

Strategic Young Researcher Overseas Visit Program for Accelerating Brain Circulation

Dispatch Report

Year: 2013

Place of fieldwork: Main Library of Jamaat-e Islami, Pakistan

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- Research background

The aim of this study is to trace the history of Pakistan's languages and the extent and development of publishing culture as it relates to Islamic thought in Pakistan. Islamic theologian and politician Maulana Saiyid Abu al-Ala Maududi (1903-1979) and his publications are the subject matter of this research. Maududi was a controversial 20<sup>th</sup> century Islamist thinker who worked in South Asia. He founded the religious party Jamaat-e Islami (Islamic Party) in 1941 in Lahore and wrote over 150 books and pamphlets in Urdu.

- Research purpose and aim

Based on the result of my previous fieldwork, I commenced my main research on Urdu publication and on Maududi at the main library of Jamaat-e Islami in Lahore. Mainly, I met with my research advisor at Punjab University to get advice on my research progress. During my study period, I made two research presentations in Lahore and Brunei. The National Institutes for the Humanities of Japan (NIHU) Program for Islamic Area Studies, held the fourth international Islamic Area Studies Conference at Lahore University of Management Science from 2 to 4 November, 2013. I made a poster presentation on book markets in Pakistan, which are referred to as the "Urdu Bazaar," at this conference. Thereafter, the Joint International Seminar in Islam Studies held its *Islamic Studies in the Age of Globalisation: the New Horizons* conference at the Universiti Brunei Darussalam from 25 to 26 November, 2013. It was jointly sponsored by Kyoto University and the Universiti Brunei Darussalam's Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies. At this conference, I delivered my paper on Quranic Interpretation in South Asia, focusing especially on Maududi.

- Results and achievements by fieldwork

During this fieldwork, it was a very good experience for me to attend the two above-mentioned international conferences. This might have been the largest academic gathering ever held in Lahore, and more than 50 Japanese scholars participated. It was an honour to make a presentation in front of Pakistani and Japanese scholars who are involved in Middle Eastern studies or studies of other Islamic countries. I received much praise and many useful comments on my poster presentation from journalists, students and professors.



Photo 1: Poster session at the Lahore International Conference



Photo 2: Discussion with other participants

Morefather, this was my very first visit in Brunei. I was very impressed their academic passion for Islamic study which is officially supported by their government. The Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddin Centre for Islamic Studies was founded just few years before, but they already have many international students from Egypt, Germany, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Malaysia and so on. We enjoyed talking about the academic situation regarding Islamic studies.

Also, I was surprised that Maududi's books have been translated and published in Brunei. They were translated by a Chinese Muslim Bruneian. It is evidence that Maududi's thought is spreading and influencing Southeast Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.



Photo 3: With faculty and staff of the Sultan Omar 'Ali Saifuddien Centre for Islamic Studies

- Implications and impact on future research

The main purpose of my next visit is to survey materials about Urdu languages and literature that will show the relationship between Urdu, Arabic and Persian. This time I spent a lot of time to prepare the conferences. So, next time, I will try my best to visit universities, libraries and publishers as much as possible. Also, I will attempt to attend *dars* (Islamic study class) so as to obtain a good sample of the oral language of religious instruction and discussion. I already found that there are around 10 ladies who regularly attend and their purpose is not to become Islamic scholars but to solve their personal or family problems via Islamic wisdom. They have been very corporative with my research.