in different space but also different time, is employed as a key opening modern urban sphere of Tokyo for new 'touristic' possibilities. Clearly, this idiographic<sup>43</sup> description has its limits as regards drawing conclusions concerning the object discussed hereby, yet it can be considered as an introductory stage to a further research around emerging phenomenon of urban 'nomadic' communities in the paradigm of sociology of mobilities.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Refer to definition created by World Tourism Organization quoted hereby in note 9.

<sup>43</sup> Earl Babbie, *Badania społeczne w praktyce* (The Practice of Social Research), Polish Edition, Warszawa: PWN, 2003.

<sup>44</sup> Urry, *Sociology Beyond Societies...*

MICHAŁ MOCH

## Memories and Identities of the Lebanese Maronites: The Interdisciplinary Research

### Abstract

The article has got two important parts and dimensions. The first is rather methodological and concentrates on giving ideas that could refresh and enrich the interdisciplinary research on ethnic issues in the Arab world. The author's point of view is the one of an Arabist who combines philology with the methods of contemporary social sciences. In the second part of the text the methodological context is practically utilized in the analysis of chosen examples. This would be the case of the Maronites of Lebanon – their collective identity and politics of history conducted by their elites. Lebanon itself is a unique example of Muslim-Christian 'confessional democracy' in a region dominated by the Arab-Muslim civilization. However uniquely diversified, it can also serve as an example of a more universal social phenomena concerning the entire Arab world. The Maronite question is very interesting in this context, because it illustrates a rare situation in which minority, ethnic and religious community, becomes the dominant group – only to return finally to the role of a minority fighting for its place in the society.

### 1. Introduction

The article consists of two basic parts. The first is methodological and concentrates on giving ideas that could refresh and enrich the interdisciplinary research on ethnic issues in the Arab world. In the second part of the text methodological context is practically utilized in the analysis of chosen examples. This would be the case of the Maronites of Lebanon – their collective identity and politics of history conducted by their elites.

The issue of methodology of research is not often broadly addressed in works of Polish Arabists. Arab Studies in itself is a broad and interdisciplinary field of studies. The author is presenting some ideas, less or better known in Polish academic milieu, suitable for describing some of political, religious and social problems of contemporary Arab world, which can be seen as dynamic and pressing subjects of contemporary humanities. It is important to propose the creation of new terminology and approaches that could refresh and enrich the interdisciplinary research on ethnic and religious issues in the Arab world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The very term 'Arab world' is ambiguous and controversial. This is also the case of other geographical and political notions describing modern and contemporary Arab states, societies and Islam e.g. Islamism, Islamic fundamentalism and Islamist. It is treated in the following article according to the Arab concept (Arabic: *al-alam al-arabi*) of a community of states with Arabic as an official language, and what is more important, with the Arab-Islamic civilization as a dominating mode of

The Lebanese Maronites form a community living in the country of many religious and ethnic groups with different versions of identity and competing collective memories. It is a unique example of Muslim-Christian 'confessional democracy' in the region dominated by the Arab-Muslim civilization. However, sometimes it is also criticized as a model of sectarian society which had to collapse at some point of its history and this happened during the civil war between 1975 and 1990.

However uniquely diversified, Lebanon can serve as an example of a more universal social phenomena, concerning all the Arab world: tensions between Pan-Arab (*qawmiyya*) and local (*wataniyya*) levels of nationalisms, application of the Western ideas and institutions into the Arab world, functioning of ethnic and religious minorities in the Arab societies, insurgence of political Islam and local Christian reactions towards it.

This topic is very lively and dynamic and the results of this very discussion on Maronite collective consciousness can influence positions taken by all Christian communities in the Middle East. Taking these aspects into account, the author touches the crucial problem: whether the pluralist society embracing multilevel, multicultural, multiethnic identities, can really emerge in the Arab countries?

## 2. Ethnic and religious phenomena in contemporary Arab world

Traditional Arab Studies, born as a *stricte* philological discipline, put emphasis on knowledge of the language, its grammatical rules and precise understanding of primary sources. Acknowledging the importance and indispensability of Oriental Studies so understood, it can be claimed that a philologist's workshop is not sufficient enough from contemporary Arabist point of view. Especially while describing social processes, common interpretations of the history of the Middle East and Northern Africa, or while presenting individual and collective memory of inhabitants of these areas – in the most distanced way. Thus, an open and genuine discussion on the methodology of scientific research of Arab Studies, as well as introducing new scientific strategies and approaches, seems to be necessary. It may even be vital when considering all the challenges ahead in this scientific discipline.

In the sphere of politics in the Arab world, it is still the religious, denominational factor that dominates over other components of collective identity. One of the political analysts of so called "Arab Spring", a contemporary revolutionary phenomena in the Middle East, presents the idea that "the evidence in Lebanon and Iraq [two Arab countries experimenting with Western-influenced models of democracy – MM] points unequivocally to the fact that turning the political machine around, once it has headed off down the sectarian and ethnic route, is well nigh impossible".<sup>2</sup> In the cases of the Copts of Egypt and the Maronites of Lebanon religious peculiarity goes hand in hand with ethnic distinction, and political representation of both

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culture, and participating in the League of Arab States. Using this notion of the Arab world, it has to be acknowledged that this term itself is a projection of the linguistic and cultural stereotype shaped by the Pan-Arab nationalism in the thirties, forties and fifties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, the term 'Middle East' represents the Westernizing view of the region as a periphery of the West. It is not possible to avoid stereotypical names and notions describing contemporary Arab states, however it is recommended to treat them with distance and criticism.

<sup>2</sup> G. Butt, "Do Arabs need a new awakening to win true democracy?", <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-19272199> (accessed 16.08.2012).

communities is almost equally divided between secular politicians and leaders of the churches, namely patriarchs and leading bishops. Thus, the strictly Lebanese idea of the National Pact and 'confessional democracy', launched in the colonial French era and confirmed in 1943 by the political leaders of Maronite and Sunni Muslim groups, suits well to the version of democracy which allows religious and tribal-ethnic affiliations to dominate.

The following phenomena are connected with the process of shaping identity based on religion: generating the belief of a group's own superiority over other religious groups (i.e., mythical appraising of the outstanding role of pre-Muslim Egypt, contrasted with its decay in the Islamization period) and various aspects of coexistence and conflicts between the Christians and representatives of dominant religion of Islam. The first element has played an important role in shaping the dominant Maronite world-view in which native mountainous and fearless Lebanese Christians strongly differ from non-native Muslims of Greater Syria.

Returning to the question of scientific terminology, the different dimensions of collective and individual memory, the ways of managing the memory in the Coptic and the Maronite communities, (in relevance to the understanding of this expression by the scientists such as Pierre Nora, Aleida and Jan Assmann, or, in case of the Polish borderlands studies Robert Traba), should be taken into account.

The issue categorized as a collective memory was first introduced as a 'historical consciousness' to Polish social thought by Nina Assorodobraj in the article *Żywa historia* ("Living History", 1963). This category can be considered as exceptionally unclear and difficult one to interpret. This is due to the ambiguous distinction between the understandings of this definition as a linear historical process and the acknowledged presence of the past in the present.

It seems more adequate and safe to opt for the term a 'collective memory', proposed by Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist and disciple of Emile Durkheim. His two works, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1925, The Social Frames of Memory) and *La Mémoire Collective* (The Collective Memory, published after the author's death in 1950), are of the greatest assets for the future generation of researchers. Halbwachs dealt with the influence of society on individual memory and with collective memory. He formulated alternative research categories: autobiographical memory – historical memory; history – collective memory, thus, the opposition, between dead history living history and history known from sources versus history experienced everyday.

Another interesting and adequate definition of a collective memory would be the one proposed by Polish scientist Barbara Szacka: "collective memory of the past comes from the notion of the past of home group, constructed by individuals memories – in accordance with the rules discovered by psychologists – information of miscellaneous sources and reaches them via different channels. They are understood, selected and transformed appropriately to their own cultural standards with regards to their outlooks and beliefs. These standards are socially generated, therefore common to all members of a given community, and the notion of the past is so homogenized it allows them to talk about historical collective memory of the home group".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Barbara Szacka, "Pamięć zbiorowa" (Collective Memory), in: *Wobec przeszłości. Pamięć przeszłości jako element kultury współczesnej* (Towards the Past. Memory of the Past as a Piece of Modern Culture), A. Szpociński (ed.), Warszawa: Instytut Adama Mickiewicza, 2005, p. 18.

The distinction between ‘communicative memory’ and ‘cultural memory’, introduced by Jan and Aleida Assmann, is also crucial. Communicative memory is related to everyday time domain, and its most important feature is the limited time horizon, from 80 to 100 years back. It is the period of time retained in the memories of a generation’s lifetime.<sup>4</sup> The cultural memory is distant from a daily life, and it has its points of reference located in the unlimited time horizon. Events that determine group’s fate constitute constant points. Cultural memory forms the identity of a group.<sup>5</sup>

An important methodological suggestion concerning the methods of researching collective memory, was formulated by Pierre Nora. The notion, ‘place of memory’ (French: *lieux de memoire*) has become a key category as a new form of writing and interpreting the history. It was named by Nora<sup>6</sup> ‘a history of a second degree’ (*histoire au second degré*). Its characteristics are: breaking with positivistic fact-collecting, history and linearity and turning to symbolic space. The very term itself, ‘place of memory’, which has its background in Ancient rhetoric (Quintilian), was given by Nora a whole new meaning – and it has become an idiomatic expression in the French language lexicon (hence the standard dictionary Petit Robert). Places of memory are present in the collective memory, giving shape to each groups’ identity, and to its self-image. Against the topographic suggestion, the term should be understood as a metaphor, a sign of history rooted in collective memory in contrary to analytical historical descriptions made by professional historians.<sup>6</sup> The following are the possible examples of the places of memory which could be derived from Nora’s methodological scheme and which could be associated with the examples concerning European, Lebanese Maronite and the Egyptian Copts :

- ‘historiographic places’, which serve to pass on a certain vision of the past (i.e. any cultural centers or museums presenting certain visions of history, like The Warsaw Uprising Museum or The Jewish Museum in Berlin), in the Middle East this role could be played by museums, scientific institutions and religious sanctuaries;

- ‘founding places’, which represent any group’s pedigree (i.e. the knowledge of canonical texts, specific for each religious tradition and creation of their vision of the world). This role can be attributed to the religious sources of the Copts and some versions of the genealogy of Maronites, e.g. references to Phoenicians and Mardaites in the official Maronite vision of history that focuses on the ancient, primordial character of the Maronite denomination and ethnicity;

- ‘geographical places’; rivers, mountains, oasis’, deserts, locations on hills e.g. Wadi Natrun – the spiritual center of Coptic Christianity with famous monasteries in Alexandria – the birthplace of Egyptian Christianity or Bkirki – the contemporary seat of the Maronite Patriarchate located in Mount Lebanon;

- ‘cultural and economical places’; streets, districts, markets and market squares, trade routes, train stations (e.g. the positive stereotype of Lebanon as a safe haven for merchants

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<sup>4</sup> Jan Assmann, *Pamięć zbiorowa i tożsamość kulturowa* (Collective Memory And Cultural Identity), „Borussia”, No. 29, 2003, p. 12–13.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Nora, “General Introduction: Between Memory and History”, in: *Realms of Memory, The Construction of the French Past*, Vol. 1: *Conflicts and Divisions*, Pierre Nora (ed.), New York: Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 14–21.

and “the land of the first boat and the first oar” with such important ports as Beirut, Tyre (Sur) or Byblos (Jubayl);<sup>7</sup>

– ‘architectural places’, as in the Nora’s research of The Eiffel Tower in Paris for the French;

– ‘real and mythical figures’, like Pope John Paul II for the Poles or the late Pope Shenouda III of Alexandria for the Copts; St. Marun (Mar Marun, probably died in 410), hermit and legendary pioneer of Christian monastic life in the Valley of Orontes has been perceived as the founding figure (and the source of the name) for the Maronite community;

– as well as all events, songs, banners, symbols, literary texts, holidays, rituals what means the sphere of mass nationalism.

It is vital to acknowledge a significant number of theoretical and scientific texts, created by researchers from the Middle East or coming from the Arab world and living in the West, which translate Western categories (nation, ethnicity, country, religious fundamentalism) into the reality of Arab countries. Most of these authors are characterized by a deep knowledge of Western theories of nation-making and identity and quite strongly identify with some of these approaches, e.g. as did the historians Youssef M. Choueiri (*Arab History and The Nation-State. A Study in Modern Arab Historiography 1820–1980*<sup>8</sup> and *Arab Nationalism. A History*<sup>9</sup>), Muhammad Muslih (*The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*<sup>10</sup>) and Adeed Dawisha (*Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*<sup>11</sup>). Sometimes the creators of this broadly defined scientific direction have also historiographical-ideological ambitions, such as the late Lebanese historian Kamal Salibi, who will be cited in the next chapters, because he created some landmark works on modern and contemporary history of Lebanon.

The weak points of some of the aforementioned works, despite of their crucial value for historical studies, are definitely: avoiding methodology other than historical and using only written sources, as well as the lack of broader discussion on the Western conceptual thinking and ways of describing nationalism with reference to the Arab reality. For instance, in the Dawisha’s work, which is an interesting attempt at depicting the phenomenon of Pan-Arab nationalism, methodological reflection is significantly underdeveloped. The author recalls the works and terms formulated by well-known researchers like Benedict Anderson (constructivist approach) or Charles D. Smith (ethnohistorical and symbolic approach), however without having these extremely different approaches properly contrasted and discussed in the specifically Arab context.

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<sup>7</sup> Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Spaces of Memory: Forms and Transformations of Cultural Memory), München: Verlag C.H. Beck, 1999, p. 132 (translated thanks to unpublished translation by Marta Karkowska).

<sup>8</sup> For more information on construction of the Lebanese ‘merchant’ myth and its ideological representation in the writings of Michel Chiha see: M. Hartman, A. Olsaretti, “‘The First Boat and The First Oar’: Inventions of Lebanon in the Writings of Michel Chiha”, *Radical History Review*, Issue 86, 2003, p. 37–65.

<sup>9</sup> Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History and The Nation-State. A Study in Modern Arab Historiography 1820–1980*, London–New York: Routledge, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab Nationalism. A History*, Oxford–Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 2000.

<sup>11</sup> Muhammad Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1988.

Still, while applying sociological and psychological approaches to Arab Studies scientific researches (less commonly used, however, than the historical ones), it appears that quantitative methods are too broadly used; and as these methods do not prove exactly correct in the Middle Eastern reality (i.e. application of the statistic surveys in the article: Mahmoud Mi'ari, "Self-Identity And Readiness For Interethnic Contact Among Young Palestinians in The West Bank"<sup>12</sup>). In this aforementioned text, the author tried to establish relations among ethnicity and religion, which were involved in creating individual identities of the examined group, in a statistical way. Young Palestinian students of well-known universities and research centers from the West Bank and from the Gaza Strip, were forced to formulate false classifications of their views and beliefs (i.e. they were to state clearly whether the identities: Arab, Palestinian, clan or Muslim [Islamic], were always of primary value and the greatest importance in each situation). Such a very "Westernized" generalization resulted in the unreliable outcome of the opinion polls, and certainly, in the process, complex, multi-layered character of the individual identities in the Arab Middle East was lost in the pursuit of artificial homogeneity. In the meantime, the experience of many various affiliations is often multileveled, for instance, acknowledging the fundamental role of religion is not synonymous to rejecting local nationalism (which uses the language that emulates the European ideas).

Highly interesting scientific tool from an orientalist perspective is an open biographical interview – known from the ethnological or sociological works. It is very often related to situations of communities inhabiting cultural and linguistic borders. The method requires interviewing in a rather free way, only slightly controlled, members of examined groups that live in certain, chosen areas. It seems to be a good solution to problems encountered by a researcher of national identities in the Middle East. It respects oral cultural traditions of everyday life, and encompasses sacral sphere (i.e. the role of memorizing the Qur'an and the Bible, the recitations of the Holy Book and its tendency to use parables, examples, tales); It also develops bonds with the respondents. It helps to gain their trust and faith and involves them in the conversation – what is crucial and extremely difficult in the unfriendly reality of authoritarian countries.

Implementing the new methods of analysis of national and religious phenomena to Oriental Studies requires combining the following research competences: knowledge of terminology and approaches, applied in the social sciences, and strictly philological background. This is especially true in case of the researcher of Arabic language and Arab culture, with regards to the diglossia and necessity of speaking both the literary official language (*al-lughā al-fushā al-arabiyya*), as well as local dialects (*al-ammiyya*). An interesting idea perhaps is to differentiate contemporary Islamic studies in order to distinguish *the Islamic Studies* – which would basically concentrate on the analysis of the source texts, and thus, similar to the traditional philology, and the *Islamology* (or the *Contemporary Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies*)<sup>13</sup> – closer to the sociology and

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<sup>12</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair*, Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003.

<sup>13</sup> Mahmoud Mi'ari, "Self-Identity and Readiness for Interethnic Contact among Young Palestinians in The West Bank", *Canadian Journal of Sociology/Cahiers canadiens de sociologie*, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1998, p. 47–70.



cultural studies, which would describe contemporary Islam in the public space, and the concerning discourses.

Analogical distinction could be transferred into the sphere of the Arab Studies, so it would also comprehend history and modern times of the ethnical and religious minority groups (mostly, however, of non-Arab character), inhabiting densely Middle Eastern countries, but with an Arab majority. Throughout the centuries, the Copts and the Maronites alike (as well as the Kurds of Iraq and Syria, and to some extent the Assyrians), surrendered to the Arabization processes in terms of language, and came under the Islamic majority influence. Perchance in the future the Arab Studies will become more regionalized and focused on internal diversity of the Arab countries cultures, e.g. it is not impossible that the studies on Maghreb countries, the Gulf, the Christian Arab and Arabic-language communities etc. will form new distinct academic specializations.

Summing up, depicting the relations between Islam versus local and Pan-Arab national identities, examining the Christian and the Muslims multi-layered contacts in Arab countries, presenting the process of forming the sense of autonomy in culturally and religiously minor groups – are, undoubtedly, one of the most interesting tasks for the contemporary Arabist, open to accomplishments of contemporary social studies.

### 3. Attitudes of the Maronite elites at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century<sup>14</sup>

The Lebanese Maronites form the most important part of mosaic Lebanese Christianity and are, politically, the most emancipated Christian group in the Arab world. The construction of Maronites' collective identity is strictly connected to the question of shaping the Lebanese 'imagined community'. Without the Maronite intellectuals there would be no conception of Greater Lebanon, bigger than the Christian stronghold in Mount Lebanon and consisting of Beirut and areas with Muslim demographic domination. Westernized consciousness of Catholic Maronites was also an important reason for cooperating with the French colonial administration that helped in fulfilling the very idea of Greater Lebanon as a French-sponsored Mandate (1920–1943). The Christian thinkers (mainly Maronites) invented the idea of Lebanon as Switzerland of the Middle East which was sound and successful in the West. It is intriguing how the Maronite elites have shaped their world-view and how is it reflected in contemporary history of Lebanon. In the last thirty years, the Maronites had to reconcile their vision of autonomous Lebanon with the dominating Arab-Muslim world-view.

The horror of civil war (1975–1990), the Syrian political domination over Lebanon, death of Rafiq Hariri, the prime minister, and so-called 'Cedar Revolution' in 2005, another war with Israel in 2006 – all these dramatic events had to influence the traditional historiographical and political approaches of the Maronite elites. Nor was it possible to ignore the growing role of Hizb Allah (Hezbollah, The Party Of God), powerful political

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<sup>14</sup> Some parts of this chapter are free translations of the passages taken from the MM monograph, that was prepared for printing in 2012 and entitled *Swoi i obcy. Tożsamość Koptów i Maronitów w arabskich tekstach kultury* (The Natives and the Others. Identity of Copts and Maronites in the Arabic Texts of Culture).

and military resistance<sup>15</sup> movement, representing demographically growing group of the Lebanese Shi'a. Relating to aforementioned Jan Assmann's category of cultural memory, it must be admitted that it suits well to the Maronite group. Their collective consciousness is very deeply rooted in history, but it's not the factual history, rather one of its interpretations, shaped in the Westernized modern Maronite milieu. It was critically analyzed by Kamal Salibi<sup>16</sup> who tried to show how a historically heretic (perhaps the Monothelite creed was their first denomination) and internally diversified group of Maronites (whose tribal background is not known) has become a metaphorical "rose among the thorns"<sup>17</sup>, a sign of Catholic orthodoxy among dominating forces of Arab-Islamic civilization and other heretic Christians. This manifestation of strong bonds with Roman and the Western Christianity was enriched in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries with a huge dose of anti-Arab sentiment and a vision of Lebanon as a platform between the West and the Arab-Islamic world, which should be neutral in all regional conflicts. For the most part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, however fluent in literary Arabic and taking part in Arabic-language cultural life, the bigger part of the Maronite elites was still strongly tied to the concept of Maronite and Lebanese non-Arab identity, being rather hostile towards Pan-Arab ideas and indifferent to the idea of supporting the Palestinians in their fight for self-determination against the Jewish nation-state.

What remained of these Maronite ideas in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Lebanon has survived the bloody civil war and invasions of stronger neighbors and remained so far an independent nation-state. It must be reliving for the Maronites who invented the very Lebanese imagined community of many ethnicities and denominations with Christians as the dominating power-brokers. However, the shape of contemporary Lebanese 'confessional democracy' does not reflect the Maronites' tradition and world-views. They had to acknowledge the fact that Lebanon was and would be the Arab country, the participant of the Pan-Arab *ummah*, even if their presumptions were exactly the opposite. How do the Maronite elites react in this situation of demographic fragility<sup>18</sup> and political complexity?

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<sup>15</sup> The category of resistance (Arabic: *muqawama*) has been the focal point of political identification for such political-military movements as Hamas or Hezbollah. Resistance was often related to the question of Palestine and military fights against the Israeli forces (and not to the global *jihad* against the infidels in case of these two movements). However, the *muqawama* ideology has strongly increased the social status of radical Islamic parties, the enemies of Hezbollah criticize using the anti-Israeli resistance ideology as a pretext to gather arms and blackmail other political groups in Lebanon.

<sup>16</sup> Kamal Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions. History of Lebanon Reconsidered*, Berkeley: University of California, 1988, p. 72–108. Salibi gave a new controversial account of medieval and modern Lebanese Maronite historiography, hinting that crucial historians as the 17<sup>th</sup> c. patriarch Istifan ad-Duwayhi, have invented some elements of the Maronite past that seem to be natural and obviously contemporary.

