

Special Feature: “Toward the Future of Sufi Studies”

Editor’s Note

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As a sister institute of the Center for Islamic Area Studies, the Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies was established in March 2016. The new center focuses on studies on Sufism, tariqa, and saint veneration, while our center deals with Islamic studies and middle-eastern studies in general.

Sufism is commonly referred to as “Islamic mysticism,” reflecting the rich spirituality and interiority of the religion. Research into Sufism is a pressing matter to correct the current view of Islam through the lenses of terrorism and conflict.

Although Japan has a long tradition of research into Sufism that began with Toshihiko Izutsu (Keio University and McGill University, Canada), no institute has focused on Sufism in Japanese education and research. The inauguration of this center at Kyoto University is a groundbreaking venture for the research of Islam in Japan.

The Kenan Rifai Center for Sufi Studies conducted an educational program entitled “the Bridge of Two Easts: Education Programme for Sufi Culture” from 24 January to 27 February. It was held at Uskudar University (Istanbul) with the collaboration of the Kerim Foundation, the Prime Ministry of Turkish Republic Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, and the Institute for Sufi studies at Uskudar University. The following five students participated in the program from Kyoto University and the University of Tokyo: SAWAI Makoto (JSPS Post-Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University); INOUE Kie (Doctoral student, Graduate School of Letters, the University of Tokyo); and YAMAMOTO Naoki, MATSUDA Kazunori, and MADONO Kotoko (Doctoral students, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University). The co-organizers concluded the educational program with a panel of the same title as an attachment to the first symposium of the center entitled “Islamic Studies and the Study of Sufism in Academia: Rethinking Methodologies” on May 20 and 21, 2017 at Kyoto University. This special issue is based on the papers read by these young scholars on this occasion.

This special feature is composed of four articles. INOUE Kie, YAMAMOTO Naoki, and MADONO Kotoko’s papers are based on their presentations mentioned above. SAWAI Makoto’s paper was newly written for this feature, and his presentation in the abovementioned presentation was entitled “Beyond Commentary: Dāwūd Qayṣarī’s Spiritual Authority.”

Unfortunately, we could not include MATSUDA Kazunori's paper in this special issue. The title of his paper read for the panel was "Story of Prophet Muḥammad's Birth in the Urdu Writing of Shāh Aḥmad Sa'īd Mujaddidī."

The first article of the feature is "Re-experiencing the Myth of Adam: Junayd's Idea of *fanā'* and *baqā'*" on the Primordial Covenant" by SAWAI Makoto. In this paper, the author investigates how Junayd (d. 298/910), a prominent Sufi thinker in the classical period, discusses the terms *fanā'*, meaning "annihilation," and *baqā'*, meaning "subsistence" by focusing on the verse of the Qur'an (Q7:172) known as the "primordial covenant." In myth, this is the first contract between God and human beings, wherein human individuals in pre-existence emanated from Adam's loins and testified God as their Lord. Attempting to elaborate the idea of *fanā'* and *baqā'*, Junayd regards the unification between God and human beings in pre-existence as an ideal situation for Sufis. Human beings could have united with God in meaning if they had not made the contract with God. This means there is no gap between God and human beings. For Junayd, the experience of unification with God in this world is to re-experience their ideal situation in the primordial situation.

The second article is INOUE Kie's "The Practice and Principle of *Samā'* in Rūzbihān's Thought." One prominent Sufi in 12th-century Iran, Rūzbihān Baqlī, writes about *samā'* for the elite Sufis chosen by God and for the Sufi novices. He regards *samā'* as a mystical station or state that Sufis will experience on their way to God in accordance with the opinions of other orthodox Sufis about *samā'*. However, Rūzbihān treats the *samā'* ritual as a special way for the chosen ones. According to Rūzbihān, the elite could remember God's sweet voice, which they heard in the primordial past in God's land when He chose them as the elite in the *samā'*. Thus, in Rūzbihān's text, there are two explanations for *samā'*: an actual explanation of *samā'* as a Sufi practice manual for novices and an ideal *Samā'* theory as a specific way to God for the chosen ones. In this study, the author focuses on these two dimensions of his explanation of *samā'*, comparing it to the attitude of his other texts toward Sufi practices and theory.

The third article is YAMAMOTO Naoki's "Becoming the Perfected Man (*Insān Kāmil*) through Spiritual Journey and Practice (*al-Sayr wa al-Sulūk*): A Study of Ibrāhīm Ḥaḫḫī Erzurmī's *Ma'rifetnâme*." Ibrāhīm Hakkī Erzurmī (d. 1194/1780) was renowned for his magnum opus *Ma'rifetnâme*. After classifying the Islamic knowledge in the Ottoman tradition, the author raises a question: "What is the aim of *Ma'rifetnâme*?" To answer this question, the author compared this work to Taşköprüzâde's *Miftāḥ al-Sa'āda*, which collected more than 500 sciences and knowledge in the 16th-century Ottoman Empire. Taşköprüzâde counts two methods toward Allāh: the method of reasoning practiced by 'ulamā' and that of purifying self-practiced by shuyūkh. For him, the ideal man should be *majma' al-baḥrayn* (the point where two oceans meet), which combines these two methods.

Erzurmî divides the sciences into three categories: 1. Sciences about the worlds, 2. Sciences about the human body and soul, and 3. Sciences of gnostic knowledge and practice to reach Allah's presence. He also divides his book *Ma'rifetnâme* into three parts, which respectively deal with these three categories of sciences. For him, the ideal man should be the manifestation of the beautiful characters of the macro cosmos and at the same time, the micro cosmos. The author concludes that the *Ma'rifetnâme* is not an encyclopedic work, but aims to guide people to become *Insân Kâmil* (Perfect Man).

The fourth and last article is MADONO Kotoko's "Niyâzî-i Mıṣrî's Concept of Murshid and its Development Based on the Theory of *Insân Kâmil*." Niyâzî-i Mıṣrî (d. 1105/1694) is known for his collection of poems. However, the author elucidates the metaphysical aspect of his thoughts by focusing on his theory of *Insân Kâmil*. She raises the following two questions. 1. What is the *Insân Kâmil*? 2. How can people reach the stage of *Insân Kâmil*? *Insân Kâmil* is a key concept of the School of Ibn 'Arabî, to which Niyâzî-i Mıṣrî belonged. Niyâzî-i Mıṣrî developed the concept of *Insân Kâmil* based on his theoretical worldview of the Oneness of Being (*Waḥda al-Wujūd*), which is another key concept of the School of Ibn 'Arabî. On the other hand, his view on *Insân Kâmil* is closely related to the mystical paths to reach unity with God through a practical approach. The author emphasizes the importance of *murshid* in the actual tariqas, who is himself perfect and makes others perfect. In this article, the author bridges the theoretical and practical aspects of Sufism.

We hope this humble special feature will open a new door to the future development of Sufi studies, not only in Japan, but also in the world.