

**International Seminar on
Islam and Multiculturalism:
Exploring Islamic Studies within a
Symbiotic Framework**

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Southeast Asian Muslims in the Dai-Nihon Kaikyo Kyokai's Photography Collection

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After the Second Sino — Japanese War broke out in 1937, the Japanese authorities (politicians, military officers, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials) and industrial conglomerate leaders took a growing interest in Asian Muslims. In this context, two Islamic political and cultural events occurred in 1938; the opening of the Tokyo Mosque (demolished in 1986) and the foundation of the Dai-Nihon Kaikyo Kyokai (Greater Japan Muslim League; hereafter, the DNKK). The DNKK promoted Islamic studies, organized exhibitions, published magazines, and pursued other cultural, economic, and intelligence activities. In short, it represented the so-called Kaikyo Seisaku (Islamic Policies) during war-time.¹

The DNKK and its archives, which were long forgotten after its dissolution following Japan's defeat in WWII, have been re-evaluated recently. The DNKK's documents and photographs were classified as "Deposited Materials by the DNKK" one decade ago.² At that time the Photography Collection was digitalized and produced in CD-ROM, but some of it was unclear and remained unidentified.³ The Organisation of Islamic Area Studies at Waseda University re-digitalized the same photographs and constructed a database (<http://photo-kaikyokyokai.w-ias.jp/>).⁴ It covers about 1,550 items (2,000 photos including some versos) with titles, dates, venues, key persons and so on. In my poster, I showed 22 photos concerning the DNKK, especially its activities for Southeast Asian Muslims.

1. The IBK's photographic magazine *Nippon*:

The Islam Bunka Kyokai (Association of Islamic Culture, aka Perkoempoelan Keboedajaan Islam in the Malay language, founded in 1937; hereafter IBK), an academic precursor of the DNKK, issued the photographic magazine *Nippon (Djepoen)*, first in Arabic and later in Malay (one issue was published in each language) in 1938. This magazine spread propaganda. The DNKK inherited these IBK materials.

2. The DNKK's photographic magazine *Nippon*:

Following the IBK, the DNKK also published a photographic magazine under the same title, *Nippon* (1941-1942) and distributed it to Islamic countries. Twenty thousand copies of the first issue were printed. Captions were written in Japanese, Arabic and a third language (Turkish, Chinese, or Malay) depending on the issue. It is certain that *Nippon* was more aimed at propaganda for Japanese situations to Asian Muslims than to show its pro-Islamic attitude. In fact, the DNKK collected around 450 photos on various topics, such as Japanese landscapes, industries, education, and sports that were remote from Islamic interests. However, the DNKK's current Photography Collection contains none of the military photos that were published in the 4th issue; they must have been scrapped after the DNKK's dissolution in 1945.

3. Omar Kobayshi at the al-Azhar:

Hadji Omar Kobayashi Tetsuo was one of the earliest Japanese students at the al-Azhar University, Cairo (1936-1939). After four years of study, he engaged in the Japanese pacification of Sulawesi Island. He founded

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1 "Japan and the Middle East before World War II," *Annals of Japan Association for Middle East Studies (AJAMES)*, No. 23-2 (2007), pp. 193-274; "New Trends in Japan's Study of the Middle East," *AJAMES*, No. 28-2 (2012), pp. 51-144.

2 Tanada Hirofumi, "Islamic Studies in Wartime Japan," *AJAMES*, No. 23-2, pp. 215-236; "Islamic Institutes in Wartime Japan," *AJAMES*, No. 28-2, pp. 85-106.

3 "Constructing Database for Relations between Japan and Islam" Project, supported by JSPS & Research Office of Asian Societies, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University (eds.), *Photography Collection of the Greater Japan Muslim League Ver.1* [CD-ROM], Tokyo, 2006.

4 For verification, I mainly used the early biography on Japanese Muslims, Komura Fujio, *Nippon Islam-shi (Islamic History in Japan)*, Tokyo, 1988 and the following databases of national newspapers in Japan: *Asahi Shimbun* (Kikuzo II Visual: <http://database.asahi.com/library2e/>) and *Yomiuri Shimbun* (Yomidas Rekishikan: <https://database.yomiuri.co.jp/rekishikan/>).

Islamic associations in Sulawesi, Borneo, and Ambon Islands. According to Komura, these organizations had 300,000 members. Kobayashi was killed during a military operation in 1943.⁵

4. Present from Thai Muslims to the DNKK's president Hayashi:

"The Thai Muslim Association",⁶ claimed that there were 1.20 million Muslims in Thailand, presented Ex-Prime Minister General Hayashi Senjuro, the DNKK's first president (1939-1942), a plaque for the "future partnership". We couldn't confirm the later exchanges.

5. The Malay – Sumatra Delegation:

The DNKK hosted Muslim delegations from Northern China, Manchuria, Afghanistan, and other areas. These visits were golden opportunities to promote Japan's industrial, military, educational, and Islamic progress. The DNKK also welcomed the Malay – Sumatra Delegation, which consisted of 25 local leaders in August 1943.

6. Investigation Travel:

The IBK/DNKK dispatched their members for inspections to China, Manchuria, India and the Middle East. Some photos were published in the DNKK's internal magazine, *Kaikyo Sekai (Islamic World; 1939-1941)*. An IBK member was sent to cities in Southeast Asia such as Jakarta, Kotaagung, Purwakarta (Indonesia), Kuala Lumpur, Zamboanga (Philippines) in September-October 1937. The fact that the photographer's name is hidden suggests some problems.

7. Moro Special Students from Mindanao:

In 1943-1944, the Japanese Government invited 205 Special Students⁷ from Southeast Asia areas that Japan had occupied. The DNKK welcomed the Moro Muslim students from Mindanao. It held Moro Muslims in great esteem because under the General Staff Office's direction, the DNKK had dispatched its members to Manila to investigate the Moros in 1944; however they were not successful.⁸ In the Photography Collection, for example, we find Datu Mama Sinsuat (who later became a Philippines Senator) visiting the Tokyo Mosque with DNKK members and Halim Abubakar (who later became a Philippines Consul in Kobe) studying in the dormitory in Hiroshima.

One participant from Abu Dhabi asked whether there are other photos of Arabs besides Yemeni Prince Hussein, who participated in the Tokyo Mosque's opening ceremony. I answered that the DNKK's Photography Collection contains some photos regarding the IBK's Middle Eastern investigation trips to Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt as well as postcards, but the DNKK concentrated more of its attention on Northern and Southern China and Manchuria. The participant said that a similar database project of Arabic photos is being produced. Indeed, we need to compare our database with other collections and archives no matter whether they are photographic, documentary, domestic, international, cultural, political, military or whether they relate to intelligence.

5 Komura, *op. cit.*, pp. 253-268, 377-383.

6 This may refer to some precursor of the Central Islamic Council of Thailand, which was established in 1949.

7 Egami Yoshiro, *Nampo Tokubetsu Ryugaku-sei Shohei Jigyo no Kenkyu (A Study on Foreign Students from Southeast Asia during the Second World War)*, Tokyo, 1997; Kadono Hiroko; Murakami Asako (tr.), *Asian Leader's Children Who Were Called "Nampo Tokubetsu Ryugakusei"*, Tokyo, 2010; Leocadio des Asis, *From Bataan to Tokyo*, Lawrence, KS, 1979; Othman Puteh, *Debu Hiroshima*, Kuala Lumpur, 1987.

8 Komura, *op. cit.*, pp. 390-394.