<sup>17</sup> Salibi, *A House of Many Mansions...*, p. 72 et al. This metaphor, taken from the Song of Songs (2:2) was utilized in the landmark bull of the Pope Leo X which was sent in 1510 to then Maronite Patriarch, Butrus of Hadath. The bull underlined purely Catholic orthodoxy of the Maronite community and encouraged long process of integrating the Lebanese Maronite Patriarchate into the structures of the Catholic Church.

<sup>18</sup> According to the results of 1932 census the Maronites formed 29% of the Lebanese population and the total Christian population did have a small majority over all Muslim groups (52: 48 %, data

#### 4. Memory and commemorating

Political, social and ideological transformations among the Maronites overlap with the overall situation of ‘crisis of history’, as it was coined by P. Nora in his important essay *Time of Memory* (2001). Taking France as an example, the acclaimed historian traced the transition from ‘historical consciousness’ to ‘commemorative consciousness’.<sup>19</sup> This phenomenon happened due to specific factors. The examples were rooted in the history of France, but the very terminology of P. Nora can adequately describe the situation of Lebanese Christians as well. The effect of the aforementioned transformation of social roles of history have been both political and symbolic because it has resulted in the triumph of memory over history. This was helpful in the formation of a firm concept of a ‘national’ or ‘collective memory’.

Referring to the historical approach of K. Salibi, it is worth emphasizing that the post-modern era has turned previous canons: history has become subjective and personal, while memory has become one of the properties and characteristics of the community. The historian ceased to be the depository and authoritative interpreter of “History” with a capital H, but one of its many “producers”.<sup>20</sup> He shares this role with politicians, judges and legislators, as well as with direct witnesses of history and mass media. This situation leads to the democratization of history, however it also dangerously leads to mass popularity of simplified visions of the past that blur in the ocean of the mutually excluding interpretations.

The Maronite question is very interesting in this context, in fact it illustrates a rare situation in which an ethnic minority and religious community becomes the dominant group only to return finally to the role of minority fighting for its place. Contemporary ‘acceleration of history’<sup>21</sup> has also affected the Christians in the Middle East, forcing them to adapt to changing conditions. History is no longer a confident reference point for the present, its dominating aspects are rather those of inconstancy and uncertainty. The present ceased to be a solid bridge linking the past and future. What will happen in the future and its unpredictability raises terror, because there has been a breaking of historical linearity that means the lack of continuity of the historical process. The only salvation could be a return to the ‘collective memory’ because the effort of ‘commemorating’ allows one to find roots in history. To quote Pierre Nora<sup>22</sup>, since “we are cut off from history” and do not know its meaning, there is a kind of “duty of memory”, or “pious collecting, in a somewhat

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after: Claude Boueiz Kanaan, *Lebanon 1860–1960. A Century Of Myth And Politics*, Beirut: Saqi, 2005, p. 135). It has been the last official census until now, but the fears of demographic outnumbering have been very powerful in the Maronite milieu. Unofficial data present a different pictures of the contemporary situation, however the fact of growing Muslim (especially Shiite) majority is obvious. For example, according to the CIA World Factbook from 2012 there were 59,7% of Muslims and 39% of Christians in Lebanon: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html> (accessed 08.2012), however no precise numbers for members of specified denominations were given. Some contemporary commentators think that Lebanon should be now described as a country of three minorities: the Sunni, the Shiites and the Christians.

<sup>19</sup> P. Nora, “Czas pamięci” (The Time of Memory), *Res Publica Nowa*, No. 7, July 2001, p. 37.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>21</sup> P. Nora utilized here the term coined by Daniel Halžvy.

<sup>22</sup> Nora, “Czas...”, p. 40–41.

undifferentiated manner, of all visible traces and marks of all the material, which shall certify (perhaps), what we are or what will we prove to be". The past has nowadays become a mysterious area, and an extremely difficult one to recover. What remains is protecting the available historical evidence and "the reconstruction work on documents, archives and monuments"<sup>23</sup> which may lead to the strengthening of the national identity. However, this effort of "remembering", "commemorating" or reconstructing<sup>24</sup>, no longer belongs to the order of history, but rather to the sphere of constructed collective memory. This leads to symbolic exchange of roles between "memory" and "history", what can result in dangerous consequences. In other words, the 'collective memory' takes over the role of the official version of national history.

The contemporary Maronite group is furthermore representative of the aforementioned social processes, testified by the various types of texts created by prominent representatives of this community. Out of necessity, the researcher describes a phenomena of contemporary times primarily on the basis of ad hoc analysis of different texts (political texts, journalistic articles) as well as careful observations of public events connected with history. The conclusion on the Maronite experience, which can be drawn by the researchers, is that the community is in a period of very strong manifestation of identity based on their collective memory. Referring once again to the apparatus of P. Nora<sup>25</sup>, it can be concluded that the Maronites are living in the "era of commemoration" and their collective memory is very "hot", alive and open for internal conflicts. Within the Maronite group there exists a violent struggle on whose interpretation of history will gain the status of an official and uncontested form of collective memory.

A good example of such conflicts were the celebrations of the 1600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of St. Marun (Arabic: Mar Marun). In 2010, the event took place in two localizations and seemed to be a kind of a political competition. It seems that more important than the religious dimension of the ceremony was presenting the contrasting political views on the Maronite community and its way of functioning in the Arab world. The official celebration, supported by the Maronite Patriarchate in Bkirki, took place on 8<sup>th</sup> February 2010, at St. George Church in Beirut. The liturgy was led by Patriarch Nasr Allah Sufayr who, in his pastoral word, put emphasis on the importance of Lebanon's independence and stressed that the Maronite Church has always played with his attitude a very important role of national co-existence between Christians and Muslims (*yashhadu laha Allah bi-qiyam al-aysh al-mushtarak bayna al-masihiyyin wa al-muslimin wa la siyama fi ard Lubnan*).<sup>26</sup> At the same time, however, the second ceremony was held in the church in Brad, on the outskirts of Aleppo, on the Syrian territory. The mass was attracted by some Maronite

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>24</sup> It is possible to relate this notion to the contemporary wave of reconstructions of historical events, often based on the expectations of a post-modern spectator e.g. the field reconstruction of the battle of Grunwald or the city games concerning the dramatic events of the Warsaw Uprising. In The Arab countries there is a phenomenon of TV series depicting the golden age of Islam, e.g. the life of prophet Muhammad, the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and the Caliphates.

<sup>25</sup> Nora, "Czas...", p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/arabicNewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&571AE D8ED80D176DC22576C50020FC64> (accessed 9.02.2010).

political celebrities as Michel Awn, Sulayman Faranjiyya and Amil Lahoud, the former President of Lebanon at the time of Syrian domination. Political leaders who had gathered in the Syrian church pointed out that they came to a genuine place of residence and death of St. Marun. However, the choice of the ceremony venue did not arise from the fascination with archeology and theology, but rather from a different vision of politics of history and brutal fighting for formation of the desired version of collective memory. The figure of St. Marun, patron and founder of the community, was taken out of context and rewritten in the historical context of the two narratives. The first narrative was contained in the official liturgy of the Maronite Patriarchate, celebrated in Beirut, and stressed the universal heritage of the saint and an attitude of friendliness towards the West. In this approach there exists a very close relationship, even union of the Maronite community with peculiar, nationalist and pro-Western vision of the Lebanese national identity.

The solemn mass at the Brad church was associated with a completely different message. It was well expressed in the press interview of a close associate of M. Awn, a member of the Lebanese parliament, Nabil Niqla. He did not conceal at the same time that the Syrian event is closely connected with 'the duty of memory', as it was coined by P. Nora:

"Going to Syria to commemorate St. Marun's anniversary aims at reactivating the memory, especially that of the Christians, reminding them that they are the sons of the Orient (Arabic: *awlad ash-sharq*) and not intruders (...) We also wanted to remind the Western countries that we are the descendants of Eastern people (*annana min asas ash-shu'ub ash-sharqiyya*), and not the remnants of the Crusader invasions (*lasna min baqaya al-ghazawat as-salibiyyin*)".<sup>27</sup>

This position manifests an entirely different approach from the aforementioned attitude of the majority of the Maronite clergy elites. The most important factor in the second narrative is showing solidarity between the Arab societies and the wider Muslim world. There is no distinction between Syrian and Lebanese Maronites, in that narration they all form one community, hence the independence of Lebanon is praised. This is only if the country's goals are consistent with the policy of Assad-ruled Syria. Such an approach shows respect not only for their nearest neighbor, but also seeks to establish friendship and alliance with Iran. It results from the cooperation of some Maronite parties with the Shiite groups – Hezbollah and Amal parties. Consequently, even if these Maronite parties (the Free Patriotic Movement, Marada Brigades and other smaller groups) officially affirm the Lebanese identity, they do so because of radically different reasons and associated with it a completely different ideological content than most of the clergy and the more traditional Maronite forces (Kata'ib Party – the Phalange and Lebanese Forces). Unexpectedly, this new tendency was somewhat supported by some public statements of the new Maronite Patriarch, Bishara ar-Ra'i, elected in 2010. He showed empathy and even political support towards the embattled (during so-called 'Arab Spring') Syrian regime and Hezbollah, e.g. by visiting its strongholds in southern Lebanon. Surprising and often self-contradictory rhetoric of the new patriarch seemed to cause great division and bustling discussion among the Maronites.

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<sup>27</sup> The unknown author, *Hass Naharnet*, Niqla: "Nahnu abna' ash-sharq wa lasna min baqaya as-salibiyyin", <http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/arabicNewsDesk.nsf/Lebanon/8C992B21E42B349CC22576C70062C522?OpenDocument>, 11 February 2010 (accessed 11.2011).

The described pro-Syrian orientation was sharply criticized by Samir Ja'ja' the former leader of the Christian armed militias during the civil war period (1975–1990). The Lebanese Forces leader perceived an attitude of submission towards Syria and Iran as an “unnatural denial of the foundations of the historical policy of Christians in Lebanon” (*tahaluf maghayir li at-tabi'a wa didda mabadi niqat irtikaz as-siyasa at-tarihiyya li al-masihiyyin fi Lubnan*).<sup>28</sup> The historical argument serves to express his very firm belief that Maronites are a ‘belligerent nation’, which from generation to generation brings an innate reluctance to surrender to oppression (*shab muqawim la yastaslimu bi-tabi'atihi*).<sup>29</sup> A sense of superiority towards other communities and conviction about the leading role of the Maronites is implicitly included in such views.

An important phenomenon in Lebanese Christian circles seems to be the radicalization of young generation of political activists, based on views resembling aforementioned S. Ja'ja' theses. This sentiment is expressed by Sami Jumayyil (born in 1980), the son of Amin Pierre Jumayyil, long standing leader of the Phalange movement, and nephew of Bashir Jumayyil. The youngest political representative of the famous family, personally not remembering the greatest crimes of the civil war, presents an apology for the past connected with the belief that the Maronites fought only in self-defense, forced to do so by the enemy. If the symbolic center of the world-view was for the older generations of Phalangists the independent Lebanon protecting Christians, then for S. Jumayyil and contemporary activists like him a sense of their work becomes the exclusive focus on the fate of Christian communities and their strong separation from the Muslim neighbors.<sup>30</sup>

## 5. Conclusions

The analyzed material proves that in the Lebanese public discourse there are two very radically defined visions of the world which are highly influential in the Maronite environment: one assumes autonomy for Christians, their isolation from other groups and contains a strong anti-Arab resentment, the latter is based on the total identification of Christian positions with the political views of other Arab countries and Iran, but does not aim at reducing the Maronite privileges in independent Lebanon. Both views seem to be rather socially harmful, and the solutions should be found in the future to reconcile the contradicting world-views. The question is whether Lebanese Maronites would preserve their own voice and awareness of their historical and religious peculiarity, but at the same

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<sup>28</sup> <http://www.naharnet.com/domino/tn/ArabicNewsDesk.nsf/getstory?openform&1B49FE D8DC2EED48C22576F70040427E>, 31 March 2010 (accessed 11.2011).

<sup>29</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>30</sup> See: Phillip Smyth, *A New Kataeb*, <http://mepei.com/in-focus/580-a-new-kataeb> (accessed 06.2010). An example of isolationism of young Phalange leaders is their interest in reviving of “Aramaic” elements of the collective identity of Maronites. According to P. Smyth, they try to organize a movement of ‘Sunday School’ that propagates the teaching and learning of Modern Aramaic language. They also have expanded the “Aramaic” style of writing proper names connected with using the graph in the Latin alphabet. An example might be a group of activists called Bnay Qyomo, which, using modern Internet sources, seeks to rehabilitate the “Aramaic roots” of Lebanese Maronites. This evokes an association with the “Syriac-Aramaic” tendencies, emphasizing the role of the classical literary Syriac language as a liturgical language and the language of communication within the Christian community.

time would they harmonize their differences with the wider experience of non-Christian Lebanese and Arabs. This process of rethinking the Maronite collective identity can follow some important results: shaping the more democratic and multilayered view of their history, a criticism of collective historical memory and rejection of anti-Arab stereotypes ruining relationships with other Middle-Eastern communities.

In Lebanon, as it was proved earlier, exists a specific ‘culture of commemoration’, based on the ‘duty of memory’ and historical narrations accenting the peculiarity of the given ethnic-religious communities. Each group celebrates its own martyrdom, at the same time depreciating the tragedy of other communities. This tribal attitude is usually hidden under the facade of ‘national dialogue’ that is a strictly political case and is conducted mostly by former warlords who become civil politicians still ruling their denominational groups.

For instance, the services in memory of “Christian martyrs” highlight not only their sacrifices, but lead to the avoidance of questions about their own responsibility, e.g. for the death of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in 1982. Relations between various Lebanese communities are thus based on nurturing their own martyrdom and self-harm at the expense of relationships with other groups. The dominance of ‘the duty of memory’ and ‘culture of commemoration’ causes the isolationist tendencies of ethnic and religious communities; individual approach to the history of religious groups is based on remembering specific events. As an example, the Maronites would choose the feast of St. Marun (which is, as previously shown, a vehicle for different political messages), the commemorations of the Christian victims of the civil war, or the anniversary of B. Jumayyil’s death. The Druze would commemorate the tragic death of Kamal Junbulat, their great leader and the Pan-Arab giant, and Shiites – their religious feasts in addition to the focus on memories of the end of the Israeli occupation in South Lebanon (2000) or “the victory” over Israel (2006). However, there is a lack of a more universal perspective in describing these events and views of peculiar groups.<sup>31</sup> One of the proofs that the more general Lebanese perspective could emerge are the works of the mentioned Kamal Salibi. The historian strongly believed in the idea of Lebanon a “good house for many mansions”.

Without a dialogue between different groups and open discussion on their visions of history and identity the real Lebanese national community, connecting on an equal footing Lebanese of different faiths, will not emerge. It requires compassion and accepting the fact that each group took part in the civil war, both as victims and executioners, and that there is no single all-encompassing interpretation of this terrifying fratricidal conflict. The other issue is how to organize the school programs and academic curricula in order to present and teach more inclusive version of Lebanese past and present.

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<sup>31</sup> The account of war in Lebanon that was highly appreciated in the West was an animated documentary, partly autobiographic, film *Waltz with Bashir* (2008) by Avi Folman, the Israeli film director. However inventive and moving, this film concentrated on experiences of the author and other Israeli witnesses of history and it consciously lacks of the Arab/Palestinian/Maronite /Lebanese approaches and points of view. Sadly, important Arabic language and Lebanese accounts of war as novels by Rashid ad-Da’if or the drama film *Bayrut al-Gharbiyya* (*West Beirut*, 1998, directed by Ziyad Duwayri) didn’t succeed as much among the Western audience despite of good international reviews.

The empathic approach would show the Maronites cooperation with Israel and a subsequent murder in Sabra and Shatila in 1982 as a tragic chain of historical events, a kind of a bleak historical destiny. If there was a consensus over such an understanding of this part of Lebanese contemporary history, the Maronite environment in this situation would recognize their guilt, as well as cherish the memory of their losses caused by violent Palestinian groups and associated Lebanese militia, leaving behind themselves an empty rhetoric of “Christian resistance movement”, which was always attacked by demonized enemies. Similarly, Shiites have the right to feel a completely justified sense of marginalization and underestimation in the history of independent Lebanese state, and general acceptance of this assessment would help them in rethinking their own “dark sides” of history, as the actions against the Palestinians during the so-called “War of the Camps” (especially conducted by the Amal movement) in the mid-eighties of the twentieth century or some violent acts committed by Hezbollah.

Such a work on collective memory seems to be still a challenge, perhaps beyond the capacities of Lebanese denominational groups. It is due to their constant involvement in violent conflicts tearing apart the Middle East. The key to solving the problems of Lebanon as a nation-state, and the Maronites – the builders of modern Lebanese political nation, seem to be not concrete political solutions, but rather an attitude of openness, compassion and initiating a free debate on the contemporary history of Lebanon. Collective memory should not be sanctified in order to become a weapon or a form of exclusion.<sup>32</sup> Contrastingly, it should be a kind of a process or unfinished, still growing unit of information, which includes both negative and positive experiences of the community. Only openness to the nearest Other, which would be in this case a neighbor, could save the Lebanese people, disintegrated and affected by all the possible historical shocks. It could allow the Maronite group to continue playing an important role in Lebanon, the Arab world and the Middle East as well.

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<sup>32</sup> Compare: Nora, “Czas...”, p. 43.



BILAL GÖKKIR

## The Role of State Policies in Modern Qur'anic Exegesis in Turkey: Case of Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942) and His Exegesis

### Abstract

This paper explores modern Turkey's political and intellectual attitudes and their reflections on Qur'anic studies in the example of Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942) whose exegetical work has been widely and influentially circulated. The task of the exegesis in Turkish was offered by Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı (Presidency of Religious Affairs) to Yazır as a result of the parliamentary decision in 1926 just after the closing of the *madrasas* in 1924. The idea was that Islamic sources, at least at the level of basic knowledge should be made available to the people in their native language. Yazır began to work on exegesis of the Qur'an, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (The Religion of the Truth, The Language of the Qur'an) and completed in 1938. It might be seen that the exegesis was a product of secular governmental initiation with its control-oriented character. However, at the end it was revealed that Yazır resisted the politics in the favor of traditional Islamic understanding.

### 1. Introductory remarks

The literature of modern Qur'anic studies from the non-Arabic speaking world is not easily available to the Western reader. In fact, it has been a custom that almost all modern studies on the history of *tafsir* follow the footsteps of Ignaz Goldziher, who seemed to limit himself to exegetical literature of the Arabic speaking world in his *Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegen* (Leiden, 1920). Being loyal to Goldziher, Jacques Jomier in his *Le Commentaire Coranique du Manār, Tendances Modernes de L'exégèse Coranique en Egypte* also focuses on particularly Egyptian Qur'anic commentaries, *Manār* by Muhammad Abduh (1905) and also on the exegesis of Rashid Rida (1935) as representatives of contemporary interpretation. It seems that this neglect continued into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as John M. S. Baljon admits his regret at not being able to cover Turkish scholarship in his *Modern Muslim Kor'an Interpretations 1880–1960*.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Andrew Rippin does not mention Turkish Qur'anic studies in his *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John M. S. Baljon, *Modern Muslim Koran Interpretation (1880–1960)*, Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1961, p. vii.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, London: Routledge, 1990. The translation of Goldziher's work into Arabic by 'Alī Hasan 'Abd al-Qādir, under the title *al-Madhahib al-Islamiyya fi Tafsir al-Qur'an*, Cairo: Matba'at al-'ulum, 1944, seems to have been very

Despite this neglect by the Western world, Turkish Qur'anic studies have made a considerable contribution to Qur'anic studies, both in the modern and pre-modern era. Research on *tafsir* literature in the Ottoman era however shows that while approaches were mainly concentrated on the linguistic study of the Qur'an, most of the time these treatises were rewritten classical exegetical works on the treatises of Zamakhshari, Razi and Baydawi, in annotated styles. Research also shows that commentary works were concerned with individual *suras*, rather than with the entire text of the Qur'an.<sup>3</sup>

Turkish Islamic and Qur'anic scholarship deserves scholarly attention first of all for its Ottoman legacy and secondly because of modern Turkey's particular history in Qur'anic studies, which has been extensively re-shaped by methods originated in the West, and perspectives and politics that developed over two centuries of Westernization policy. Thus, this paper aims to expose the status of the contemporary study of the Qur'an in Turkey in the example of Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942) one of the important Turkish scholars of Qur'anic studies, whose exegetical work has been widely and influentially circulated in Turkish Islamic and Qur'anic studies. However, first, the intellectual and institutional background of Turkey will be examined. In this regard, secularist, modernist, and Westernized political and intellectual attitudes and their reflections in Qur'anic studies will be presented. This paper will then explore to what extent the above-mentioned Turkish exegete demonstrated influences from the national/local context in his texts.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. The emerging modern republic: The transition from the Ottoman Empire to Turkish Republic as context

The 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were a time of physical and ideological challenges for the Ottomans. At this time Turkish Muslims were adapting Western political systems

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influential on Muslim scholars as well; for example, people like Husayn al-Dhahabi (1961) in his *al-Tafsir wa'l-Mufasssirun*, Ismail Cerrahoglu (1988), in his *Tefsir Tarihi*, (2 vols) (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı Yayınları, 1988) and Ali Turgut in his *Tefsir Usulu ve Kaynakları*, (Istanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Vakfı, 1994) limit themselves to Arabic-speaking scholarship and talk only about Shah Wali Allah al-Dahlawi (d. 1762), Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan (d. 1898), Muhammad Abduh (d. 1905) and Rashid Rida (d. 1935), as if they were the only modern representatives of Qur'anic studies in the Muslim world. Recent attempts in the West, however, have been made to include Qur'anic studies from other parts of the Muslim world, like Turkey, Iran, Malaysia and Indonesia. Abdullah Said's work on Indonesian Qur'anic studies is a significant step. See: Abdullah Saeed (ed.), *Approaches to the Qur'an in Contemporary Indonesia*, London: Oxford University Press in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2005.

<sup>3</sup> For further information, see: Bilal Gökkır at al. (ed.), *Osmanlı Toplumunda Kur'an Kültürü ve Tefsir Çalışmaları* (Qur'anic Culture and Exegetical Works in Ottoman Society), Istanbul: Kur'an ve Tefsir Akademisi, 2011; Muhammad Abay, "Osmanlı Döneminde Yapılan Tefsir ile ilgili Eserler Bibliyografyası" (Bibliography of Exegetical Works in Ottoman Period), *Divan*, 1999, Vol. 4, p. 256–257.

