



国立民族学博物館
National Museum of Ethnology



**Neither Near Nor Far:
Encounters and Exchanges between Japan and
the Middle East**

24-26 May 2019

Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

Woodstock Rd, Oxford OX2 6JF

Convenors:

Laurent Mignon, University of Oxford

Hatsuki Aishima, National Museum of Ethnology

Supported by

The John Fell Fund, University of Oxford

Japan Society for the Promotion of Science KAKENHI Grant Number 16KT0098

The Middle East Centre, St Antony's College, University of Oxford

Center for Modern Middle East Studies, National Museum of Ethnology, Japan

This is the third meeting of the working group which explores cultural encounters and exchanges between Japan and the Middle East. Without denying the asymmetrical power relations between the West and its formal colonies, we question western-centric approaches to globalisation and seek to understand the role East-East encounters contribute in global experiences. This workshop brings together presenters who examine how globalisation would be reified in the everyday lives of those who are situated outside the West.

At the first meeting, *Global Flow of Cultural Knowledge and their Afterlives* (Osaka, Dec 2016), we looked at various contexts in which knowledge about the other Orient was acquired and consumed. When situating the papers in historical contexts, we have come to understand how Europe used to mediate the knowledge flow between Japan and the Middle East, although in recent years there have been more opportunities for direct contacts. Therefore at the second meeting, *French Orientalism and its Afterlives in Japan and the Middle East* (Paris, Feb 2018), we reflected upon France's role in hosting and shaping the cultural encounters between the two Orients and its contemporary consequences.

At *Neither Near nor Far*, we further engage with the issue of globalisation by focusing on the exchange of religious ideas and material goods between the Middle East and Japan. Among the questions that are of direct relevance are, which dimensions of globalisation do East-East encounters reveal. What are the relations between the universal and the global? To what extent has the Japanese engagement with Islam facilitated Japan's understanding of Middle Eastern countries? How does global capitalism redefine taste and curiosity?

Ultimately, the aim is to engage in innovative studies of the complexity of the relationships between Japan and the countries of the Middle East during the modern era by promoting studies that bridge anthropology, economics, politics, history, sociology and the study of religions and cultures.

DAY I: Friday, 24 May 2019
The Investcorp Building

14:00-16:30

Film Screening of Masoud Taheri's documentary film on Toshihiko Izutsu, *The Eastern*.

16:30-17:00 **Break**

17:00-18:30 **Keynote 1**

Armando Salvatore (McGill):

"Situating the Study of Islam in Global Intellectual History: Toshihiko Izutsu's Middle-Earth"

DAY II: Saturday, 25 May 2019
The Board Room

9:15-9:30 **Introduction**, Hatsuki Aishima (Minpaku) & Laurent Mignon (University of Oxford)

9:30-11:15 **Panel 1: The Immateriality of the Universal**

1. Ulrich Brandenburg (University of Zurich):
"Fascinated by Fanaticism: Bushidō and the First Muslim Converts in Japan"
2. Kieko Obuse (Kobe City University of Foreign Studies):
"Allah as Amida: A Japanese Pure Land Buddhist's Engagement with Islam"
3. Nobuo Misawa (Toyo University):
"The Image of the Middle East in Japanese Pop Culture"

Chair: Ceren Lord (University of Oxford)

11:15-11:45 **Tea & Coffee**

11:45-13:00 **Keynote 2**

Tetsuo Nishio (Minpaku):

"Beyond Orientalism: Studying Belly Dance as a Globalised Cultural Phenomenon"

13:00-14:15 **Break**

14:15-16:00 **Panel 2: The Materiality of the Global**

1. Mateja Kovacic (Oxford):
"Super Smart Societies: How Japan and Dubai are Shaping their Robotic and AI Futures"
2. Atsuko Tsubakihara (Ryukoku University):
"Blooming Rose in Between: Manufacturing Iranian Beauty in Japanese Ceramic Industry"
3. Ramazan Hakki Öztan (University of Neuchâtel):
"Japanese Textiles, Tariffs, and Smugglers: The Making of the Middle Eastern Border Regimes, 1920-1939"

Chair: Walter Armbrust (University of Oxford)

16:00-16:30 **Tea & Coffee**

16:30-17:30 **General Discussion**

Note: There are limited spaces available for the workshop on Saturday.
If you wish to attend, please register by **Sunday 19 May** by contacting Laurent Mignon
(laurent.mignon@orinst.ox.ac.uk).