<sup>4</sup> For evaluations of modern Turkish exegetical works in English see: B. Gökkır, "The Application of Western Comparative Religious and Linguistic Approaches to the Qur'an in Turkey", *Journal of Islam and Christian Muslim Relations*, Vol. 14, No. 3, July 2003, p. 249–263; Necmettin Gökkır, *The Application of Modern Critical Theories to the Study of the Qur'an – With a Particular Focus on Qur'anic Studies in Turkey between 1980–2002* (unpublished PhD Thesis, Manchester University 2004). For Yazır in particular, see: Ismail Albayrak, "Turkish Exegesis of the Twentieth Century: Hak Dini Kur'an Dili", *Islamic Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3, 2004, p. 391–413.

such as democracy, the idea of parliaments and constitutions and ethical systems and values such as human rights, liberation and equality. Namık Kemal, like many other Ottoman-Turkish thinkers, debated the idea of liberty, Islamic renewal and Western polemics on Islam in his journal, *Hürriyet* (Liberty, published in Istanbul and Paris 1868–1873). The physical and intellectual challenges of the West, Pan-Islamism (the unity of the *ummah*/Muslim community), de-colonialism, etc. were subjects that were used as an opportunity to help Islam and the Empire recover from their current positions. The scholars generally concentrated around two journals: *Sebilurreşad* and *Sırat-ı Mustakim*. As a matter of fact, in these articles and elsewhere, the West was criticized for its imperialist/colonialist character, moral bankruptcy and for the abuses of Orientalism. However, at the same time, the West was taken, by some others, as a role model and Western values and ideas are tried to be accommodated. In any way the West and its values were in discussion. Consequently Westernization led to fundamental changes in behavior and belief about economics, politics, social organizations and intellectual discourse, as well as discussions about secularization and rationalization in religion.<sup>5</sup>

As a result, Western ideologies and perspectives were largely transferred to institutes in the Empire and modern Turkey.<sup>6</sup> Starting from the late years of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey made constant attempts to adapt Western education, legal and political systems and institutions. The 19<sup>th</sup> century, for instance, was a time of fundamental reformation. Sultan Mahmud II, who tried to modernize the army and administrative structures, emerged as the best-known contemporary Muslim leader. The period is often known as the era of *Tanzimat* (Reorganization). In general terms, the reorganization was concerned with restructuring a government and simultaneously improving its status in order to cope with existing problems.<sup>7</sup>

A limited number of *ulama* (scholars) made a direct or important contribution to *Tanzimat*. One of the best known was Ahmed Cevdet Pasha (d. 1895), who had undergone both a traditional religious education and a modern education. Cevdet Pasha was the most important figure in the creation of *Majalla*, a formulation of a civil code that combined Islamic legal principles with new legal ideas.<sup>8</sup> Some intellectual movements that took place at this time were, for example, the Young Turks, who were influenced by European liberal thinking, *Servet-i Funūn* (The Wealth of Knowledge), which was influenced by Western thought via literature and the Ottoman Society of Science (1897–1898), which published *Majmu al-Funūn*, which was about modern Anglo-Saxon philosophy.<sup>9</sup> A Turkish sociologist, Ziya Gökalp (d. 1924) – another important figure – tried to find some grounds for reconciliation between Western scientific thought and purely religious Muslim thought. As a follower of

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<sup>5</sup> See: Gustave Edmund von Grunebaum, “The Problem of Cultural Influence”, in: *Modern Islam: the Search for Cultural Identity*, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1962, p. 18.

<sup>6</sup> For further information, see: William Montgomery Watt, “Islam and the West”, in: *Islam in the Modern World*, Denis Mac Eoin and Ahmed al-Shahi (eds.), London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1983, p. 4–5.

<sup>7</sup> For further information, see: John Obert Voll, *Islam Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994, p. 88.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

<sup>9</sup> For further information, see: Abdulhak Adnan Adivar, “Islamic and Western Thought: Turkey”, in: *Near Eastern Culture and Society: A Symposium on the Meeting of East and West*, T. Cuyler Young (ed.), Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1951, p. 124.

Durkheim, Gökalp proposed a distinguishment between *medeniyet* (civilization) and *hars* (culture). He argued that Turkey should adapt Western civilization, while national and Islamic culture is preserved.<sup>10</sup> At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Empire had become a country where all the major issues of Islam at that time could be observed. Reform involved the adaptation of Western techniques and ideas. The re-assertion of Islamic authenticity and the restatement of Islam in terms of modern rationalism were common themes in the Islamic experience at the time.

As a result, most of the social and value systems of the West, were integrated even in the religious sphere. To initiate a modern Western-style religious program, for instance, the mosque services were set up with new instructions in the name of the purification, simplification and modernization of religion and religious rituals. In order to reach this “modern goal”, Turkish language was proposed as the language of worship in the mosques. To achieve this goal, some other political reforms in religion also took place. The closing of Islamic courts and *madrasa* (religious schools), for instance, followed the abolition of the Caliphate and the ministry of Religious Affairs and Trusts in 1924. The adoption, in 1926, of the European system of civil, criminal, and commercial law completed the legal reformation. *Tarikat* (Islamic Sufi orders), *tekke* (monasteries) and *türbe* (tombs or shrines) were all banned in 1925. In 1928, the statement in the constitution ‘The Religion of the Turkish State is Islam’ was finally removed.<sup>11</sup>

1928 was also the year when the Latin script was introduced as the new “Turkish script”, after hundreds of years of using the Arabic script for Turkish. For the purpose of Westernization, the culture would have to be cut off from its traditional roots. The replacement of the Arabic script with the Latin alphabet was perhaps the most radical reform, in a cultural sense, in the history of Republic. However, the question here is whether this reform was born out of nationalism or a desire to westernize the state. To abolish anything Arabic might appear to be a nationalistic policy, but adopting Latin was certainly an attempt at Westernization, as the Latin script had never been used before for writing Turkish. The Arabic script, on the contrary, had a long history in Turkish culture. The effect of this reform was, therefore, immense. “This change”, Esposito observes, “effectively cut off younger generations of Turks from the religious and literary heritage of their Islamic, Ottoman past, which was preserved in its official, religious, and literary language, Arabic”.<sup>12</sup>

The state, on the other hand, worked on the Westernization project by giving Islam a more Turkish character so that all Turks could understand their faith without having to resort to interpreters, mediators or religious authorities (i.e. *ulama*). In this effort, the translation of the Qur’an into Turkish and its use in the mosque is very important. Although the attempt failed to last for long, the Turkish language briefly replaced Arabic as the language of religion, as seen in *müezzin*’s five daily calls to prayer and the sermons given in the mosque from between 1932 and 1950.<sup>13</sup> However, classical arguments were used for

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>11</sup> For further information about these reforms, see: Osman Nuri Ergin, *Türk Maarif Tarihi* (An Educational History of Turkey), Istanbul: Eser Matbaası, 1977, Vol. 5, p. 1605–2005.

<sup>12</sup> John Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984, p. 102.

<sup>13</sup> For further information, see: H. Aydar and N. Gökkir, “Discussion on the Language of Prayer in Turkey: A Modern Version of the Classical Debate”, *Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2007, p. 121–136.

the reasoning behind this process. It has been argued that the basis of the ideas behind this transformation occurred earlier in Islamic history and came to mind before the proclamation of the Republic. In fact, thinkers like Ali Suavi (d. 1878) and Jamaladdin Afgani (d. 1897), who had a great effect on Turkish thought during the *Tanzimat* era, put forward the idea that the Qur'an should be translated into Turkish and that this translation should be used by Turkish Muslims when performing their prayers, as in the history of Islam.<sup>14</sup> In particular, Ziya Gökalp, whose thoughts greatly affected Mustafa Kemal, the founder of the new Turkish Republic, was insistent on the idea that the *adhan* (to call for prayer), prayer and other forms of worship should be performed in Turkish. Gökalp depicted "a country where the Qur'an was read in Turkish, where the *adhan* was called in Turkish, where *salat* was prayed in Turkish and everybody was able to understand what they recited"; he made it clear that this is how he thought the Turkish land should be.<sup>15</sup>

It is very interesting to note that while almost all translations in the first period (the Ottoman *Tanzimat* era) were from Persian into Turkish, the second wave in the Second Constitutional Period (1908–1918) era were mainly from French or other Western languages into Turkish. However, despite this popularity and increase in numbers, the majority of translations failed to have a high enough linguistic level for the people, as political and commercial concerns gave rise to serious weaknesses. Nevertheless, some Turkish translations were linguistically proficient and left scientific concerns behind, such as Giritli Sırrı Paşa's *Sırr-ı Furkan* (1890), and *Sırr-ı Meryem* (1894), and Bereketzade İsmail Hakki's *Envaru'l-Kur'an* (1913).

However, commercial and political concerns seemed to come to the fore more often in the early years of the Republic. The Armenian publisher Mihran Efendi is a noteworthy example; he attempted to publish Cemil Said's translation of the Qur'an from Kazimirski's French version into Turkish in 1924. This translation was discussed in Parliament and the members eventually came to a decision that a new translation and exegesis should be prepared by a "scholarly expert (*alim*) in Islam" in order that people could learn their religion correctly. The project of a Qur'anic translation and an exegesis of the Qur'an in Turkish was the most significant activity organized by the Turkish parliament to help the Turkish people to understand their religion from the primary sources. Eventually, the task of translating the Qur'an was given to the great Turkish poet Mehmed Akif Ersoy; while the Turkish exegesis of the Qur'an was given to Muhammed Hamdi Yazır.

### 3. Muhammed Hamdi Yazır (1878–1942) and his *Tafsir Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (The Religion of the Truth, The Language of the Qur'an)

Muhammed Hamdi Yazır has been known by the epithet Elmalılı as he was born in the town of Elmalı, in the province of Antalya in Southern Turkey. However, as his father Numan Efendi, a *başkatip* (head secretary) in the Elmalı court, was from Yazır, a village in

<sup>14</sup> See: Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye'de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi II* (The History of Contemporary Thought in Turkey II), İstanbul: Ülken Yayınları, 1979, p. 76; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi (Islahat Fermanı Devri 1861–1876)* (Ottoman History Period of Reform Edict 1861–1876), Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1983, Vol. 7, p. 215.

<sup>15</sup> Ziya Gökalp, *Yeni Hayat* (New Life), İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Basımevi, 1976, p. 11; see also: Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (The Principles of Turkism) İstanbul: Türk Kültür Yayınları, 1923, p. 160–161.

the province of Burdur, Gölhisar, he took the surname of Yazır at the time of the promulgation of the surname law in the Turkish Republic. Having completed his primary education and Qur'anic (*hıfz*-memorization) education in his hometown of Elmalı, Muhammed Hamdi went to Istanbul with his uncle Mustafa Efendi and joined the school, Küçük Ayasofya Medresesi (1895). He received his *ijaza* (license) from Kayserili Mahmud Hamdi Efendi, whose scholarly circles young Muhammed Hamdi had attended in Bayazıt Mosque. In order to distinguish him from his teacher Mahmud Hamdi Efendi, he used the title of “Küçük” (junior) Hamdi Efendi in some of his articles before the adopting the surname Yazır.<sup>16</sup> During his education Yazır developed his skills in art, literature, philosophy and music. Eventually, he became a *dersiam* (lecturer) at the Beyazıt Medresesi in 1906. Meanwhile he also completed the Mektebi Nuvab, i.e., the faculty of law.<sup>17</sup>

During the second constitutional period in 1908, Yazır joined the political movement *İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti* (Committee of Union and Progress) and supported the dethronement of Sultan Abdulhamid II and the introduction of the *Meşrutiyet* (constitutional monarchy). Just after the declaration of the constitutional monarchy, Yazır expressed his ideas about the matter of the caliphate. For him, the caliph was not merely a person who had authority over people, but was also someone who had a duty to follow the rules and constitution himself: “*The caliph, on the one hand, has the duty of attorneyship/representation for the ummah who accept his authority, on the other hand, he has a duty of regency to act in the name of the constitution and as a law maker he has to follow and act like his people*”.<sup>18</sup> Yazır describes an alternative theory of the caliphate. Instead, he suggests a constitutional framework for the Islamic political authority for those Muslims living in Muslim lands. “*As the caliph in Islam is only a representative of the Constitution for the fulfillment, the caliphate is not a spiritual leadership. The caliphate is only leadership of the Islamic constitutional government (hükümet-i meşrutat-ı İslamiyye). Therefore, the caliph has no guardianship over Muslims in non-Islamic lands (memaliki ecnebiye)*”.<sup>19</sup> Eventually, with the establishment of the constitutional monarchy, Yazır became a Member of Parliament for Antalya.<sup>20</sup>

Meanwhile, Yazır taught *fiqh* (Islamic Law) in *Mekteb-i kudat, fiqh* methodology in the *Medresetü'l-Mütehasisisin* (School of Specialists) and the law of the *awqaf* (charitable foundations) in the *Mülkiye Mektebi* (school of civil service, later the faculty of political sciences). He was appointed as a member of the *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiyye*, which was established in the Office of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* and later as the head of the organization the *Darü'l-Hikmeti'l-Islamiyye*. He was then promoted to teach logic in the *Süleymaniye Medresesi*. When he was appointed as Minister of the Charitable Foundations (*Evkaf Nazırlığı*) in the first and second cabinet of Damat Ferit Paşa, he wrote his distinguished work *Irshad al-Ahlaḫ fi Ahkam al-Awqaf*, which was related to the rules of the foundations.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> See his articles in *Beyanülhak* and *Sebilürreşad* Journals.

<sup>17</sup> Yusuf Şevki Yavuz, “Elmalı Muhammed Hamdi (1878–1942)”, in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, İstanbul: Diyanet Vakfı, 1995, Vol. 11, p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> Küçük Hamdi, “İslamiyet ve Hilafet ve Meşihatı İslamiyye” (Islam and Khilafa and Islamic Authority of Shaikh al-Islam), *Beyanü'l Hak*, (1327) Vol. I, No. 22, p. 511.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 512.

<sup>20</sup> Yavuz, “Elmalı Muhammed...”, Vol. 11, p. 57.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem.

During and after the First World War, Yazır continued his ministry in Istanbul government.<sup>22</sup> When Ankara's government came to power and Istanbul collapsed (1922), Yazır was detained and brought to Ankara for trial, but after a forty-day imprisonment, he was released as he had previous link with İttihad and Terakki movement.<sup>23</sup> Yazır returned to Istanbul and focused on his studies. He finished the translation of the *Histoire de la Philosophie: Les Problèmes et Les Ecoles* by Paul Janet and Gabriel Stailles into Turkish under the title of *Metalib ve Mezahip* with very critical annotations and a long introduction.<sup>24</sup>

Yazır wrote on Islamic issues of his time in the journals *Beyanu'l-Hak*, *Sebilü'r-Reşad* and *Ceride-i İlmiye*. The scope of his articles is quite wide, ranging from core Islamic issues, like *Ulumu'l-İslamiye* (Islamic sciences) and *tevbe* (repentance) to political issues like the *Otuzbir Mart Vakası* (Uprising of March 31). He also contributed to the discussion of Islam and the claims of modernity that "Islam does not prevent progress, but rather ensures it".<sup>25</sup>

#### 4. Exegesis of the Qur'an in Turkish

In 1926, Yazır was offered the task of the new Turkish exegesis by the head of the Diyanet İşleri (Religious Affairs Department) according to a parliamentary decision. Yazır gives as a reason for this that the closing of the *madrasas* in 1924 and the lack of religious education in the program of the new Republic produced a gap in religious knowledge in society; it was thought that Islamic culture, at least at the level of basic knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah, the two main sources of Islam, should be taught to the people in Turkish.<sup>26</sup> This issue was discussed in the Parliament and it was eventually decided that the basic Islamic sources were to be translated into Turkish and that duty was put under the coordination of the Presidency of Religious Affairs.

The duty of translating the Qur'an was given to Mehmet Akif Ersoy, the poet who wrote the Turkish national anthem. Ersoy translated most of the Qur'an into Turkish in a poetic-style. However, towards the end of the translation, he seemed worried that as result of the government's Turkification of worship policy,<sup>27</sup> similar political powers might force his translation to be used

<sup>22</sup> At that time there were two governments, the Ottomans in Istanbul and the new Anatolian independent force led by Mustafa Kemal in Ankara.

<sup>23</sup> Yavuz, "Elmalılı Muhammed...", Vol. 11, p. 58.

<sup>24</sup> For further information, see: Süleyman Hayri Bolay, "Bir Filozof Müfessir" (A Philosopher Mufassir), in: *Türkiye Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır Sempozyumu*, Ankara: Diyanet Vakfı, 1993, p. 125–139 and Mustafa Bilgin, "Hak Dini Kur'an Dili" (The Religion of the Truth, The Language of the Qur'an), in: *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 1997, Vol. 15, p. 157.

<sup>25</sup> This is the title given for his article in *Sebilurreşad* "Müslümanlık Mani-i Terakki Değil, Damin-i Terakkidir" (Islam not the Preventer of Progress but the Provider of Progress). For the list of relevant articles by him in *Beyanu'l-Hak*, *Sebilü'r-Reşad* and *Ceride-i İlmiye*, see: Nesimi Yazıcı, "Muhammed Hamdi Yazırın Basın Hayatı ve Yazarlığı" (Muhammed Hamdi Yazır's Life and Writership), in: *Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır* published symposium papers Ankara, 1993, p. 31–32.

<sup>26</sup> Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, İstanbul: Eser Nesriyat, 1971, Vol. 1, p. 8.

<sup>27</sup> See: İsmail Kara, *Türkiye'de İslamcılık Düşüncesi* (The Islamist Thought in Turkey), İstanbul: Kitabevi, 1997, p. 312.

instead of the original Arabic in daily worship.<sup>28</sup> This seemed to stand in the way of the translation by Ersoy, who was known for his relatively traditionalist attitudes. Ersoy was unable to overcome the problem of justifying such religious activities at the order of the secular state, and he cut short his work when it was nearly finished in fear that his translation would be substituted for the original Arabic Qur'an. Ersoy moved to Egypt, abandoning the task. The translation never came to the public. Alongside the Turkish interpretation of the Qur'an, now Yazır took over the translation of the Qur'an into Turkish too.

Yazır began to work on translation and exegesis, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili* (The Religion of the Truth, The Language of the Qur'an) in 1926. The first volume of the exegesis was published in 1935 and the whole translation was finished in 1938. The subsequent volumes were being published in chapters. The work was republished in 1960 and 1972. The language of the work is old Ottoman Turkish. As the original is written in the Ottoman Turkish, in later publications the work was rewritten in modern Turkish.

According to the agreement between Yazır and the Department of Religious Affairs, Yazır was supposed to interpret the Qur'an in the light of the following rules:

1. The intra-textual relationship between the verses should be highlighted
2. The occasion of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*) should be referred to in relevant places
3. The ten official types of reading (*Qiraat al-ashara*) should be applied
4. The meaning of the words should be explained
5. The interpretation should be in accordance with *Ahl-Sunnah* and the practical rules of Hanafi School
6. The polemical ideas of non-Muslims against Islam should be clearly refuted
7. It should involve an introduction that indicated the reality of the Revelation and the Qur'an.<sup>29</sup>

The exegesis consists of nine volumes under the title *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili: Yeni Mealli Türkçe Tefsir* (The Religion of the Truth, The Language of the Qur'an: Turkish Exegesis with New Translation). Indeed this title indicates Yazır's concerns, and the concerns of that time, in such a way that the words "True Religion" form a kind of response to Turkish secularist attacks on Islam and the words "Qur'anic language" are another response to Turkification attempts to the Qur'anic language in religious life. The issue of the language of the Qur'an was very controversial at that time. Yazır was opposed to the translation of the Qur'an. He explains his opinion in the introduction as follows:

O, Stupid! Can there be a Turkish Qur'an? The Qur'an is Arabic. It is canonically declared that "we sent this book in Arabic so that you might encompass with your reason" (The Qur'an, Sura Yusuf, 12/2). Think about the fact that it is not possible to call the sayings of the Prophet the Qur'an; if you do, this is heresy. A translation, even the best one, can only express what the translator understands, not the real meaning. And the expressions are not the same as the Qur'an.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>28</sup> For further discussion on the language of daily prayer in Turkey see: H. Aydar and N. Gökkır, "Discussion on the Language of Prayer in Turkey: A Modern Version of the Classical Debate", *Journal of Turkish Studies*, Vol. 8, p. 121–136.

<sup>29</sup> For further information, see: Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 1, p. 19–20.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



## 5. Political reasons behind the exegesis project

It might be seen that the exegesis was a product of governmental initiation, as it was supported and funded by the Parliament. As secularism is a doctrine that makes a strict separation between religion and politics and advocates a restricted role for religion in society, one may find it problematic how religious and secular policies came together at the same time. Further, secularism is known by most of the scholars with its control-oriented character. In his discussion of Turkey's secular politics, Simon Bromley highlights that the secularism of the state amounted to rigid state control over religious life and a strict *laicism* in public affairs rather than the institutional separation of mosque and state.<sup>31</sup> One might think that Yazır manipulates this mechanism in his *tafsir* by contextualizing the issues in favor of traditional Islamic understanding. However, one should know that secularism was introduced into the Turkish constitution in 1937. In this regard, Hikmet Bayur, the Minister of Education who was the sponsor of the *tafsir*, complains:

I have been thinking since my childhood that to pray without understanding is not right. That is why I could not memorize the long chapters of the Qur'an in Arabic. When I asked lecturers of religion: "what is the meaning of these? Why not memorize them in Turkish?" they replied: "Be Quiet! You will be an unbeliever. It is better to know the Word of God as it is, you cannot understand the meaning anyway." I always received such stern answers. But, when I grew up, I learned that in the School of Abu Hanifah, to pray and recite the Qur'an is permissible in a language other than Arabic. But although we, Ottoman Turks, are all from this sect, our religious scholars do not want us to do it. I was really disappointed. 20 years later, in 1933, I became the Minister of Education. On the request of the Republican government, Muhammad Hamdi, the Minister of Charitable Foundations in the Ottoman Era, completed the *tafsir* and delivered it to the Minister of Education to be published. Meanwhile, İhsan Sungu, head of the Department of Education and Training, showed me the introduction and asked: "Can we published as like?" It starts as follows: "Hasha (I seek refuge in Allah), Turkish Qur'an" I said: "Although we are only the publishers, we cannot publish it. One of the objectives of Atatürk's revolution was to cut out this kind of phrase, *Hasha*, and to demolish such understandings which prevent development in the way of modernization together with the contemporary world..."

I left the ministry and learned that the *tafsir* was published without the phrase '*Hasha*'. But a couple of years later when I looked at it I saw that there were additions that were even more offensive. One of them was the sentence: "O Stupid! Can there be a Turkish Qur'an?" Elmalili [Yazır] seemed to have ignored our objections about the offensive point of the phrase "*Hasha*, Turkish Qur'an" and acted with a fanaticism that bankrupted the Ottoman State.<sup>32</sup>

It seems a failure for secular policies that aimed Turkification of religion. Because, despite all these objections by some secularists, Yazır's *tafsir* has been the only work available for the Turkish reader. Therefore, it has been appreciated both by religious and

<sup>31</sup> Simon Bromley, *Rethinking Middle East Politics*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, p. 125–126.

<sup>32</sup> Hikmet Bayur, "İbadet Dili" (Language of the Worship), in: *Necati Lugal Armağanı*, Ankara: TTK Basımevi, 1968, p. 151–153.

secular circles. It is appreciated in religious circles because of the content that is dependent on traditional Islam. On the other hand, it is appreciated in secular circles not for its content, but rather as the product of modern times and the product of a secular state.

## 6. Academic values of the exegesis

Because of these factors, the work is sometimes compared with classical works, particularly with Razi's commentary, in terms of the philosophical debates and the multi-disciplinary approaches both pursue.<sup>33</sup> Yazır's strength on the philosophical side is undeniable and there is a resemblance between the two in terms of multidisciplinary approaches to some extent. However, comparing Yazır with Razi in this matter seems to be overstating the case. First of all, such a comparison is made on the basis of their philosophical aspects and the difference in period can work in favor of Yazır. Secondly, Razi was certainly speaking about the philosophical and sectarian thoughts of his time in more detail than Yazır did. Thirdly, Razi is quite even in his interpretation of the *suras* in contrast to Yazır, who neglected the *suras* in the middle of the Qur'an. Yazır does not give equal attention to every part of the Qur'an throughout the work. The first three *suras* namely, Fatiha, Baqara and Al-i Imran, are studied in detail. The last parts of the Qur'an seem to have been given similar attention too. The *suras* in the middle of the Qur'an, however, seem to have been neglected and sometimes the reader can even get the impression that Yazır did not go beyond a simple translation of these verses.<sup>34</sup> Sura Maryam, for example, is examined in just sixteen pages, whereas the first verse of Sura Ikhlas is interpreted in thirty-two pages. Similarly, Yazır gives details about the Christian views of the nature of Jesus and the Trinity when he interprets Sura Maidah (verse 17); however he ignores this in interpreting verses 16-40 of Sura Maryam. Yazır sometimes goes lengthy discussions in his *tafsir*. These lengthy discussions seem to be separate articles that he has inserted into the relevant context.<sup>35</sup>

Yazır's main exegetical sources, which he frequently refers to, are Tabari's *Jami' al-Bayan*, al-Maturidi's *al-Ta'wilat al-Qur'an*, Zamakhshari's *al-Kashshaf*, Razi's *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, Jassas' *Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Abu Hayyan's *al-Bahr al-Muhit*, Baydawi's *Anwar al-Tanzil*, Abu's-Suud's *Irshad al-'Aql al-Salim* and Alusi's *Ruh al-Maani*.<sup>36</sup> Yazır, like any other classical exegete, sees four main sources for Qur'anic interpretation: the Qur'an, prophetic tradition, narrated words and views of companions (*sahabah*) and the following generation regarding the interpretation of a given verse and finally, to put it in his own words, "after all these three principles have been perceived, the interpretation that one can make with a knowledge of Arabic and Shariah within the limits of scientific reason (*ma'qulat-ı ilmiye*)".<sup>37</sup>

Yazır's devotion to traditional approaches attracted similar criticisms that are made against classical exegesis as his attitude to the Qur'an is partial not holistic, giving too

<sup>33</sup> See: Halis Albayrak, "Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır'ın Tefsir Anlayışı" (Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır's Exegetical Perception), in: *Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır* published symposium papers, Ankara, 1993, p. 161.

<sup>34</sup> Bilgin, "Hak Dini Kur'an Dili...", Vol. 15, p. 157 and p. 162.

<sup>35</sup> See for example: Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 2, p. 914-929.

<sup>36</sup> Bilgin, "Hak Dini Kur'an Dili...", Vol. 15, p. 154.

<sup>37</sup> See: Introduction of his *tafsir*, p. 29-30; see also: H. Albayrak, "Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi...", p. 152-168.

much attention to the text of the Qur'an, and not being selective or cautious about the hadiths narrated or the other narrations from *sahabah* or the following generations.<sup>38</sup>

On the other hand, his interest in the problems of the modern time availed him to some extent, to differ from the classical works and bring the ethical, moral, social, philosophical and even the legal problems of his time to his *tafsir*. This, in fact, brings him into a confrontation with the West and Western values. When Yazır interprets Sura Baqara, verse 274, he criticizes the Western economical system for being a consumer economy.<sup>39</sup> His criticism goes beyond the practical issues, reaching down to the philosophical dimensions of Western ideology. Yazır not only indicates the contradictions of a given Western value but also points out the contradictions and problems inherent in Western thought itself. Here in Yazır, we definitely come across a Muslim scholar who is acquainted with Western thought.<sup>40</sup>

Yazır also tackled sectarian and ideological issues and treated the philosophical, ideological and sectarian movements to discussions from a Qur'anic perspective.<sup>41</sup> He distinguishes *wahdat al-wujud* (unity of being) from pantheism when he interprets Sura Baqara, verse 165. However, he finds *wahdat al-wujud* almost equally opposed to the Islamic teaching of *tawhid* (monotheism).<sup>42</sup> In *fiqh* (canonical law) -related issues, being loyal to the Hanafi School of *fiqh*; he shows an inclination towards the Hanafi School not only because of the agreement he made for his *tafsir* with the department of religious affairs, but also because it is in keeping with his personal choices. However, theologically he does not strictly adhere to the Maturidi school of thought, as he refers almost equally to the Maturidi and Ash'ari schools. Therefore, one can conclude from this attitude that not only his politically Ottoman nationality but also his religiously Sunni-Hanafi nature played a role in his accusation<sup>43</sup> of the Saudi-Wahhabi movement being too extreme in their thought and practice.

As his methodology, before starting an interpretation of any given *sura* Yazır provides the following information about the *sura* for the reader: The name or names of the *sura*, *asbab al-nuzul* (the occasion of the revelation), the number of verses, the number of words, the number of letters, the *fasilas* (rhymes), and whether the *sura* was revealed in Mecca or Medina. When he starts his commentary, Yazır introduces the relevant verses in the original Arabic first and then gives the Turkish translation of the verses. The translation is Yazır's own translation and it is a literal translation. We understand from the discussions of the time about Turkish translations of the Qur'an that Yazır deliberately did this type of "literal translations" to prevent his translation being used in prayers and rituals in the mosques, as he and some of his contemporaries believed that this was apparently on the agenda of the current regime.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 170–172.

<sup>39</sup> Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 2, p. 949.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 196–197.

<sup>41</sup> Albayrak, "Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi...", p. 158–161.

<sup>42</sup> Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 1, p. 576–577.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 577–578.

<sup>44</sup> İsmet Ersöz, "Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır ve Tefsirinin Özellikleri" (Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır and the Characteristics of His Exegesis), in: *Elmalılı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır*, published symposium papers, Ankara, 1993, p. 169–177.

For Yazır, there is no doubt that Qur'anic narratives are historical facts. These stories are mentioned in the Qur'an to enable the audiences to distinguish the distorted Biblical versions from the authentic versions found in the Qur'an. Although he is quite aware and careful about *Isra'iliyyat*<sup>45</sup> he does not refrain from using the *Isra'iliyyat* narratives in his exegesis.<sup>46</sup>

The theory of abrogation (*naskh*) finds its interpretation in Yazır's exegesis slightly in a different perspective. For him, abrogation definitely exists in the Qur'anic text and abrogation itself demonstrates the progressiveness of Islamic law. He argues that only God can abrogate and the theory of abrogation exists to explain some internal contradictions in the Qur'an. Further, there are only three categories of *naskh*: abrogation of the verse and ruling, abrogation of the verse without ruling and finally abrogation of the ruling without a verse.<sup>47</sup>

Yazır's approach to modern values and modernity seems to be not only moderate but also self-aware of the Muslim legacy. First of all, for Yazır, Muslims can only develop in modern times by respecting their own tradition. In order to achieve progress, one should, in his own words, "bring the richness of the past and the richness of the present together".<sup>48</sup> In Yazır's work, therefore, *ijtihad* and *tajdid* are two significant concepts. He distinguishes *tajdid* (renovation) from *bid'ah* (innovation).<sup>49</sup> Observing the well-known *Majalla* article, "there is no place for personal opinion in the existence of *nass*", Yazır is not apologetic about the gender inequality such as male polygamy,<sup>50</sup> or males inheriting twice the amount of females<sup>51</sup> or the stipulation that the testimony of two women is equal to that of one male.<sup>52</sup>

Yazır displayed also a moderate attitude towards scientific interpretation. When trying to solve the contradictions between scientific explanation and the message of the Qur'an, the exegetes should reconsider scientific explanations, as the Qur'an is not a work of science.<sup>53</sup> Yazır was critical of scholars who denied the miracles in the Qur'an, rather attempting to explain them in a scientific way. In Yazır's understanding, people cannot see or experience every possibility and therefore, there is no point in denying something that we are unable to understand with our limited capacity of observation.<sup>54</sup>

## 7. Conclusion

As a conclusion, in this study, it has been argued that the Turkish literature of exegesis has been persistently affected and influenced by political context of Turkey while being culturally interwoven with contemporary political debates, particularly, during the establishment of the Republic (post-1923). Debates intensified most prominently around the issues of liturgy, the state and the constitution focusing our attention on how these were accommodated and discussed by a Turkish exegete. This is because the Qur'an, the

<sup>45</sup> See: Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 6, p. 3954.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 2211.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Vol. 3, p. 1747–1748; c.f. İsmail Albayrak, "Turkish Exegesis...", p. 402–403.

<sup>48</sup> Yazır, "Dibace", in: *Elmalılı M. Hamdi Yazır Makaleler I* (Elmalılı M. Hamdi Yazır Essays I), C. Köksal and M. Kaya (eds.), Istanbul: Kitabevi, 1998, p. 247.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p. 263–266.

<sup>50</sup> Yazır, *Hak Dini...*, Vol. 2, p. 1284–1287.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 1302–1305.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 982–983.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., Vol. 5, p. 3355 and also Vol. 2, p. 1121–1124.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., Vol. 9, p. 6123–6130; see also: İ. Albayrak, "Turkish Exegesis...", p. 408.

main source of Islam, constantly provokes a new reflection on thought and practice in every society. Turkish intellectuals produced fresh understandings by re-contextualizing the Qur'an in their own context. In other words, they assessed their own world and created their own identity in their works. This is, of course, inevitable, because every context presents problems, questions, and dilemmas of its own, which demand timely, suitable, and practical answers.

This article, thus, has underlined how the *mufasssir* (exegete/interpreter of the Qur'an) and his *tafsir* (exegesis/interpretation,) are linked to, or generated by, various discourses and debates within a particular context. Thus, it is crucial to refer to the context and the needs of the contemporary society when analyzing the text. That is to say, the political and intellectual background of the author sometimes directs their writings. All this provides a different perspective and different concerns from previous exegeses. This is exactly what Hans-Georg Gadamer says about interpretation, that is, "to understand a text always means to apply it to ourselves and to know that, even if it must be understood in different ways, it is still the same text presenting itself to us in different ways".<sup>55</sup> This idea fits Turkish exegetical works very well.

Dealing with the exegesis by Yazır in particular, the Turkish secular political power seemed to be very concerned with the religious affairs with its hidden agenda in its very early time of the republic. The book was initially, planned to be published for the sake of political and secular agenda by secular and westernized politics. The aim of the politics was to cut off the relations between the public and original Islamic culture and heritage which is in Arabic by promoting secular policy of Turkification of religion. Yazır, however, in his exegesis insisted on his traditional understanding of Islam ignoring secular political intentions whatsoever.

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<sup>55</sup> Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1979, p. 359.



AGNIESZKA AYŞEN KAIM

## *Sema* Ceremony – between Ritual and Performance



### Abstract

The *Sema* ceremony is a ritualistic dance which evolved from and was inspired by the philosophical ideas of Mowlana and was developed by his son Soltan Valad, becoming a part of Turkish custom. This sacred dance, not approved by early orthodox Islam, represents elements of shamanistic dances from Central Asia and those of ecstatic dance practices of ancient Asia Minor. Movement and dance enables a person to enter the sphere of sacrum and has been a way to attain a unity with God by combining body, mind and emotion. It reflects the structure of the universe and the circle of energy. As a rite, it preserves its symbolic structure, sacred costume and space, it belongs to a certain community. As an artistic expression *sema* (Pers. *sama* ' ) involves dance, music and poetry, it has its particular costume, rhythm, choreography and professional performers. Contemporary show culture converts rituals into entertainment and results in a de-sacralisation of the rite.

Mowlana was walking in the goldsmithing section of Konya when he heard hammering that sounded like beautiful music. The rhythm of the pounding hammer exerted such an overwhelming influence on him that he began to whirl in harmony with the rhythm. The goldsmith apprentices hammered until they were ready to drop. *Dance (only) where you break (mortify) yourself and (when you) tear away the cotton from the sore of lust./ (Holy) men dance and wheel on the (spiritual) battle-field: they dance in their own blood./ When they are freed from the hand (dominion) of self, they clap a hand; when they escape from their own imperfection, they make a dance.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *The Mathnawi of Jalalu'ddin Rumi*, edited from the oldest manuscripts available with critical notes, translation and commentary, Reynold A. Nicholson, New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2003, Vol. 3, p. 95–98.

This is how the legend describes the beginning of the *Sema* ceremony, a ritualistic dance of the Mevlevi order which evolved from, and was inspired by the philosophical ideas of Mowlana and was developed by his son and poet, Soltan Valad (Tur. Sultan Veleđi Çelebi).

Mowlana Jalaloddin Rumi (Tur. Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, 1207–1273) was born on the far eastern edge of the Persian Empire in Balkh (present-day Afghanistan). His father, renowned scholar and mystic, Baha'oddin Valad, had to flee from Balkh with his family and after ten years of wandering settled in Konya in the province of Rum (ancient Iconium, present-day Turkey) when Jalaloddin was 22 years old. The Seljuk capital with its cosmopolitan population with Christians, Jews, Greeks and Armenians afforded him the atmosphere to evolve and express Mowlana's new unorthodox ideas and independent spirit. His profound philosophy introduced the new dimensions of Islamic mysticism. He achieved the distinction as a young theologian and Sufi master. The spiritual heights he attained in his teachings are reflected in his written works. Among the main works of Mowlana are the exposition of his teachings *Masnawi*, the collections of poems *Divan-i Shams-i Tabrizi* written in Farsi in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, but using some Greek and Turkish words and phrases scattered throughout the texts. Rumi's poetry with the distinctive marks of Sufi symbolism and poetic allegory, especially his *Masnawi* makes a synthesis of mystic ideas taken over from Neo-platonism, Christianity, Indian, Persian, Greek mythology, stories from Holy Books, Arab and Persian legends and folk stories.<sup>2</sup>

This mystic and poet constantly expanded the main themes of his works such as spiritual exile, sorrowful separation from God and the Beloved and the yearn to return for the Beloved. This search has three stages: purification, enlightenment, and union. Thus the ideas of humanity, spiritual purity, love and tolerance worldwide recalled with Mowlana's faith marks are only the effects that emerges beside this main Sufi path.

Apart from the teachings and written heritage left after Mowlana, his philosophy engendered the Mevlevi movement which is known in Europe as "The Whirling Dervishes". One of its religious practices is *sema* (Pers. *sama*). In Sufism *sama* means "listening to music", singing and chanting to attain the state of religious ecstasy (Arab. *wajd*, Tur. *vecd*). In other words whirling dance is an outcome of ecstasy evoked by the *sema*. However in time of Mowlana ritual *sema* was done at any time or any place, even without music.<sup>3</sup> The present ritual in its structuralised form came into being in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars have made their assessments on the basis of observations made within the last hundred years.<sup>4</sup> Nowadays this mystic rite's artistic expression involves several branches of art such as dance, instrumental and vocal music and poetry. The *Sema* ceremony, regarded as innovative in its early stage, gradually evolved into perfection. The whirling has the attributes of

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<sup>2</sup> Sufism with its intensive contact with other belief systems throughout its emergence and development all over the Islamic world is influenced by many external factors such as Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Shamanism, and Animism.

<sup>3</sup> Talat Sait Halman and Metin And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi and the Whirling Dervishes*, İstanbul: Dost Yayınları, 2005, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup> İlker Evrim Binbaş, "Music and Samā' of the Mavlaviyya in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: Origins, Ritual and Formation", in: *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and the Middle East*, Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson and Elisabeth Özdalga (eds.), Richmond: Curzon, 1999, p. 67.



dance and ceremony which has surpassed its rite structure and has become an advanced form of dance performance.

But, this is nothing exceptional, because the movement and dance have always been associated with rite, enabling a human being to enter a sacrum sphere and communicate with the gods. Dance is said to be a vehicle of emotional experience. For the Mevlevi order the *sema* is one of the techniques of meditation. *Sema* can be described as *a prayer of feet*, meditation of feet, or, in other words, a meditation in movement, worship through dance and music.

This sacred dance represents a line of evolution following several patterns of culture, those of Shamanistic dances dating back to the period when Turkish tribes were present in Central Asia and those of ecstatic dances derived from various dance practices of Asia Minor (Bacchae). One hypothesis claims that the raising of hands in the *Sema* ceremony comes from ancient Greek mystery plays, the Dionysian ritual (which used to be practised in Central Anatolia), through the ecstatic movements of hands and whirling/spinning movements, is very typical as the religious *gestus* for various cultures and can be also influenced by Shamanism. Nevertheless, while a dithyrambic ritual essentially has indignity, even obscenity, no whirling dervish ever touches another. Although the dance ritual itself is communal the dervish is in a world unto himself purifying his soul, having communion with God. Dionysus recalls the cult of wine, whereas the Sufis' ecstasy requires no wine in reality, only on the symbolic level, nor even music to be induced.<sup>5</sup>

The idea of *tariqa* (Arabic term for a path) and journey towards the Beloved has been easily adopted from the foreign rooted Sufi philosophy and Koranic tradition and later developed by the nomadic Turkish tribes, being on the move all the time.<sup>6</sup> Islam through Sufism referring to the 'old Turkish beliefs' was easier to be accepted.<sup>7</sup> Early orthodox Islam regarded the religious dance practices cultivated among the people as an intoxicating activity and an obstacle to the new religion. Although early Islam had an essentially negative attitude towards music and entertainment, elements of pre-Islamic and non-Islamic ritual chant and dance were incorporated into a variety of Islamic practices.

As a part of this movement, Jalaloddin Rumi freed his order from the ban of music and dance. Eventually *sema* became a part of Turkish custom and cultural activity.

The circle (Tur. *devr*, Arab. *dayere*) dance movement for praying and ritual purposes were used by the other sects as for instance Rifa'i, Bayrami, Gülşeni, Uşşaki, or the orders of Central Asian origin as Halveti, Naqshbandi. Actually the term "dancing" is not applicable to these practices. Perhaps it is not a dance, not even a foot-play or bodily indulgence but the dissolution of the soul, the state of the soul is impossible to explain by words and to be put into a specific definition.

An attempt to describe the role of "dance" in religious practices can be supported by many examples of dance in various cultures. In Indian culture, gods dance by themselves. King

<sup>5</sup> Halman and And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi...*, p. 31.

<sup>6</sup> Talat Sait Halman, "Kaç/ Göç: Göçebe kültürü ve Türk kültürü" (Flee/ Migrate: Nomadic culture and Turkish culture), in: *Türk(îye) Kültürleri* (Turk(ish) Cultures), Gönül Pultar and Tahire Erman (eds.), Ankara: Kültür Araştırmaları Derneği, 2005, p. 67–76.

<sup>7</sup> However, at the same time the Turkish Sufi orders in their convents (*tekke*) offered the practices of orthodox Islam as well, such as pious retreat, meditation, contemplation, prayers and fasting to the initiates (*mürîd*).

David dances before the Arc of the Covenant. According to the apocryphic text of early Christian literature from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C. *Acta Joannis*, even Jesus Christ danced. This text draws a controversial picture of the Last Supper where Jesus sings the hymn with his disciples. Actually that hymn was not only sung but also danced in a mystical procession with twelve disciples holding hands dancing in a circle, Jesus in the middle, singing, while the others kept repeating the refrain *Amen (I'm the word in a Word where all creation danced)*.<sup>8</sup>

According to some cosmogony theories, the act of creation involves whirling and dance. The whirling of the Mevlevi dervish resembles the spinning movement of the microcosmos and macrocosmos, simply that of the universe. According to Mevlevi teachings, all the condignations of the universe are moved by divine love so that a human being is regarded as a reflection of God who is urged (begs) to become one with his Beloved and has to whirl with the same power. This mystical journey brings man's spirit through mind and love to perfection. The idea of turning comes from the Quran. *Onto God belongs to the East and the West, and wherever you turn, there is God's countenance* (sura Bakara 2, verse 115).<sup>9</sup>

On the technical level, the whirling movement is a matter of balance, balance being a matter of centering the body. Finding the right center is a very important aspect of any performer's act, the Turn technique based on a specific form of concentration. *Sema* beginners look at the thumb of their left hand and after gaining some fluency, retain focus, reciting *dhikr* (kind of litany) in every single turn (Pers. *charkh*, Tur. *çarh*).

The dervish who rejects his ego (Tur. *nefs*, Arab. *nafs*) and makes his spiritual journey to reach maturity and unity with God does not belong to himself anymore.

*I thump my feet on the floor/ I dance my soul; I whirl my world,/ Clap your hands, my soul; clap your hands, my world,/ Please do – for the sake of this man in ecstasy.*<sup>10</sup>

A shaman's journey can be in flight or can descend while the dervish's is an ascent. The recalling of a shaman here is not a coincidence, the term *sema* has another meaning of "blue firmament" while at the same time, the sky function can be perceived in a similar light. It can emphasise the shaman's trance to the upper world and the dervish's soaring to ecstasy.

The complexity of terminology brings a chain of different experiences. In the idea of one *who is possessed (a holy fool)*, a trance and ecstasy emerges in the rites of several cultures and always has its religious function. In the Dionysian rituals with the roots in Anatolia, the maenads involved in his mysteries were possessed and empowered by the god himself, their ecstatic dance freed them from self-consciousness. However, the spiritual experience in the *Sema* ceremony is not a trance but ecstasy, not an unbroken ecstasy nor a loss of conscious thought. According to Annemarie Schimmel's suggestion the Sufi ecstasy should more appropriately be called an "in-stasy" as the Sufi stays in himself, sunk in the "sea of the soul".<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Transl. by Robert Reszke, not published, after Leszek Kolankiewicz, *Samba z bogami. Opowieść antropologiczna* (The Samba of Gods. The Anthropological Story), Warszawa: Wyd. KR, 1995, p. 72–75.

<sup>9</sup> Abdülbaki Gölpınarlı, *Mevlanadan sonra Mevlevilik* (The Mevlana Order after Mevlana), İstanbul: İnkılâp Kitabevi, 1953, p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Halman and And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi...*, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystische Dimensionen des Islam. Die Geschichte des Sufismus* (Mystical Dimensions of Islam. The History of Sufism), München: Diederichs Vlg., 1995, p. 253, after Bahodir Sidikov, "Sufism and Shamanism", in: *Shamanism, An Encyclopedia of World Beliefs, Practices, and Culture*, Mariko Namba Walter and Eva Jane Neumann Fridman (eds.), p. 241.

Even from such an authority as Mircea Eliade, these two terms are used synonymously – the precise distinction between ecstasy and trance given by Gilbert Rouget.<sup>12</sup> His approach finds in trance and ecstasy two poles of some sort of continuum of certain phenomena. At one end (ecstasy) there is solitude, motionlessness, silence, hallucination etc. and at the other (trance) there is social experience, movement, noise, lack of hallucination etc., .... According to Rouget's theory, trance has been a psycho-physiological disposition of human nature and the variability of its symptoms depends on the diversity of cultures it is shaped in. When looking for the parallels between shaman's and semazen's ecstatic state of soul, the contents of ecstasy are different but the techniques can be described as similar.<sup>13</sup> As a religious practice of the Sufi order, *sema* has been a way to attain a unity with God (Allah) by combining three basic elements of human nature: body, mind and emotion. It reflects the structure of the universe and the circle of energy of which a human being is a part. As a rite, it preserves its symbolic structure, sacred costume and space and, most importantly, it belongs to a certain community. It is the latter that is the main actor in the rite. Somehow though, the Mevlevi *sema* ceremony surpassed its rite structure and became an advanced form of dance performance. Looking at the other *tarikats'* dance practices, we can see just the ecstatic movements form side to side and the recitation of *dhikr*.

As a performance, *sema* has its particular mise-en-scene, stage decoration consisting of costume, its rhythm, choreography, music with a life of its own and singing, as well as performers trained in the use of body, balance and energy. *Sema* has the universal features of every dance such as movement, the sequence of movements composed into the choreography and stage semiotics.

The dancers come into a sacred space, called *semahane* and sit in the places assigned for them. The sheikh enters the *semahane* with a slow walk, takes the position exactly opposite the main door. The semazens sit in a row according to their degrees in the hierarchy of order. The musicians are seated opposite to the main point in Muslim sacred space *mihrab* indicating the direction of Mecca. The *sema* instruments consists of a reed flute (*ney*); a small drum (*kudüm*) covered in camel or sheep skin and played with two sticks, a rebeck (*robab*), bow instrument (*ıklığ*), similar to the Persian fiddle *kamanचा*; a zither-like plucked instrument with 72 strings (*kanun*), a long-necked plucked lute (*tambur*), a pear-shaped lute (*ud*). The role of music in *Sema* ceremony has been very important. According to the cultivation of *musiki*, the traditional art music in Turkey and the Middle East, was in fact largely dependent on the Mevlevi *sema* practice.<sup>14</sup>

Looking at the *sema* with its fixed 'acts of drama' I will try to deliver the brief description of this ritualistic performance maintaining its sacral and profane elements.

The ritual starts with eulogy *Nat- ı Şerif* to the Prophet, followed by drum sounds and musical improvisation *taksim* with a *ney*, a kind of ornamental passage like *cadenza* in the various appropriate modes, ending with the mode chosen for the day. It serves to emotionally

<sup>12</sup> Gilbert Rouget, *La musique et la transe. Esquisse d'une théorie générale des relations de la musique et de la possession*, Paris: Gallimard, 1980; Kolankiewicz, *Samba z bogami...*, p. 105–106.

<sup>13</sup> Sidikov, "Sufism...", p. 238–242.

<sup>14</sup> Anders Hammarlund, "Sacral, Secular or Sacred? An Essay on Music and Aesthetic Emancipation", in: *Sufism, Music and Society in Turkey and the Middle East*, Anders Hammarlund, Tord Olsson and Elisabeth Özdalga (eds.), Richmond: Curzon, 1999, p. 37–46.

uplift the participants. Then, the dervishes stand up and with the sheikh leading three times, repeat a *Devri Veledi*<sup>15</sup> circular walk anti-clock wise, reciting the formula – the name of Allah *ismi Celal* – his name is *Jelal (Glory)*, accompanied by the *peşrev* (preludium) played by all musicians. The sheikh takes his place, called the *post*, and the dervishes take off their *hirkas* and take the dance position followed by whirling consisting of four salutes (*selam*) towards the *post*. The right hand's position is higher on the breast while the hands rest crossed at arm level, the fingers spread. *Selam* is a form of salutation wishing peace and greeting. Here, the music is improvised on a *ney*. At the end of the fourth part, the oral segment concludes with instrumental music followed by the musical vocal form called *yürük semai*.

Except the *semazenbaşı* (the head of semazens), the semazens lay aside their outer cloaks, dressed in white *tennures*. Semazens, with a senior *semazenbaşı* first, one by one approach the sheikh and kiss his hand who in turn bends down and kisses the head dress of every dervish. The *semazenbaşı* takes the place next to the sheikh and points out the place to dance for every semazen. If someone is a good dancer the *semazenbaşı* moves his right leg to the right, which means that dancer should take his place in the middle of "the stage". Otherwise, if he approaches a novice, he moves his leg in front of him and drives the dancer aside. Beginning his dance the semazen rolls up his sleeves, slowly opens his arms at breast level, the hands spread on two sides, right hand directed up, left hand turned down, the head softly falling on the right arm. The dance sequence repeats three times, every time it finishes by returning to the circular order. The head dancer walks among them and with a soft thump urges those whose whirling is not sufficiently fluent.

When the *sema* part starts for the fourth time the sheikh himself joins the circle of dancers taking the central position. He turns in place, slowly, with arms closed, *hirka* on, accompanied by *ney* improvisation. The sheikh whirls to the center point called *qutb* (Tur. *kutb*, Eng. *pole*), the place entitled for Mowlana and his followers by succession. The chief semazen does not admit anybody else to inner circle.

After this first act the semazens in a group of four support each other in order not to lose balance and fall. With a bow of the head they greet the sheikh and pass to the next step of the ceremony. The ritual finishes with the sheikh's return to his *post*. The next part consists of collective kneeling and kissing the earth with the prolonged the shortest name of God, *Huuu* (Him), a sound imitating divine creation. The last, sixth part, is a reading of the Quran and prayer. While one of the singers recites from the Quran, dervishes sit down. Following the recitation, the head of semazens stands up and starts to pray in front of sheikh *dua-gû duası*, prayer which is dedicated to Mowlana and holy saints. The whole *sema ayini* lasts from 45 minutes to one and a half hours.

Any artistic technique involved in the *sema* always has its symbolic connotation. The sacred space is divided into two symmetrical parts: the right half symbolizes the tangible, human world and the left, one of the unseen, divine world. Salutations evoked by shapes and movements of bodies symbolize the salutation of soul to soul.

According to Mevlevi teaching, the first part of the ceremony is a turn of the sky sphere which is possible to be assumed within human cognition, the second turn of the sun, the third that of the moon. The fourth doesn't have any reference in the universe, being only the work of a human.

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<sup>15</sup> *Devri Veledi* has been called after Sufi poet Sultan Veled, son of Rumi.

The central position of the sheikh is a metaphor of the sun and the planets in their own orbits, the turning figures all composing the universe. Its central localization can be compared to those in the Hasidic mystic dance tradition of a zaddik or to the role of coryphaeus in an ancient dramatic chorus. But there is no intermediaries in seeking ecstasy, each Sufi dancer is integral man.<sup>16</sup>

The sheikh's seat post here is coloured red to symbolize divine nature. The role of costume also has its mystic dimension with the dancer giving life to the costume. The dervish's black cloak called the *khirqa* (Tur. *hirka*) symbolizes his tomb, head-dress called the *sikke* his ego's tombstone, and his white skirt *tennure* his ego's shroud. The *tennure* also supports the body of the dancer in keeping balance during the whirling.

Each emotion, each gesture has a divine significance. The direction of keeping hands has the meaning of a vertical stream of energy transferred from God into people, with the right hand directed to the sky as a sign of readiness to receive God's beneficence, the left hand turned toward the Earth.

The turn's direction is from right to left, pivoting around the heart. The sudden turns are an attempt to see God in all directions. The left leg is static as a column, while the right is moves in a circle (*charkh* means "turn" in Persian).

Thumping the ground symbolizes tampling crass selfhood, crushing ego. While a jumping is a gesture of soaring towards the supreme world. *Kill you vile ego, for it is your own devil. then houris will appear within your breast. Once you have killed your vile ego, then for certain you can place your foot upon the roof of the seventh heaven!*<sup>17</sup>

Genuflection expresses an abandoning one's soul to God. Opening the arms to the sides is the aspiration to the spiritual excellence and union with God.

The *sema* as the rite an performance has its fixed structure divided into parts, regarded also as acts of a drama. The first part, *çarh* represents the period of 20 years of age, the spring of human life. The second part, *raqs* (Tur. *raks*, dance sequence), represents the period between 20 and 40 years of age. It is therefore dynamic, expressive and full of motion, symbolizing the summer of human life. The third part, *muallak* (the body drifted in the air), symbolizes time between 40 and 60 years of age, representing the autumn of human life. The last, *pertev* (the sudden turn), is after 60, symbolising winter. In this context, the main movement of whirling has a special meaning, where through its stages the dervish reaches spiritual maturity.

Even the number of performers has its mystical dimension, The number one that is like a coryphaeus, is 1 like God's unity. When the dervish holds his arms crosswise he also represents the number one and testifies to God's unity. The inner circle of four represents the four main elements. The inner circle with one soloist makes up 5, which means the 5 pillars of Islam. The outer circle plus the soloist makes 7, the seven circles of Heaven and 7 circles of Hell. The number of days of a traditional novelty is 1001. The number of dancers is 11.

The space has its symbolic dimension also. The right half of the *semahane*, "the stage" symbolizes the tangible and visible world while the left half is the invisible, angel's world.

<sup>16</sup> Halman and And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi...*, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup> William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Love: The Spiritual Teachings of Rumi*, Albany: State University of New York, 1983, p. 89, original Rumi, Divan 21323–24.

The flute *ney*, in Sufism is regarded as a divine breath that gives life to everything. It represents the trumpet called the *sur*, which will be used by the Archangel Israfil, on the Day of Judgment to wake the dead and help them to attain eternal life. According to this interpretation the role of the sheikh is in guiding Sufis' souls to the divine truth.<sup>18</sup>

As in every ritual, the *sema* has its fixed time, usually practiced with afternoon worship, sometimes in the evening. The special holiday time for celebration is the day of the death of Mowlana, the 17th of December, celebrated as a *Wedding Night* (Shab-i 'Arusi) when Mowlana reached full union with God.

The metaphysical dimension of a dance has been understood also by some famous professional stage dancers. One of the most important names in world dance history, Isadora Duncan, also regarded dance in general as "a revelation of the energy of the world through the medium of the human body", and dancers for her are those who "...transfer the energy of planets onto the audience".<sup>19</sup> The dancer here stressed the role of the audience in a circulation of energy.

This aspect is particularly significant in relation to performance. Whereas the theatre performer transforms his energy into communication with the audience, the *sema* dancer transforms it to build communication with Allah, to reach real unity. The performance audience may respond or not respond by attending. Staying away from ritual means rejecting the congregation or being rejected, though the performative function may dominate. This happens nowadays when the influence of contemporary show culture converts rituals into entertainment and is why even the role of the audience has also shifted from participants in a rite to those who attend a performance. Let me quote from Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* on a audience's attitude toward *sema* as a ritual show, which took place in the Brooklyn Academy of Music. There the announcement had a special note: 'The program is a religious ceremony, you are kindly requested to refrain from applause'.<sup>20</sup> This was to signal the rarity of what the audience was about to see. However, the approach of the audience doesn't change the essence of this ritual. This inner transformation belongs only to the performer and constitutes his private experience. While in a shaman's *kamlanye*, the performer is responding to the social request, even order, and his task takes the form of a social service. Everything fits into the dynamics of ritual, which according to Levi Strauss, involves asymmetry which is postulated between the profane and the sacred.

Another important element of every rite is repetition, the oral and movement. This formula becomes the sacred pattern, where exact repetition as it has been passed on through the ages, should be somehow protected. In the structure of the *Sema* ceremony any pause – a rest has also its important role. This is a kind of resting while the body stays active in a static way, where the rest is still a part of the rite. It is important to underline that silence and pause, like four *selam* in *sema*, is also an element of dance, requiring the presence of the performer in the cumulation of energy.

Technical information about the *sema* can be collected according to the experience of the practicing dervishes. Practicing semazens often admitt that the hardest part is to

<sup>18</sup> Halman and And, *Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi...*, p. 100–101.

<sup>19</sup> Włodzimierz Tomaszewski, *Człowiek tańczący* (Dancing Man), Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Szkolne i Pedagogiczne, 1991, p. 76–77.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 150–151.

overcome the feeling of nausea from spinning. This involves learning to control your body, through special breathing techniques.

This means that the *semazen* craft requires training, learning a specific language of body and mind where it has two levels: technique and philosophy. Each dervish and novice is trained not only in religion but also in playing an instrument and singing, some in whirling. The shaman is an *ozan* (bard) and the dancer – actor and uses a transformation of characters to perform. The dervish is a someone who enters along a journey regarded as a kind of abnegation of ego that enables him to develop his self according to Sufi stages.

On the other hand, the stage performer has to develop the character within its physical and psychological possibilities, while the dancer learns the sequence of steps. Practising semazen Bülent Sefermendi says that he started his training with two teachers and trained for six months at a special school, just learning this dance. Others, like Hamsi Kırgız needed only one and a half months to learn the *semazenlik* and began this practice thanks to his ethno-musicological interests, having studied Mevlevi culture and dance. They say “You can only perform it if you really understand the philosophy behind it”.<sup>21</sup> After a performance the stage dancer deserves a rest, drink and food, while semazen meditate in silence (*tefekkiür* – meditation) in their cells.

The dervish training technique has attracted several experimentalists from around the world in the use of the body and search for the pure dance movements in performance arts. The dance researcher, mystic and occultist Giorgios Gurdjieff<sup>22</sup> visited Constantinople in 1885, where he studied Sufism, attending the teachings of the Mevlevi and Bektashi orders. In the early 12<sup>th</sup> century he created 39 movements<sup>23</sup> that are called after him Gurdjieff movements, based on Sufi training techniques, taught to his students as part of the work of *self observation* and *self study*. The pause frequently described as a “stop exercise” is traditionally used in this canon type movement in which the hands describe a huge semi-circle from right to left. From time to time, the instructor calls out “Stop!” and the dancers are required to freeze in the exact position they were in. With the command “Continue!” or “March!”, they resume the movement where they left off. The main purpose of this exercise is to enable the body to quit its old habits and automatic movements, thereby gaining a new feeling for the world.<sup>24</sup> It is also an essential study for finding a “moving center” that is in charge of one’s learned movements. Explaining it in the Sufi way, the mystic self (mystic consciousness, soul) is surrendered to suspension and intelligence is cleared of any content. In this state the soul reaches the ability to rise toward God.

The other famous theatre reformer who used Eastern methods of trance in his training was Jerzy Grotowski, a Polish director and theoretician of theatre. In a brief conversation, his friends prof. Osinski and Kolankiewicz shared with me some undocumented information on Grotowski’s ideas connected to the *sema* practice. It transpires that the latter was

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in: D. Jones, “Turkey: Discovering Spirituality with the Whirling Dervishes”, *Deutsche Welle*, September 2007, <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,2798133,00.html> (accessed 06.09.2012).

<sup>22</sup> Giorgios Gurdjieff (1866–1949) born in the Ottoman Empire in Gumri (Alexandropol), as a son of an Armenian mother, and half Greek and half Russian father.

<sup>23</sup> Those who have practiced the Movements often refer to them as a “sacred dance”, because of their extraordinary impact on their psychological state and expanding awareness.

<sup>24</sup> Omar M. Burke, *Among the Dervishes*, London: Octagon Press, 1973, p. 110.

profoundly interested in oriental ecstasy practices and incorporated some of them into his training. His idea of the Poor Theatre, Theatre Of Roots, Ritual Theatre, was simply approached by this revolutionist and was considered the only way to meet God. He was desperately looking for ritualistic unity<sup>25</sup> with the spectators who were moving in his performances towards the role of participants. According to Leszek Kolankiewicz's memories, Grotowski's plans never were carried out further than initial thoughts but he considered involving Polish Tatars living in the Eastern part of Poland in training work by using *sema* as the only way to bring them to understanding Sufism.

The other names associated with experiments in whirling are American theatre director and the visionary of modern theatre, Robert Wilson with his Performance Group and choreographer Laura Dean, dancer and experimental choreographer of modern dance, popular in the 1970's, who developed many types of dance based on spinning. His Company 'Byrd Hoffman School Of Byrds' used Mevlevi whirling movements in the performance *Ka Mountain* and Guardenia Terrace set in the middle of the ruins of Persepolis and the mountains near Shiraz in annual 6<sup>th</sup> Festival of Arts 1972. The performance lasted for seven days. Whirling dance elements emerged also in Wilson's works such as 12 hour-marathon *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin* (1973), *Letter for Queen Victoria* (1974 ) and *The \$ Value of Man* (1975), *Einstein on the Beach* (1976).

The phenomenon of staged rituals is followed by the idea of touring that results in a desacralisation of the rite. It could be a reflection of the other phenomenon – hybridisation of culture. On the other hand, the fusion of different faiths and philosophies (Christianity, Shamanism, Islam) may be the reason why the whirling dervishes continue to amaze and mesmerize so many people representing different cultures and religions. This kind of worship offers another perspective of Islam at a time when the idea of the clash of civilizations is always fashionable.

From the cultural anthropology point of view, this specific case – the *Sema* ceremony – is a ritual intended to be a performance where performers through dance reach a level of ecstasy. In these circumstances, the *sema* as a dance technique is not the aim but only the guide or vehicle to reach the aim, one of a metaphysical not, performative nature. On the emotional and religious level, the *sema* can be considered as the only way of fulfilling human longing after God, which is an eternal part of every human being.

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<sup>25</sup> Jerzy Grotowski, "Teatr a rytuał" (Theatre and Ritual), *Dialog*, No. 8, 1969, p. 65.



HAIFA ALANGARI

## British Policy Towards King Hussein of Hijaz after the Arab Revolt

“All Warfare is based on deception...”  
Sun Tzu

### Abstract

The post-war British territorial strategy which re-demarcated the new boundaries of the Middle East, the mandates, the post and major treaties, had contributed to the decay in the authority of King Hussein of Hijaz.

This study raises the question of the damage of the unclarity and duplicity of the British dialogue with Hussein on his long-term leadership in Hijaz. One could argue that, although Hussein did not have a clear vision about the nature of his leadership, Great Britain misled him in believing that he could be a pan-Arab leader. In fact, Great Britain came out of the Great War with an extended territory and a new map for the Middle East.

### Introduction

The aim of this study is to outline the decisions, the non-decisions and the omissions of the major post war treaties and to retrace their effect to the first instance, where King Hussein lost strategically important territory in the Middle East. The creation of the mandates of Syria, Palestine, Transjordan and Mesopotamia removed these areas from possible inclusion in Hussein's aspired Arab Confederacy. Thus, British Middle East policies during and after the Great War weakened the political bargaining power of Hussein, and precipitated the decay and finally the decline of Hussein's authority in Hijaz. Such decline was part of an extensive and confusing diplomatic political causality, which resulted from the war and was reinforced by major treaties and international conferences such as the Paris Peace Conference, the Treaty of Versailles, the San Remo Conference, the Cairo Conference and the Treaty of Sevres. All these diplomatic events and agreements undermined the political credibility of Sharif Hussein and accelerated the decline of his rule in Hijaz.

In the series of post-war conferences and treaties, the conditions which were negotiated by or between Britain and King Hussein differed substantially from the predictions made by McMahon to Hussein in their (well documented<sup>1</sup>) wartime correspondence. If the Hussein/McMahon Correspondence in 1915 could reasonably be interpreted to offer a Hashemite pan-Arab Kingdom, it is pertinent to analyze the process by which Britain

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<sup>1</sup> See Elie Kedourie, *In The Anglo-Arab Labyrinth*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

managed to achieve a reinterpretation of the seeming promises of these documents. An examination of the post-war diplomatic negotiations and treaties reveals the conflicting political pressures and forces upon Britain, which contributed to deny Hussein his controversial pan-Arab leadership.

One could argue that the fate of Middle Eastern boundaries was linked inherently to a new general post-war attitude, namely that the territories of destroyed empires were now to be the spoils of war, distributed according to the tried and tested diplomatic reflexes of empire. "The fact of war meant that the map of the world was open for redrawing... once the future had been rendered easily persuaded, then the precise share of the spoils claimed by Britain was dictated by a mixture of reflexes to old problems – the route to India, the defence of Egypt and the canal – and to all-important new one, oil".<sup>2</sup>

It is therefore clear that this study raises the questions of how Hussein came to be denied pan-Arab leadership in this period where Middle Eastern Territories were being formally internationalized. How did Great Britain go into the Great War in a wholly defensive spirit, and somehow emerged with a largely expanded Middle East empire whose subsequent dissolution thereafter was to be bitterly contested?

### **British Policy for Hijaz after the Arab Revolt**

While Hussein's contribution to British war-time strategy was crucial at the outbreak of the Great War, one major way in which Britain betrayed Hussein was through the shift of its political ideals which shaped its post-war foreign policy. In essence, Britain's diplomatic policy had reverted to what it was before the war: non-intervention in Arabia.

After World War I, the British aimed to maintain the divisions of power in the Arabian peninsula, with Hussein controlling Hijaz, Ibn Saud dominating Nejd and keeping Ibn Rashid as third and balancing power. This would maintain the "equilibrium of Arabia".<sup>3</sup> However there were two events which radically altered plans conceived during the latter part of the war. The first was the diplomatic bartering and power broking surrounding the Paris Peace Conference. Secondly, a major change in the machinery of British government dealing with the Middle East affected the channels of communication and reduced powers of both – the India Office and the Foreign Office. While Whitehall actions and policy remained fragmented and confused, rivalry over which leader to support was bound to continue. Moreover, the very terms of the Paris Peace Conference and the creation of the mandates of Syria, Palestine, Transjordan and Mesopotamia removed these areas from possible inclusion in a larger Arab confederacy. Sir Mark Sykes verbally (and secretly) urged Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1916, after one year's observation "the Government of India is incapable of handling the Arab question... the British officials in India are themselves influenced by [a] pro-Turkish atmosphere. The Arab movement, as such, is disliked in India", and more pertinently: "It is useless to ignore the jealousy which subsists between Simla and Cairo. This is an old long-standing feud... a cause of constant irritation".<sup>4</sup> Even at this point Sykes called for a single unified control of

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<sup>2</sup> Max Beloff, *Britain's Liberal Empire*, London: Macmillan, 1987 p. 182.

<sup>3</sup> John S. Habib, *Ibn Saud's Warrior of Islam: The Ikhwan of Nejd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1978.

<sup>4</sup> Verbal report to Cabinet on 6 July 1916, in „Policy in the Middle East: the Arab Question“, CAB 17/176.

Arab questions by one department, the Foreign office. In March 1915, about six months prior to the Cabinet decision, allowing for the creation of the Arab Bureau, the Foreign Secretary had already decided that “political control of the Hijaz and its ports should be under Cairo”.<sup>5</sup> The highest-ranking official in the Middle East at the time was the High commissioner at Cairo. The incumbent during the Crucial period of the Arab Revolt was Lt. Col. Sir A.H. McMahon. He was replaced in 1918 by General Sir Reginald Francis Wingate. The Arab Bureau was a temporary war-time creation which began its work in the spring of 1916. The necessity of such an organization had been recognized by the Director of Military Intelligence of the Egyptian army, and its primary function would be to “co-ordinate Middle East intelligence and to spread propaganda while countering the effect of hostile propaganda”.<sup>6</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1917 in an unsigned *aide-mémoire* form the Cairo Residency, McMahon offered a consistent resume of his previous policy: Britain’s concept of her obligations as undertaken prior to the Arab Revolt, “is that we guarantee to keep a ring defined approximately in these negotiations within which Arab’s autonomy shall have free play. We did not guarantee the pre-eminence of the Sharif, or another, within this ring: although the King considers that our conduct of these negotiations through him implied our willingness to see his pre-eminence a fact”.<sup>7</sup> It must be stressed that Britain had never embodied her promises to King Hussein in any single document signed by both parties. Rather an understanding was evolved through the Hussein–McMahon correspondence. (The Hussein–McMahon correspondence provided a formal record of British guarantees, and expressed the extent of Britain’s explicit commitments to, and specific conditions of the alliance during the Arab Revolt and post-war period.) One could argue that the Hussein–McMahon correspondence was in some sense the great non-treaty of the treaty era: a prior claim to uncertainty in a new era of uncertainty. However, it is also true that Britain certainly took an advantage of the absence of a formal agreement in order to extricate itself from internal Arabian affairs, and no doubt paradoxically benefited from the inferences implied in the correspondence. Britain avoided clarifying certain points and eschewed the ensuing risk of disappointing Hussein as long as his support was required. It was certainly true that one of Britain’s strategic goals in supporting Sharif Hussein during the Arab Revolt was the creation of a religious authority vested in the Sharif as Caliph, in order that he could challenge the religious authority of the Ottoman Caliph. This policy would “abolish the threat of Islam by dividing it against itself, in its very heart” as McMahon noted; and would prevent a united Jihad against the allies.<sup>8</sup> However, as early as 1917 the British High Commission in Cairo realized that British policy instigated at the beginning of the revolt must be re-evaluated.

Officials in Cairo realized that British policy as designed and linked to the revolt must be reconsidered, and by defining British interests in the Arabian Peninsula, a post-war policy could emerge. These interests were:

- “(a) the security of the annual Pilgrimage.
- (b) the immunity of the Peninsula from foreign occupation, or penetration beyond the terms of agreement [i.e. the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916]...

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<sup>5</sup> Telegram on 31 March 1915, Political Resident, Aden to Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station, FO 141/610/3666.

<sup>6</sup> FO 141/436/7658, Confidential Print of 17 May 1920.

<sup>7</sup> Note by Cairo Residency staff, 23 December 1917, CAB 27/23.

<sup>8</sup> Report by McMahon entitled „The Politics of Mecca”, 17 February 1916 in L/P&S 10/525.

- (c) the preservation of peace and the promotion of trading facilities on the borders of autonomous Arabia and the outlying settlements (e.g. Aden) and the regions under control.

Providing these interests are adequately safeguarded we have no desire to intervene in the internal politics of the Peninsula".<sup>9</sup> Other components of policy were the conclusion of a treaty with King Hussein. For his part the King attempted to confuse the issue of what guarantees were implied in the correspondence, or perhaps he was himself confused; for instance he re-wrote his original demands from the 1915 negotiations on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1918, and sent these to Sir Wingate as a list of supposed British commitments. The King requested explanations of British concessions and was threatening to resign. It was on receipt of this fresh call for negotiations from King Hussein that Sir Reginald Wingate wrote the most sympathetic plea on his behalf to Balfour in September of 1918. Emphasizing the precariousness of Hussein's position, Wingate stressed not only the current British dependency on Hussein's allegiance, but also inferred that there were long-term and deeper "moral obligations... incurred by us towards him", Wingate then made a suggestion for a new policy directive to clear up all the misunderstandings; this was no less than His Majesty's Government support of Arab unity in central and southern Arabia. This support could be achieved by "an alliance between the Arab chiefs under the leadership of one of them", although each chief would be autonomous. He further proposed "that HMG considers King Hussein to be the best fitted to assume the leadership of the Alliance, and would welcome him in that capacity".<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it is symptomatic of policy conflicts that only two days after the Foreign Office printed for circulation to other government departments the arguments discussed by Wingate in September 1918, it is also published details of the Sykes-Picot arrangement, outlining the political dominance of Syria and Mesopotamia between France and Britain.<sup>11</sup> While formerly Britain had endorsed the creation of a Hashemite pan-Arab Kingdom, the post-war ideal of self-determination was Britain's priority after the Paris Peace Conference. This was in conformity with its changing strategic requirements and a desire to satisfy its leading allies. This change of policy was partly due to the financial strain of the war, and partly because Britain wanted to moderate the activities of France. Thus, its post-war negotiations had to accommodate the appeal to public opinion of Woodrow Wilson's Universal Philosophy of international relations. President Wilson's belief that the war would only have been justified by a transformation of the international system, was to have its effect upon the futures of pan-Arabism and on the political authority of Hussein itself, particularly through its connection to the mandate system.

Some British officials had even considered offering Palestine to the United States as an inducement with regard to the fate of Colonial territories. Lord Derby offered one strand of British Political opinion on the issue of self-determination when he wrote to Balfour in 1918 "Are we to give up Arabia, Palestine, and the German colonies? And are we to give Ireland, Egypt and even India such governments as the people there can be said to want?"<sup>12</sup> Thus, Britain related Hussein's greatly diminished post-war popular backing to the principle of local self-determination and viewed this priority as militating against his bid for pan-Arab power. Clearly, British foreign policy after the Great War was directed towards non-intervention

<sup>9</sup> Note, residency, Cairo, 23 December 1917, CAB/27/23.

<sup>10</sup> Sir Reginald Wingate to Mr. Balfour, 21 September 1918, CP of 5 November 1918, FO 141/557.

<sup>11</sup> Printed on 7 November 1918, see FO 141/766/70.

<sup>12</sup> Derby to Balfour, 8 July 1918, Balfour papers, B.M. add 49743.

in Arabia. Thus, in response to Hussein's political ambitions, the War Office recommended at this time formal negotiation with Hussein, "to give effect to control of the eastern littoral of the Red Sea." It also advocated "the desirability of retaining the Caliphate under British auspices," with perhaps Baghdad as the seat of the Caliphate.<sup>13</sup> In 1918 the Foreign Office reorganized its administration of Middle Eastern affairs, a step which was necessary because an independent state of Hijaz, which had full treaty relations with Britain, must now be treated as a foreign country, not as a dependency. The Arab Bureau was wound down officially in September 1920.<sup>14</sup> By that time its duties had greatly exceeded its original mandate and it was then conducting quasi-governmental business on behalf of Hussein. Its closure left Hussein in an unstable position with regard to British support, and essentially in the administrative vacuum although the British Consul was re-established in the Hijaz as the first line of communication to the Foreign Office.

The administration of British Middle Eastern affairs was not truly unified until 1920, when separate Middle Eastern Department was set up to supervise the various conquered areas.<sup>15</sup> A Cabinet review, the Masterton-Smith Committee, addressed the wide-ranging difficulties of interdepartmental overlapping and duplication of effort, and considered the massive task of administering the newly mandated territories of Iraq, Mesopotamia and Palestine.<sup>16</sup> The committee decided, that the Foreign Office was best suited to handle the overall responsibility for the British mandated territories, and a new department was duly created within the colonial Office in 1921 with specific responsibility for Middle Eastern relations. However, responsibility for the Hijaz, was shifted to the new Foreign Office Eastern Department (mentioned in the Foreign Office list from 1921) which replaced the former Eastern and Egyptian Department.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to the formal Paris Peace conference of 1919, British officials attempted to work out agreements and proposals within the Cabinet.

On the other hand, the Cabinet generally agreed not to concur in King Hussein's pretensions, and shortly after this decision, downgraded his significance. "It was fairly clear that Hussein might have some spiritual authority, but not political – even though it might be necessary to subsidize him from Mesopotamian revenues in his capacity as keeper of the holy places".<sup>18</sup>

Thus, concerning its stand on the Arabian chapter of the peace treaty with Turkey, the Foreign Office sent an alternative draft to the delegation at Paris in August 1919, which did in fact suggest treating King Hussein as an "Arab chief and merely *primus inter pares* among the Emirs of the Arabian Peninsula".<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> From secret note, War Office, 6 July 1917: observations by the director of military intelligence on Sir Reginald Wingate's Despatch No. 127 of 11 June CAB 227/222.

<sup>14</sup> FO 371/5596.

<sup>15</sup> FO 141/436/7588, Confidential Print 17 May 1920.

<sup>16</sup> See *Report of the Interdepartmental Committee*, 31 January 1921 L/P&S/11/93.

<sup>17</sup> There was also the Levant Consular Department which was not a diplomatic department. British Consular representation in Jeddah was channeled through the British Ambassador in Constantinople, and correspondence and reports are located under „Turkey" in Foreign Office papers.

<sup>18</sup> From Eastern Committee 43 minutes, 16 December 1918, CAB 27/24. Cited in Busch, B.C., *Britain, India and the Arabs, 1914–1921*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1971.

<sup>19</sup> Despatch No. 5485 of 18 August 1919, FO 371/4234.

In fact, the delegation did not want to attribute Hussein with any greater status, Balfour explained in a reply to Lord Curzon: "We are committed to treating the Hijaz as an independent state, and we may be charged with inconsistency when a different attitude appears more consistent with our own interest".<sup>20</sup>

### **The Controversy over The Mandates**

The most fundamental factor obscuring the finalization of a British-Hijazi treaty was Hussein's constant disapproval of the mandate system, despite the benefits which accrued to his sons. (For example, Faisal was installed initially as King of Syria, and Abdullah as Amir of mandated Transjordan.) Hussein's opposition to the mandate system undercut the legitimacy of Britain's acquisition of desirable territory, which thus eroded British support for him, and it also undercut Britain's personal legitimacy, because the fact that Hussein's sons headed these territories, rendered his opposition politically incompatible with their new power.

In order to maintain his religious legitimacy as Sharif of Mecca, Hussein had little option but to oppose the Palestine mandate and the planned homeland for the Jews,<sup>21</sup> particularly in order to try to salvage the credibility lost after 1917, when he had appeared passive on the issue of the Balfour Declaration. Towards the end of his rule, Hussein increasingly and emphatically opposed British plans for Palestine, stating that he wished Britain to support legitimate Arab rights including political and economic rights, not merely the civil and religious rights as Britain proposed.<sup>22</sup> Although his initial lukewarm response to the Balfour Declaration proved difficult to justify, Hussein expended much effort in promoting debate of the Palestine issue:

"With a tenacity which ended by grating on the Foreign Office nerves, he kept protesting... he was not moved by narrow or selfish motives, ... his attitude was dedicated solely by the conviction that there could be no peace for the British, Jews or Arabs in Palestine so long, as the latter had come to suspect the ultimate aim of Zionism was to establish a Jewish state in their midst, and at the expense of their national aspirations".<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Balfour to Curzon, 26 August 1919, FO 371/4234.

<sup>21</sup> In re-analyzing British promises to Hussein regarding Palestine, the Foreign Office concluded that at best the British government had been ambiguous about what Palestine was to become. The British High Commission's vagueness was not intended as a caption, but was nevertheless exploited later by other British officials. This re-analysis recognized that the British High Commission in Cairo in his „Hijaz Rising Narrative" of November 1916 appeared „to assign Palestine to the Arabs under the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, while noting the reservation of French interest". This secret history of the Arab Bureau stated in particular: „What has been agreed to, therefore, on behalf of Great Britain is: (1) to recognize the independence of those portions of the Arab speaking areas in which we are free to act without detriment to the interest of France. Subject to these undefined reservations, the said area is understood to be bounded – west by the Red Sea and the Mediterranean up to about latitude 33 and beyond by an indefinite line drawn west of Damascus, Hamma, Homs and Aleppo" (FO 371/175635).

<sup>22</sup> Regarding the Palestine issue, Brigadier Clayton noted in 1924, following a talk with Hussein, that Hussein wanted any discussions on Palestine to be kept in private to avoid criticism and opposition, and agreed with Hussein that he could not afford the resultant Muslim criticism and possible abuse should accede to the Anglo-Hashemite Treaty as it stood. Clayton thus suggested dropping Article 2 altogether (G.F. Clayton memo, 23 January 1924 L/P&S/10/881).

<sup>23</sup> George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening*, New York: Putnam, 1938, p. 334.

One major incentive for British officials who promoted Zionism, was satisfying a significant proportion of the American electorate. In fact, it was the conservative wing in British politics that was the most favorable to the Zionists.<sup>24</sup>

Another mandate, with which Hussein began to concern himself with after 1917 was that of Mesopotamia. He argued that Iraq should be acknowledged as his territory by right,<sup>25</sup> rather than as separate state ruled by Faisal. In 1924 the Foreign Office acknowledged:

We have pledged ourselves to King Hussein that Mesopotamia shall be «Arab» and «independent», subject to special measures of British control. There is no controversy about this control: it is accepted by King Hussein, by the people of Mesopotamia, and by all the British authorities that are concerned in the settlement of the Middle East.<sup>26</sup>

Given this policy, the Foreign Office was concerned when Captain Wilson proposed isolating and cutting off Mesopotamia from the Arab national movement, which it believed “would clearly be a breach of faith with King Hussein”.<sup>27</sup> Yet it did not support Hussein’s personal claim to power in Northern Arabia, for instance, concerning Syrian mandate which he particularly claimed; on the grounds that the Arab Revolt had been inspired by the encouragement and backing of Syrian groups.<sup>28</sup> In the autumn of 1918, Faisal received the submission of the Syrians and their acceptance of Hussein as their sovereign, with the title “Emir-al-Muminin”.<sup>29</sup> Hussein’s reply reflects his presumption that he would ultimately control that area. That is, he consigned the Syrians to Faisal’s care until such time as he could “himself attend to their affairs”.<sup>30</sup> Thus, as Wingate noted, Hussein had “in no degree abated his original pretensions concerning Syria...” Apparently, Wingate continued, “he still nourishes illusion that through the good office of his Majesty’s government he may be installed as, at any rate nominally, overlord of greater part of the country”.<sup>31</sup> Britain’s strategy for resolving the issue was to stress the new international emphasis on popular consent, arguing that there was no evidence that any Arab nationalist movement at grass-roots level existed: “there is no political affinity with Syria

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<sup>24</sup> Beloff, *Britain’s Liberal Empire*, p. 261.

<sup>25</sup> See series of correspondence between King Hussein and British agent at Jeddah from 3 September to 3 October 1918, FO686/39.

<sup>26</sup> See Foreign Office discussion regarding telegram from the Chief Political Officer, Baghdad, n.d., but c. July 1917 FO371/3386.

<sup>27</sup> See Foreign Office Memorandum on telegrams Nos. 10973 and 1109 from the Chief Political Officer, Baghdad, FO 371/3386, n.d. but c. 1918.

<sup>28</sup> The Arab Syrian Committee in London wrote to him in February 1918, as „supporters of the Arab community and the Hashemite banner”. (Arab and Syrian Committee in London to the King of the Hijaz, n.d. c. February 1918, FO 371/3399). It must be noted that there was also equal opposition to the Hashemites in Syria: in 1918 Syrian opinion was „averse to close connection with Arabia as represented by the King of Hijaz and his sons.” (GHQ, Egyptian Expeditionary Force to Foreign Office, 21 September 1918) FO 371/3399.

<sup>29</sup> Wingate to FO, 13 October 1918, FO 371/3384.

<sup>30</sup> Hussein’s continuing possessive interest in Syria was evident in his campaign against the French; he petitioned the League of Nations in 1921, arguing, „the idea of the mandate in Syria will be synonymous to colonization”. (Hussein to League of Nations, 2 July 1921, CO727/2).

<sup>31</sup> Sir H. Wingate, Cairo 29 November 1917, FO 371/3057.

or the Hijaz”.<sup>32</sup> Extensive anthropological evidence collected by Gertrude Bell was produced in support of this, detailing the local tribes’ limited political horizons.<sup>33</sup> In addition to such arguments, the unpopularity of Faisal’s rule gradually undermined Hussein’s claim to Syria: “French domination is not liked by the Syrians, but they would prefer to have that rather than revert to the late conditions”.<sup>34</sup> Hussein’s claim to support from groups in Syria were thus eroded. Furthermore, these claims had exerted considerable pressure on Anglo-French relations, which further alienated Britain from supporting an expansion of Hussein’s post-war authority.

Hussein’s complete opposition to the mandate system affected his ability to conclude an explicit treaty with Britain specifying the extent of his powers. Significantly, the appointments of Faisal and Abdullah as heads of mandated territories split the Hashemite dynasty and enforce a bloodless shift of internal allegiance: giving Hussein’s sons the security of British backing was an ideal mean of preventing them from working against Britain’s new security agenda. His sons, placed in opposition to their father on security issues, would be sustained in power only as long as they supported Britain’s position.

The first split (among Hashemites) which emerged after the Mandated areas were established, was the rival territorial claims over Ma’an and Aqaba which developed between Hussein and his son Abdullah.<sup>35</sup>

The second mean by which Britain’s use of the Hashemite family in the Mandated areas contributed to Hussein’s downfall, was that it prevented his sons from providing military assistance during Ibn Saud’s invasion of Hijaz.

The third fissure in Hashemite solidarity was caused by British security needs which conflicted with his sons’ plan to offer their father refuge in the Mandated areas after Ibn Saud’s invasion.

Thus, the mandate system contributed indirectly to Hussein’s downfall during the critical period of Ibn Saud’s encroachment on Hijaz, since his sons, as mandate rulers, were paralyzed by the policy of non-intervention when Britain stated that it would “give no countenance to interference in the Hijaz by Transjordan and Iraq”.<sup>36</sup> (Admittedly Abdullah

<sup>32</sup> Memorandum of Telegrams No. 10972 and 1109 from Political Officer, Baghdad, FO 371/3386 n.d. but c. 1918.

<sup>33</sup> Bell’s well known and numerous reports are in the Arab Bulletin, for instance much information on the fluctuating tribal situation through interviews with Ibn Rumaih and ‘Aqaili, on 23 February 1920 in Baghdad (L/P&S/10/390). However, there were other contemporary sources: the Ottomans reportedly gathered much anthropological evidence on Hijaz tribes; some of this material was captured from prisoners of war and did not tally with known information, for instance there were said to be many more tribal divisions that previously thought. This material has apparently not been retained in British officials archive (Arab Bulletin, No. 110, 30 April 1919).

<sup>34</sup> See extracts from Jeddah’s agent’s report for the period ending 9 August 1920, FO371/5243.

<sup>35</sup> During Faisal’s brief rule in Damascus, both he and his father laid claim to the areas of Ma’an and ‘Aqaba, and after that it became an issue between ‘Abdullah and Hussein. B. Shaadran, *Jordan, a State of Tension* (New York: 1959), p. 154–158. Also Gary Toller, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia*, Frank Cass: London, 1987. p. 223.

<sup>36</sup> Colonial Secretary to High Commissioner for Iraq and Palestine, 30 September 1924, L/P&S/10/3665.



did supply his father with a small force of mercenaries,<sup>37</sup> and after Abdullah gained Aqaba it is thought that he allowed Ali to use the region as surreptitious supply route.)<sup>38</sup> In fact, Faisal and Abdullah's mandate positions contributed to Hussein's final political destruction, because they are related to Britain's decision to treat with Ibn Saud during his encroachment on Hijaz, through Anglo-Saudi negotiations, led by Clayton in October 1924. These negotiations forced the mandate leaders to accept indirect treaty relations with Ibn Saud, against the interests and security of their father's rule, and they were thus forced to accept decisions made jointly by Britain and Ibn Saud on boundaries.

### **The Anglo-Hijazi Treaty**

Both, the political climate created by the post-war international peace conference at Versailles, and the practical need to place diplomatic relations with Hijaz on a formal footing, led to laborious negotiations for an Anglo-Hijazi Treaty of friendship. Yet, when Britain resumed negotiations.<sup>39</sup> Hussein proceeded to resist the treaty all the way, and negotiations dragged on interminably.

It must be eighteen months or two years since King Hussein did anything we may have wanted him to do without dissembling... he has except in tiny matters of the most unimportant routine, made every possible difficulty, always, continual obstruction and continual provocation.<sup>40</sup>

From Hussein's point of view, the main obstacle to any agreement was the larger question of the Jewish homeland in Palestine, as well as the specific British desire for his recognition of the Palestine mandate. The Duke of Devonshire, the Colonial Secretary, wrote to Lord Curzon on 2 March 1923:

"You know the difficulties with which we have to contend in Palestine. They are not only from local opposition, but from criticism at home, which finds its strongest weapon in the unfortunate McMahon Pledge of 1915. Our idea is that we should now try to pin Hussein down to an Article that would in effect commit him to approve of the steps taken by us to liquidate our war-time pledges. We should then have an effective answer to future critics".<sup>41</sup>

Britain made purely verbal concessions in drafts of the treaty that it was then negotiating with Hussein. The High Commissioner reported to the Colonial Secretary in January 1924, "a solution of the question of the Anglo-Hijazi Treaty might be... the entire omission of Article 2 of the draft Treaty... no allusion being made in this document... to Palestine".<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Bullard to Chamberlain, 30 June 1925, L/P&S /10/3665.

<sup>38</sup> Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs*, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1925, 1926, 1928, 1929, 1932. p. 300.

<sup>39</sup> The numerous drafts of formal treaty were prepared in early 1920s, and one was actually signed by Sharif Ali on behalf of Hussein, but Hussein rejected it, as he had the previous drafts, over many minor changes or disagreements with translation. In 1923, the British Government was still willing to undertake the treaty as numerous memos and inter-office correspondence show (FO371/8939).

<sup>40</sup> British agent at Jeddah to Forbes Adam, 21 January 1922, FO371/7711.

<sup>41</sup> Duke of Devonshire to Lord Curzon 2 March 1923, FO 371/8437.

<sup>42</sup> Viscount Samuel to R. Hon. JH. Thomas, Secretary of State for the Colonies, 25 January 1924 L/P&S/10/881.

Indeed, Britain did consider references to mandates submitted by Hussein in his version of Articles 2 and 4 (in translation), which suggested that Britain should “recognize the independence of the Arabs in all Arab territories on the Peninsula, Iraq, Transjordan, Palestine and the other Arab territories, with the exception of Aden...” He suggested that any Palestinian state should not oppose sister Arab states.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, Hussein had announced these changes to the Treaty of Hijaz in *Al-Qibla* (The Hijazi official newspapers) on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1923, claiming he had made “the Balfour Promise as though it had never been a sentence of death was passed on it”.<sup>44</sup> Obviously with this move, Hussein was attempting to embarrass British officials and impair their schemes. Britain’s repeated attempts to secure a formal post-war treaty with Hussein proved a source of irritation; he completely refused to co-operate, hindering negotiations at every turn. The British were becoming increasingly annoyed with Hussein: “King Hussein is, at times monstrous, but he is a monster of our own creation. It would be unjust (to him) to assume that his attitude is otherwise than incidentally anti-British. It is anti-Western and anti everything that is not bound up with his Arab Kingdom-and-Caliphate ambitions”.<sup>45</sup> In 1924, the treaty was still not finalized, and it was now abandoned because of Hussein’s claim to the caliphate. It was in this context of non-co-operation that Hussein abruptly announced his claim to the Caliphate. This claim caused Britain to distance itself from Hussein. One might view Hussein’s sudden announcement as an attempt to use an effective spoiling tactic against the British diplomatic process – however, the tactic turned out to be a cardinal blunder. For as Mallet observed, the timing of this proclamation consequently gave the (erroneous) impression to foreign observers that Britain was backing him for the Caliphate, and to dispel this assumption Britain immediately distanced itself from Hussein. Thus, the separate agreement which he was negotiating with the British concurrent to the conference, namely, the Anglo-Hijazi treaty was necessarily abandoned temporarily as Mallet considered:

It therefore seemed most undesirable to conclude a treaty before the novelty of King Hussein’s proclamation had worn off, lest we should be held to be tacitly acknowledging his new dignity. It was therefore decided to wait for further overtures regarding the treaty to come from King Hussein, and to make none ourselves in the meantime.<sup>46</sup>

The British threatened to stop payment of the subsidy to Hussein, and tried to convince him that Ibn Saud and the militant Ikhwan would not invade the Hijaz if there was a formal treaty between Britain and the Hijaz. Britain wearily sustained a secondary agenda of securing the stability of Hussein’s post-war state which was undergoing post-war economic, military, and social exhaustion, and was threatened by an invasion by Ibn Saud. However, Hussein found many ways to sabotage the British secondary agenda of support for him, particularly during the period of the Kuwait Conference.

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<sup>43</sup> See King Hussein’s proposal: Hashemite Dival No. 1 to the British Prime Minister, Ramsey MacDonald, 2<sup>nd</sup> Moharram 1343 L/P&S/10/881.

<sup>44</sup> See extract from *Al-Qibla*, 29 October 1923, FO371/8956.

<sup>45</sup> British Agent in Jeddah to FO, 19 October 1923, FO 686/111.

<sup>46</sup> Memorandum by Mr. Mallet on the Anglo-Hashemite treaty negotiations, 1924, E 4678/29/91 in L/P&S/10/881.

The Kuwait Conference is generally regarded as one of Britain's last attempts to sustain a limited authority for Hussein in Arabia, an authority which related to his specific natural resources of power. One major reason for its occurrence was to establish formally the Nejd-Hijaz boundary. This was a crucial strategic criterion, since Hussein was threatened by no other power but Ibn Saud. Indeed, the establishment of this boundary was—of all factors, social, ideological, religious—a single element which alone would have preserved his rule. Unfortunately, from the beginning, Hussein chose to regard the event as a series of critical challenges to his authority. Unlike his sons, Hussein was not consulted by the British about the possibility of these negotiations for almost a year after they were mooted, and it was on these grounds originally that he refused to send a delegate.<sup>47</sup> His creation was to abstain. The British tried extremely hard to induce him to send a delegate. The High Commissioner was briefed to impress upon Hussein that the chance of settling differences with Nejd could eliminate risks of further Ikhwan attacks into the Hijaz (this came after Faisal Al Dawish led a raid close to Medina).<sup>48</sup> Nothing could have put the case for negotiation so succinctly and prophetically as Britain's pointing out that:

a settlement of the Nejd-Hijaz issue is more likely to be in favor of the Hijaz when discussed at a conference where there can be much more latitude for give and take elsewhere, whereas if the Transjordan Nejd questions are definitely settled at Kuwait the Kings's frontier will have to be decided on its own merits and may suffer as a result.<sup>49</sup>

The absence of a formal British/Hijazi treaty prevented the British from interference in the final Saudi-Hashemite struggle. When Ibn Saud's troops entered Taif in 1924, Great Britain refused to use air power to defer him, despite numerous requests from Hussein (and later Ali) to intimidate Ibn Saud on behalf of Hussein, as they did to protect Transjordan.

Therefore, beyond Britain's manipulation of Hussein's sons, the major external political factor which precipitated Hussein's downfall was Britain's neutrality during the invasion, and its statement that it would only intervene if both sides spontaneously requested her assistance. This amounted to a direct refusal of help, since obviously, as Ibn Saud's occupation was proceeding favorably from his viewpoint, he was unlikely to request arbitration.<sup>50</sup> Later on, in response to Hussein's request for British aid, on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1924, they informed him, " [The British do]...not propose to be entangled in any struggle for possession of the holy places of Islam... They [The British] intend to confine their efforts to an attempt to safeguard His Majesty's Government's Moslem Subjects".<sup>51</sup> Thus, "Britain's policy of non-intervention in Arabia invariably worked to the advantage of Ibn Saud, with whom the natural balance of power lay".<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> FO 317/9097/E1622, interview with King Hussein at Amman, January 21, 1924.

<sup>48</sup> In Autumn 1923 Faisal Al Darwish raided at Ulla, close to Medina. FO to IO, Nov. 5, 1923 (L), No. 4256.

<sup>49</sup> FO to Bullard (British Consul, Jeddah) Nov. 6, 1923 (T), No. 4256.

<sup>50</sup> After the initial Ikhwan raid upon Taif the British reaction was simply to express concern for their own citizens, sending a warning to the Ikhwan commander that precautions must be taken to safeguard the lives and property of British subjects in the Hijaz.

<sup>51</sup> L/P&S/10/1124,P3979,SOSCO to HCI, September 30, 1924.

<sup>52</sup> Clive Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925–1937: The Imperial Oasis*, London: Frank Cass, 1983, p. 27.

## Conclusion

The unique strategic and political interests of British Policy after 1916 had a considerable destabilizing effect on the political authority of Sharif/King Hussein of Hijaz. Changes in British Policy occurred in response to the broad, general political forces such as the dynamics of imperial administration in the build-up to war, the war itself, and to the shifting alliances and territorial claims of the period when the war was drawing to a close, including the international consensus on Great Power responsibilities which developed during the Treaty of Versailles. The political dynamics which Britain introduced were the Hussein-McMahon correspondence which began in 1915, the Arab revolt of 1916; the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916; the Balfour declaration of 1917; and the British negotiations surrounding the 1922 Peace Conference. These specific policies demonstrated that Britain's role in Arabian political affairs was clearly that of a catalyst.

The removal of the Turks from the region had left a power vacuum, one that Britain did not wish to fill in peacetime. It is even more important to remember that Britain was also involved in a general agreement by the Great Power's policy of creating mandates. For Britain, its good relations with France, and their common issues under negotiation with regard to the Middle East, were far more significant than relations with Hussein after his usefulness has ended. It was far more important for Britain now, to satisfy France's territorial interests than to fulfill its commitments toward Hussein. This was the rationale for non-intervention in post-war Hijaz.

If this withholding of coercive support was to some extent an inducement to Hussein to accept the new territorial division of the Middle East, to enter into finite treaty relations with Britain, Hussein did not take this last chance to salvage his political authority. British strategy had transformed from the hasty and expedient maneuvers of war to the dictates of the long-term stability and security of Great Powers for decades to come.

It has been argued that history has proven that post-war territorial boundaries were largely decided by the early interim agreements which were necessary for the survival of Great Powers.<sup>53</sup>

In Hussein's case, what was sacrificed was the wider sovereignty he had seemingly been promised, "the pan-Arab kingdom". In his eyes, Britain may have been the loser in absolute moral terms of obligation and responsibility; however the Hashemites in Hijaz were the losers for perpetuity.

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<sup>53</sup> Beloff, *Britain's Liberal Empire*, p. 182.

DOROTA RUDNICKA-KASSEM

## The Ḥaram Collection and It's Importance for Studying the History of Jerusalem during the Mamlūk's Days.

### *Ḥaram 102: Study of the Document*

#### Abstract

In an article published in December 1978 by two young scholars, Amal A. Abul-Hajj (Palestinian) and Linda L. Northrup (American) there was announced an archeological discovery of great importance for the study of medieval Islamic history. On August 19, 1974 there had been found in the Islamic Museum in Jerusalem, a group of 354 complete documents and many other small fragments. The photographs of the documents are kept at the Museum and the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies. Up until today a number of articles and books on the Ḥaram documents have been published. The Ḥaram collection consists of 883 separately cataloged documents, majority of which come fourteenth (Christian) century and relates to transactions or records of events from Jerusalem under the Burji Mamlūks. The article exposes an overview of the collection with an emphasis on the various types of documents and the issue of the Ḥaram documents' significance for studies on Islamic diplomatic, Islamic law and the history of Jerusalem under the Mamlūks. The special focus is on the detailed analysis of one document, i.e., the *Ḥaram 102* which together with presented comparison of the documents discussed by Huda Lutfi in her article "A Study of the Fourteenth Century *Iqrār*s from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women" gives a unique opportunity to acquire some knowledge about the common life of the medieval Muslim woman.

#### The Ḥaram documents: an overview of the collection

As it was reported in 1978 by Linda L. Northrup and Amal A. Abul-Hajj in their article, there had been found (a few years earlier) in the Islamic Museum located in the precincts of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem a group of documents dating from the thirteen to the fifteen centuries estimated to contain "approximately 354 complete documents as well as many other small fragments".<sup>1</sup> Apart from giving some important details about the collection as a whole, the authors also presented the summary description of fifty sample documents. These fifty documents include examples ranging from royal Mamlūk decrees to deeds for the sale of land in Jerusalem under Mamlūk regime. In their article Linda L. Northrup and Amal A. Abul-Hajj also added that "the existence of still other documents has become known", and pointed out that what had

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<sup>1</sup> Linda L. Northrup and Amal A. Abul-Hajj, "A Collection of Medieval Arabic Documents in the Islamic Museum at the Ḥaram al-Sharīf", *Arabica*, Vol. XXV, 1978, p. 283.

been found was one from the largest and potentially “most important caches of medieval Islamic documents as far discovered”.<sup>2</sup>

As for the story of the discovery of the Ḥaram documents, it began in September 1973 with the appointment of Amal A. Abul-Hajj as assistant director of the Islamic Museum in Jerusalem. While exploring the Museum’s collection, her attention focused on the locked drawers which, according to the official statements, contained rather “unimportant pieces of papers”. However, Amal A. Abul-Hajj insisted on inspecting the content of these drawers and finally she succeeded. On August 19, 1974, in the presence of high officials of the Jerusalem Council of Awqāf, who were visiting the museum to check on repairs in progress, some drawers and cupboards were unlocked. In one of the cupboards Amal A. Abul-Hajj found 354 documents already mentioned. She was alone “at her excitement at the discovery of what were obviously medieval Islamic documents”. Therefore, she attempted to evoke interest of both the scholars and officials. Unfortunately, her efforts were fruitless and, as Donald P. Little underlined in his article, “it was not until she persuaded Linda Northrup, a young Mamlūk scholar who was passing through Jerusalem from a year’s study in Cairo, to help her examine the documents that work began in earnest”.<sup>3</sup>

Abul-Hajj and Northrup began their hard work. They were able to decipher fifty of the documents before Northrup had to return to the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies in Montreal in the summer of 1975. When Professor Donald P. Little, who was at that time Northrup’s Ph. D. thesis supervisor, saw the results of Abul-Hajj’s and Northrup’s work he became guardedly interested in the documents. Furthermore, he spared no effort to encourage his student to pursue her endeavors of working with the documents. In 1976, a larger group of papers had been discovered at the Museum in Jerusalem. Finally, a year and half later, it became known that Abul-Hajj would have to resign her post at the Islamic Museum because of her approaching marriage to an official in the American Consular Corps and that the disposition of the documents would be in doubt after her departure.

At that point, Little decided that an effort should be made to have the documents photographed, so as to insure their preservation. His plan was to arrange a considerable financial backing needed to send a team of three, namely Donald P. Little, Linda Northrup and the photographer Martin Lyons, to Jerusalem. So, eventually the financial assistance was provided with remarkable imagination, generosity, and speed by the Institute of Islamic Studies and the Graduate Faculty of McGill University,<sup>4</sup> and the team was ready to pursue the task.

The things in Jerusalem were working well and within the period of two weeks a permission to photograph the collection was granted by the responsible authorities and the result of the research team’s work, namely the photographs of the documents are kept at the Museum and the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies. Some time later Little wrote an

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 284.

<sup>3</sup> See: D. P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History”, *Der Islam*, Vol. 57, 1980, p. 189–219.

<sup>4</sup> Charles J. Adams, Director Islamic Studies; Walter F. Hitaschfeld, Dean and Vice Principal, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research.

important article, in which he gave the preliminary report-survey on the entire collection as a supplement to the first report given by Northrup and Abul-Hajj. In addition, the scholar drew tentative conclusions regarding the nature and significance of the H̥aram documents. Here are the main points of Little's findings.<sup>5</sup>

The H̥aram collection consists of 883 separately cataloged documents, and, it is worth noting that almost all of them are complete and intact. Majority of these papers contain only a single document which is written on one side of the sheet; sometimes the text is continued, or a brief note is written, on the back. However, as Little underlines, in the collection one may notice a substantial number of papers containing more than one document. In fact, the papers may include from two to even nine interrelated documents. While taking into consideration this fact, one may say that the total number of documents in the collection is well over one thousand. It is also important to note that almost all of documents which bear dates (approximately 80%) come from the eight Islamic, fourteenth Christian century.

Furthermore, with only a few exceptions all of the Arabic documents are related to transactions or records of events which took place in Jerusalem under the administration of the Burjī Mamlūks.<sup>6</sup>

As Little points out, in order to give the idea of the nature of the documents from the collection and characterize the type of information which can be extracted from them, one could divide them into certain types. In addition, he proposes that they could be classified in several ways. The suggested categorization looks as follows: (1) in terms of the source of issue that we would have deal with the royal documents, issued by the sultan or officers of state; judicial documents, issued by a *qāḍī*; notarial documents, by notaries; and private documents, or petitions submitted by private citizens, and (2) according to subject matter, such as real estate transactions, questions of civil status, legacies, power of attorney, homicide, assault and battery, etc.

However, as underlined by the scholar the H̥aram collection could be presented according to the form of the documents, and, in such a case one should "study H̥aram documents in their own right".<sup>7</sup>

While taking into primarily consideration the form of the documents, one may divide the H̥aram documents into several types.

The most important are the decrees, namely (1) the royal Mamlūk decrees (about 55) issued to the monks of St. Catherine's signed by the sultans from the Burjī period (about 10),<sup>8</sup> (2) the decrees issued by *amīrs* or officials from Mamlūk bureaucracy; all of them

<sup>5</sup> See: Little, "The Significance of the H̥aram Documents...", p. 189–219.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 195.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> The Mamlūks (1250–1517) were a local Muslim dynasty of slave origin that ruled in Egypt and Syria. They successfully challenged the Mongol threat. As defenders of Islamic orthodoxy, the Mamlūks sponsored numerous religious buildings, including mosques, madrasas and khānqāhs. The Bahrī dynasty (Bahriyya Mamlūks) was of Kipchak Turkish origin and ruled Egypt from 1250 to 1382. Their name means "of the sea," referring to the location of their original residence on Al-Rodah Island in the Nile in Cairo at the castle of Al-Rodah. They were succeeded by the Burjī dynasty (Burjī Mamlūks) that ruled Egypt from 1382 until 1517. Their name means "of the tower", referring to them ruling from the Citadel east of Cairo. During their times the political power-plays often

are the letters of appointment to the religious services and they usually specify the salary for these services and (3) the decrees written at the bottom or the side or on the back of petitions.

There is a small but significant number of documents written in the form of petitions. However, as Little says, they “are actually reports” and range from a report to an official in Jerusalem by an official in Gaza on the movements of the sultan in Egypt to “what seem to be reports on the price of crops submitted by agents to their employers”.<sup>9</sup>

In the Ḥaram collection there is a large group of 378 documents called “dead inventories”.<sup>10</sup> It consists of (1) the 333 documents containing in the first line of the text the clause “*haṣala l-wuqūf ‘alā*,” which means in the context that the objects listed in the document were seen or viewed by the witnesses who signed it;<sup>11</sup> (2) the thirty-four documents which contain the phrase “*waqaḡa ‘alā*” instead of “*haṣala l-wuqūf ‘alā*,” both of which mean the same thing; and (3) eleven documents which begin with the phrase “*ḡubīṭat ḡawā’ij fulān* (the possessions of Fulan were recorded).” According to Little the dead inventories constitute a valuable source of information with regard to social and economic history. However, they “are the duller to work with” because they consist largely of carelessly written lists of clothing and household articles.<sup>12</sup>

Within the Ḥaram collection one may also find another large and diversified group of documents which can be loosely classified as accounts. These 124 documents are easily recognizable by their format, which is called *daftar* in the Ottoman archives.<sup>13</sup> All these documents are written on a standard-sized sheet of paper (approximately 19 by 28 cms.), folded vertically in the middle, so as to form a folio which could be sewed into account book (*daftar*).<sup>14</sup>

The largest category of documents from the Ḥaram collection after the dead inventories consists of ninety-four *iqrār*s<sup>15</sup> which cover almost the whole of the eighth century, from 705 to 799 with more than half from the year 795 (forty-eight) and 796 (seventeen). One should mention here that the *iqrār* is known from books of jurisprudence and from papyri specimens.<sup>16</sup>

As mentioned by Little, in the Ḥaram collection there are ten documents which have a slightly different form from the *iqrār* but which seem to have much the same purpose. These documents begin with the word *yaqūl/taqūl* rather than *iqarra/iqarrat*, which means he or she says or declares rather than he or she acknowledges. Therefore, these documents might be called declarations.

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became important in designating a new sultan. See: D. P. Little, *History and Historiography of the Mamluks*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1986.

<sup>9</sup> The petitions and reports are among the most difficult documents to decipher.

<sup>10</sup> Professor Little says: “Because the Arabic phrase (“*haṣala l-wuqūf ‘alā*”) is awkward to handle as a title and because the objects listed in the documents belonged to a dead or dying person, I have decided to call this genre dead inventories, even though this term does not give a full notion of their content.” See: D. P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...”, p. 203.

<sup>11</sup> Nothing is known about them, prior to the Ottoman period. They are mentioned in neither the chancery nor the *shurūṭ* manuals.

<sup>12</sup> See: D. P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...”, p. 203.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*.



There is also in the collection a group of documents which are similar to the *iqrārs* in both form and content. They begin with the formula “*ashhada 'alayhi fulān*” or “*hadara ilā shuhūdihi wa-ashhada 'alā...*”, both of which mean that a person appeared before legal witnesses (*shuhūd*) whom he called upon to witness a deposition which he made in the document.

As for the next two types of documents in the Ḥaram collection, they include (1) deeds of purchase and (2) leases which are closely related in terms of both content and form. It is worth noting that these kinds of documents are also known from earlier examples, i.e., from papyri and parchment specimens.<sup>17</sup>

In the Ḥaram collection there are also documents referring to the personal affairs of an individual or individuals, such as (1) nine marriage contracts (*'aqd nikāh*), dated 770–795; (2) four *wakalās*, dated 743–781, by which an individual assigned his power of attorney to another for certain transactions and (3) twelve *waṣīyyas*, testamentary bequeath, dated 764–795.

With regard to the other types of documents, the collection includes (1) four documents containing an *istiftā'* and *futuyā*, that is so to say a request for a legal opinion in a given case, such as the possibility of evading the stipulations of a *waqf*, along with the response of a person entitled to give such an opinion – a *muftī*; all four documents are standard in form, short, and right to the point; and (2) sixteen documents classified as miscellaneous.<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting that apart from documents in Arabic there are also in the Ḥaram collection twenty-seven documents in Persian. According to Little the Persian documents are important for a few reasons. First, they are similar in form to certain of the Arabic types, such as bills of sale, *iqrārs* and decrees. Second, some Arabic legal terminology seems to have been translated into Persian equivalents. Finally, parts of the Persian documents are written in Arabic, most notably the headings, which designate the content of some of the documents, and the dates, which invariably occur at the end.

Why is the discovery in the Islamic Museum located in the precincts of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem that important? What are the benefits from studying these documents?

Studies on the Ḥaram documents, as underlined by Little in his article “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History”, would prove beneficial especially for the three fields, namely Islamic diplomatic, Islamic law and the history of Jerusalem under the Mamlūks.

With regard to Islamic diplomatic, the Ḥaram collection may enrich the known history of the Mamlūk period and together with the Sinai and Franciscan collections, and European archives would provide the largest and most varied set of Islamic documents for any medieval state before the Ottomans. In addition, taking into account the fact that contemporary available literary sources for the study of such documents are rich, one may agree with Little that:

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<sup>15</sup> *Iqrār* – it is an acknowledgement recorded in writing and witnessed by competent witnesses, which is thus legally binding on the person who makes the acknowledgement.

<sup>16</sup> D. P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...”, p. 208.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

Given the rudimentary state of prior research it is no exaggeration to say that these new materials make it possible to advance our knowledge of this branch of historiography to a higher level. This is true both for those types of documents about which we already have some knowledge, such as petitions and decrees, and even more so for those specimens in the Ḥaram about which we know little or nothing.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of the discussed collection for the studies related to Islamic diplomatic also lies in the fact that their analysis, would allow comparisons with similar documents from earlier periods, for example those from the papyri collection and those from the later period, mainly the Ottoman. All in all, such studies would definitely shed more light on the history of the development of Muslim diplomatic and thus contribute to the increasing awareness within the field.

As for the Islamic law, the analysis of the Ḥaram collection would prove beneficial because the documents contain a wealth of information on the duties and practices of judges, notaries and legal witnesses. All this may increase our knowledge of the operation of Muslim judicial institutions.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, as Little states:

Formerly dependent for such information on chronicles and biographical dictionaries, *fiqh*, and chancery manuals, and *adab* books, we can now correlate these literary works with documentary evidence of how these officials functioned in fourteenth century Jerusalem.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the last main field for which the studies of the Ḥaram collection would prove particularly important is the history of Jerusalem under the Mamlūks.<sup>22</sup> As Little pointed out, because the city was not central to Mamlūk concerns, the period of Palestinian history between the Crusades and the Ottoman occupation seems to be rather dim. The references to Jerusalem in Mamlūk chronicles are few and they mostly relate to religious matters. It is worth noting that the most important history of Mamlūk Jerusalem is the *Kitāb al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Ta'rīkh al-Quds wal-Khalīl* by Mujīr al-Dīn al-'Ulaymī al-Ḥanbalī (died in 928). This two-volume work contains an outline of the reigns of the Mamlūk viceroys in Jerusalem, short biographies of the '*ulamā*' who lived there and valuable information concerning public building. As Little points out, the work "furnishes only a skeleton for the history of Jerusalem".<sup>23</sup> It could be filled and completed step by step with the results of the thorough analysis of the Ḥaram collection.

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>20</sup> See: D. P. Little, "Two Fourteenth-Century Court Records from Jerusalem Concerning the Disposition of Slaves by Minors," *Arabica*, Vol. XXIX, 1982, p. 16–49; "The Judicial Documents from al-Ḥaram al Sharīf as Sources for the History of Palestine Under the Mamlūks," *The Third International Conference on Bilād al-Shām: Palestine (19–24 April, 1980)*, Vol. I Jerusalem, University of Jordan-Yarmouk University, 1983, p. 117–125; idem., "Ḥaram Documents Related to the Jews of the Late Fourteenth-Century," *Journal of Semitic Studies*, Vol. XXX, 1985, p. 227–269.

<sup>21</sup> D. P. Little, "The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...", p. 217.

<sup>22</sup> For example the history of art and architecture; see: D. P. Little, "The Ḥaram Documents as Sources for the Arts and Architecture of the Mamlūk Period," *Muqarnas*, Vol. II, 1984, p. 62–71.

<sup>23</sup> D. P. Little, "The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...", p. 218.

One may say that the book by Huda Lutfi, *Al-Quds al-Mamlūkiyya: A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents*<sup>24</sup> is a valuable attempt at undertaking this important task.

There is no doubt that the Ḥaram documents are important for study of Islamic institutions, both specific one, such as the Khānqāh, Madrasa, and Māristān known as al-Ṣalāhiyya (there is about twenty documents about it), as well as institutions such as endowments in general (there are dozens documents about it).<sup>25</sup> However, it is also worth noting that the Ḥaram collection gives a rare opportunity to study the lives of individuals. As Little mentions in his article “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents for the Study of Medieval Islamic History”, there are for example about forty documents concerning the Ṣūfī and ‘ālim Burhān al-Dīn Ibrāhīm al-Nāṣirī and his family:

Including data on his means of livelihood, his salaries from various jobs his wife and his children, his house, even a list of his books and the prices that were paid for them after his death, as well as the allowance paid to his wife and surviving children. From these documents emerges a clear portrait of an enterprising, hard-working scholar-Ṣūfī who managed, apparently, to make a decent if undistinguished life for himself by his learning and piety.<sup>26</sup>

Furthermore, the studies on the Ḥaram documents give an extraordinary and unique opportunity to learn about life of the medieval common Muslim man and, and what is of great importance, the medieval Muslim woman. It is a fact, as Little underlines, that individual women “do not recur with the same frequency in the documents as men”.<sup>27</sup> However, from the available documents related to women, we are able to learn a great deal about their situation in general concerning a number of matters, such as their material status, their relationship to men and their legal rights and duties.

The following is my analysis of the document from the Ḥaram collection, namely the *Ḥaram 102*<sup>28</sup> concerning Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn. This analysis together with presented comparison of the documents analyzed and discussed by Huda Lutfi in her article “A Study of the Fourteenth Century *Iqrārs* from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women”<sup>29</sup> may shed a better light on the related issues.

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<sup>24</sup> H. Lutfi, *Al-Quds al-Mamlūkiyya : A History of Mamlūk Jerusalem Based on the Ḥaram Documents*<sup>24</sup>, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1985.

<sup>25</sup> D. P. Little, “The Significance of the Ḥaram Documents...”, p. 219.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 218.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 219.

<sup>28</sup> In the 1980s while pursuing my Ph.D. program at The Institute of Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montreal, I passed a graduate Seminar “Arabic Historiography” with an A mark, conducted by Professor Donald P. Little (1985–1986 Fall Session). During this Seminar I learned a great deal about the Ḥaram collection.

<sup>29</sup> H. Lutfi, “A Study of the Fourteenth Century *Iqrārs* from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. XXVI, 1983, p. 246–294.



**Haram 102: content**

- (1) بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
- (2) أقرت المرأة الكامل فاطمة بنت فخر الدين عثمان المرحوم ناصر الدين محمد الحموي كان
- (3) إقرارا صحيحا شرعيا في صحة منها وسلامة وجواز أمر انها قبضت وتسلمت وصار إليها
- (4) من الصدر الاجل المحترم شمس الدين محمد بن المرحوم جمال الدين عبد الله بن شرف الدين يحيى الادريجي جابر
- (5) اوقاف المدرسة الصلاحية بالقدس الشريف والوصى على تركة المرحوم ناصر الدين الحموي زوج
- (6) القابضة كان من الدراهم الفضة الجيدة الوازنة معاملة الشام المحروس ثمانمائة درهم
- (7) وخمسة وثمانين درهما نصف ذلك اربعمائة درهم واثنان واربعين درهما ونصف درهم
- (8) قبضت ذلك فرض اولادها من ناصر الدين محمد المذكور وهم عمر وابو بكر وسلماء وسارة وخادمهم
- (9) من حين وفات والدهم والى سلخ شهر تاريخه وهو شهر ربيع الاخرة من شهور سنة تاريخه
- (10) ذلك بمقتضى فروض مكتبة بيد نالوصي المذكور قبضت ذلك قبضا تاما وافيا بما في ذلك من
- (11) ثمن اعيان طعم زيت وملح وصابون ابتاعته من تركة زوجها المذكور وبه شهد عليما
- (12) في مستهل شهر ربيع الاخرة سنة تسع وثمانين وسبعمائة (?) وصدقها الدافع على ذلك التصديق الشرعي به (... )بتاريخه
- (13) شهدت عليما بتاريخه  
كتبه  
على بن محمد بن حامد  
الحنفي
- شهدت عليهما بذلك  
كتبه  
جمال الدين عبد الرحمن

**Haram 102: translation****Haram 102 – Recto only**

Date: 1 Rabī ‘ II 789 (or 787)/ 21 April 1389 (or 1387)

- 1) In the name of God, the compassionate, the Merciful
- 2) She acknowledged – the adult woman Fāṭima the daughter of Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān, the wife of the late Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī, who is dead,
- 3) in a valid and legal iqār manner, while she was in a state of sound body and mind and legally capable of conducting her affairs that she received and obtained possession
- 4) from the most Eminent and respected Chief Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad the son of the late Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Abd Allah the son of Sharaf al-Dīn Yahyā al-Adra ‘ī, the rent collector

- 5) of the *waqf* of the *madrasa al-Ṣalāḥiyya* in Jerusalem the Noble and the executor of the estate of the late Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī, the husband
  - 6) of the recipient. Eight hundred and eighty was of full-weight good silver dirhams in current use in Damascus the Protected,
  - 7) half of which is four hundred and forty two and half dirhams.
  - 8) She received this lawful share allotted to her children from the mentioned Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad, namely ‘Umar, Abū Bakr, Salmā, Sāra and their servant
  - 9) from the time of the death of their father until the end of the month of its (document’s) date, i.e., the end of the month of Rabī ‘ the Second from months of the year of its document’s date,
  - 10) This is in accordance with the lawful shares written by the hand of the executor mentioned above. She received this in its entirety and completely including
  - 11) the price of food, oil, salt and soap which she bought from estate of her husband mentioned above. In regard to this they were borne witness to
  - 12) on the first of the month of Rabī ‘ the Second of the year seven hundred eighty nine (or seven). The payer corroborated her in conformity with the law (...) on its (document’s) date.
  - 13) It was witness to them in regard to this
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>Written by<br/>‘Abd al-Raḥmān<br/>Al-Ḥanaḥī</p> | <p>It was witness to them on its (document’s) date</p> <p>Written by<br/>‘Alī Ibn Muḥammad<br/>Ibn Ḥāmid</p> |
|--|--|

### Notes to *Ḥaram 102* – Recto only

- Line 1: This is commonly used formula of the *basmala* in arabic documents. In the chapter of legal acknowledgements Al-Asyūṭī states that all documents should begin with pietistic formulas of *al-basmala*, *al-ḥamdala* and *al-taṣliyya* for the Prophet and his family; see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 25. In spite of the difficult handwriting the *basmala* is the simplest to decipher in a document. Al-Asyūṭī describes in detail how this formula should be written; the notary should write each word separately, the writing of the *basmala* in the document should be similar to the writing of this formula in the Holy Book. For more details see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 14.
- Line 2: The text begins with the verb *aqarrat* which expresses the written intention of the person initiating the legal obligation. In the *Ḥaram* documents *aqarra/aqarrat* is the standard with the exception of one document (no 53) is the word *i’ tarafa* is used. For the discussion of the *iqrār*’s (legal acknowledgement’s) form see: D.P. Little, *A Catalogue*, 189; Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 17–53. Following the verb expressing the intention (*al-niyya*) comes the identification clause (*al-tarjama*) which identifies the woman (*al-muqirra*) who makes the legal acknowledgement. Here the name of the woman is specified by the name of her husband. The identification clause is missing the name of grandfather. The name of the husband is followed by the verb *kāna* (he was) which refers to the fact that he is dead. For the identification clause see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 24.

Line 3: The line begins with the phrase *iqrāran shar 'iyyan* which is a standard in legal documents (see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 25) and refers to the fact that the woman is legally permitted to make such acknowledgement and that this has been testified by two qualified witnesses. The phrase *iqrāran shar 'iyyan* occurs in all six documents from *Hāram* collection discussed by Hoda Lutfi in her article: "A Study of Six Fourteen Century *Iqrārs* from Al-Quds Relating to Muslim Woman". For the conditions required to make an *iqrār* see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 18; for the qualifications of witnesses and validity of document see: E. Tyan, *Le notariat*, 72–93. The following clause: *fī ṣiḥḥa minhā wa salāma wa jawāz 'amr* indicates the legal competence of the woman (see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 25). This clause is also standard in the legal acknowledgements. The rest of the line indicates that the woman (*al-muqirra*) received and obtained certain possession: *qabaḍat wa tasallamat wa šāra ilayhā*. This clause occurs in the following documents from the *Hāram* collection: 108, 184, 205, 287 discussed by Lutfi in her article mentioned previously.

Line 4–5: These line specify the identification clause of the executor of the estate of the dead husband (*al-muqarr lahu*). The person identified by the name of his father and grandfather. The honorific titles *al-Šadr al-Ajall al-Muḥtaram* indicate that person is of little, if any distinction. Al-Asyūṭī gives a detailed discussion on the honorific titles. According to him the notary should give these titles based on his knowledge of the person and concerning the profession, activity, morality, etc. For more details see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 14–16, II, 582–599. The identification clause is completed by the explanation of the profession. *Jābī al-awqāf* refers to the office of the rent collector and accountant of the *waqf* (see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 337). *Waqf al-madrasa al-Šalāḥiyya* was instituted by Šalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyubī in 588 A.H. The building of the school-church was transformed by Šalāḥ al-Dīn into a *waqf* and Šāfi 'ī school. For more information about the location of *al-madrasa* and its activity until the twentieth century see: 'Ārif al-'Ārif, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, 179–160, 237–238.

Line 6: This line begins with the word *al-qābiḍa* (the recipient) which belongs to the previous clause.

Line 6–7: Here the payment clause is indicated. The phrase *al-darāhim al-fiḍḍa* refers to the currency used in the document. The added attributes *al-jayyīda al-wāzina* may indicate that the coins were carefully and precisely examined by the notary and he accepted the currency. According to Al-Asyūṭī the currency should be clearly specified; whether it is gold or silver, the weight of it, the thickness and the province in which it was in use, should be mentioned. For more details see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 25. The phrase *mu'āmalat al-shām* refers to the province (Damascus) in which the coin specified in our document was in use. In all the *Hāram* documents almost without exception the currency of Damascus is mentioned. See: D. P. Little "Purchase Deeds for Slaves," p. 307–308.

Line 8: Here the object of the acknowledgement *al-muqarr bihi* is indicated, *farḍ al-awlādiḥā* (the lawful share allotted to her children). As Al-Asyūṭī points out in his *Kitāb al-naḥaḳāt* in the case of divorce or the death of the husband the child is protected by *farḍ al-walad*. According to the scholar this *farḍ* should secure all the necessities of the child, that is: flat, food, clothes, etc. For more details see Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, II, 222. Usually the executor of the estate of the husband, requests from the

widow to make a legal acknowledgement in order to use it as a record that he paid her the fixed lawful share for keeping custody of the children. The names of the children are indicated.

Line 9–10: In the case of object of acknowledgement, it should be detailed in full and in a clear manner. The term of payment (*al-ajal*) is the very important element (see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 28). In our document the payment term is specified clearly, that is from the death of the husband until the end of the month of the document's date. Then it is indicated that the widow received the lawful shares (for her children), written by the hand of the executor of her husband in its entirety and completely: *qabaḍat dhālika farḍ tāmmān wāfiyan*. The phrase *tāmmān wāfiyan* is standard in the *Ḥaram* documents (see: *Ḥaram* 184 and 205 in H. Lutfi article mentioned previously).

Line 11: This line contains the list of the things which the widow Fāṭima received for her children from the estate of her dead husband, that is: *thaman a 'yān ṭa'am* price of the item of food which she bought, *zayt* (oil), *malaḥ* (salt) and *ṣābūn* (soap) and from his estate: which refers to the dead Nāṣir al-Dīn. The formula *bihi shuhida* refers to an important legal element in any written document, that is to the testimony of witnesses to the content of the document.

Line 12: Here the date of the document is mentioned. The dating formula contains: the day, month and year. In our document it is the first of Rabī ' the second 789 (or 787). For more details about the dating formula see: J. A. Wakin, *The Function of Documents*, 47–49. The clause *ṣaddaqahā (...) al-taṣdīq al-shar'ī* refers to the fact that the executor of the estate of the dead husband authenticated what the widow acknowledged in legal manner, that is before two qualified witnesses and on the date of this document (*bi-ta'rīkhihi*). For more detail see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 28.

Line 13: The conclusion of the legal acknowledgement (*iqrār*) is followed by the deposition of the cause of the testimony (*rasm shahāda*). Here the witness testify not only what the widow Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn acknowledged but also to the fact that the executor of the estate of her dead husband authenticated what she acknowledged. In our document clauses of testimony are not identical. The first testimony from right to left is: *shahidtu 'alayhimā fī ta'rīkhihi*, the second one: *shahidtu 'alayhimā bi-dhālik*. The signatures of the witnesses are difficult to decipher. In spite of the fact that the *shurūṭ* scholars recommended the clear and good handwriting, from the study of this particular document and other Arabic documents (Arabic papyrus, other documents from the *Ḥaram* collection) we can see that the notaries did not follow this advice. Concerning the signature of witnesses the situation is even worse. In many cases the signature cannot be deciphered because of the cursiveness and carelessness of the script. In the case of our document the signature of the second witness (from right to left) is not deciphered completely. For details about the importance of clearly written signatures see: Al-Asyūṭī, *Jawāhir*, I, 28.

### Commentary on *Ḥaram* 102 – Recto only

The document *Ḥaram* 102 transcribed, translated and analyzed within this paper generally follows the rules of the wording of the legal acknowledgements stated by Al-Asyūṭī in the chapter “Kitāb al-iqrār” from his book *Jawāhir al-'uqūd wa mu'in al-quḍāt wa l'shuhūd*.



The analysis of each particular line indicates that the document contains all the necessary formulas and phrases. However, it should be pointed out that certain elements are not clearly enough specified and written. The identification clause of the woman Fāṭima (*al-muqirra*) is missing an important element, which is the name of her grandfather. The date of the document is not written clearly: the year can be deciphered as 889 or 887. Furthermore, the last words of line 12 as well as the signature of the second witness (from right to left) are difficult to decipher.

The study of our document (*Hāram 102*) and its comparison with two others (*Hāram 184*, 287) discussed by Huda Lutfi in her article: "A Study of the Fourteenth Century *Iqrārs* from al-Quds Relating to Muslim Women" suggests that *Hāram 102* refers to the same person Fāṭima as *Hāram 184* and 287. The comparison of the names of the woman, her husband and their children and the dates of the documents (see table 1) supports this thesis. However, there are certain elements which might weaken our statement, first, the name of Fāṭima in *Hāram 102* is not fully specified (by the name of her grandfather) and secondly, the names of the children are identical within *Hāram 102* and 184 in three cases, that is 'Umar, Salmā and Sāra'.

Concerning the fourth name in *Hāram 102* it is clearly written as Abū Bakr and in *Hāram 184* it was deciphered by Lutfi as Aḥmad. However, the writing of the fourth name in *Hāram 184* looks different. In the line 7 the name may be deciphered as Abū Bakr but in the line 8 could be deciphered as Aḥmad. Unclear script concerning the fourth name in *Hāram 184*, might suggest the possibility of an error made by the notary.<sup>30</sup>

The dates of these three documents may also support our thesis.<sup>31</sup> These documents can be placed in the following chronological order: (1) *Hāram 287*: 22 Safar 787 (content: bride, price and the loan from the husband), (2) *Hāram 102*: 1 Rabī ' II 789 or 787 (content: 885 dirhams and other specified things for maintenance of the four children from the estate of the dead husband), (3) *Hāram 184*: 2 Ramaḍān 789 (content: family allowance for three months for four children from *waqf* revenues).

As Lutfi stated in her article mentioned previously<sup>32</sup> Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn came from the middle-class income group. From *Hāram 287* we know that she was married to a merchant. When her husband died it seems (from the content of *Hāram 184*) that she did not have enough income. What happened to Fāṭima during these two years? Perhaps *Hāram 102* can be considered as a part of the answer.

Hāram	Date	Woman	Husband	Children
287	22 Safar 787	Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn ibn Zayn al-Dīn 'Umar al-Ḥamawīyya	Nāṣir al-Dīn ibn Muḥammad 'Ala' al-Dīn ibn Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī	

<sup>30</sup> According to Professor Little it is *li 'Umar* and he corrected H. Lutfi in the following article: H. Lutfi, and D. P. Little, "Iqrars from Al-Quds: *Emendations*", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. 28 (1985), p. 326–330.

<sup>31</sup> I consulted Professor Little concerning the problem and he also confirmed my assumption that the Fāṭimas in *Hāram 102* and in 184 and 287 are the same.

<sup>32</sup> See: Commentary on *Hāram 184*.

Haram	Date	Woman	Husband	Children
102	1 Rabī ‘ II 789 or 787	Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān (nisba is not mentioned)	Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī	‘Umar Abū Bakr Salmā Sāra
184	2 Ramaḍān 789	Fāṭima bint Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Uthmān ibn Zayn al-Dīn ‘Umar al-Ḥamawiyya	Nāṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Ḥamawī	‘Umar Abū Bakr Salmā Sāra

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2. Giacomo Luciani (ed.), *The Arab State*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 124.
3. Kareen Pfeifer, "Is There an Islamic Economics?", in: *Political Islam. Essays from Middle East Report*, Joel Beinin and Joe Stork (eds.), Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977, p. 155.
4. Zygmunt Komorowski, *Kultury Afryki Czarnej* (Cultures of Black Africa), Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1994, p. 89.
5. L. Dimond, "Rethinking of Civil Society", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 5, No. 3, July 1994, p. 4.
6. Tafsir of Ibn Kathir: <http://www.qtafsir.com> (accessed 20.11.2011).

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7. Pfeifer, "Is There an Islamic...", p. 154.
8. Ibid., p. 186.
9. Ibidem.

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