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Politics and Religion

Introduction

Junya Shinohe

Director of the Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions

The study of the “Between the Heaven and the Human” not only applies to China, but also its East Asian Confucian neighbors, i.e., to non-indigenous monotheistic religions that made their way into the Confucian cultural sphere.

Dr. He Guanghu is not only a leading scholar of Christian theology but has also taught Muslim researchers among his students. He also led the Chinese theology movement during the 1990s. In particular, He helped demonstrate the significance of dealing with the theological issue of social reform focusing on the discourse on the between the heaven and the human. The faith structure can be briefly summarized as follows.

Throughout the history of the Chinese people, religion has been associated with rituals of ancestor worship. Assessing the delicate relationship between heaven and mankind, the ruler was expected to venerate the heavens and love the people. Thus, politics became a religious ritual. The dynamics of faith at this point was altered so that the ruler represented heaven and subjects came to represent the masses. If the ruler neglected the will of heaven and failed to love the masses, he would forfeit his role as ruler. A revolutionary and sometimes religious principle would manifest itself through the concept of the mandate of heaven. The dimension of revolutionary Confucianism could be activated in such a case. As evident from the example of the Taiping Rebellion, “non-indigenous” religious influence can insight rebellion.

Let us consider what occurred as the authority of the Chinese emperors began to increase. As the concept of the “son of heaven” developed, the head of state (Emperor) began to exert tremendous pressure on his subjects. At times even Confucian ethics, which contained a revolutionary component, could not put the power of the thrown in check. After the 1990s, a similar dynamic of corruption manifested itself. Chinese theology attempted to reverse this course of power abuse as we shall see.

A similar process can be observed among the Japanese followers of Confucian ethics. After the Meiji period, Christianity began to be accepted as a revolutionary movement that placed special emphasis on the salvation of the poor.

And there are two possibilities in the structure of Confucianism: obedience to power, or becoming reform philosophy; as the example, the left-wing tendencies of the Wang Yangming school instigated the Oshio Heihachiro insurrection. There seems to have been a serious dilemma among intellectuals and religious followers whether they should submit to the conservative ethos or whether to carry out the revolutionary principles embedded within Confucian philosophy. The Dr. He's article structurally reveals this circumstance.

I would like to posit the following question. In the case of Confucianism, was it necessary to make an explicit choice that monotheistic religions and Buddhism require? In other words, does religion exist primarily to promote righteousness and social reform? While affirming the positive, it does not seem that one would have to make exclusive claims whether one should serve God or one's ancestors as is evident in the case of European Christianity and Arab Islam.

Buddhism has managed to coexist with Confucianism outside the framework of faith. This is not because Buddhism emphasizes loving the masses. Buddhism expounds the dharma to all sentient beings including the son of heaven. As mentioned earlier, Confucianism has a peculiar dynamic which allows it to focus on a particular class, but Buddhism does not try to display subservience to authority or plot to overthrow the structure. By contrast Confucianism places special emphasis on the rituals of ancestor worship. For the most part though, Confucianism does not manifest its potential for toppling the existing political structure.

In the case of Islam, God has blessed and sanctioned human relations, so people are free to engage in ancestor worship and the rituals associated with it. Thus, ancestor worship does not interfere with the principles of monotheism. Rulers and low ranking subjects as well as wives, sons, daughters and brothers are all part of the community of believers. They must avoid sacred objects such as stones and trees and are taught to dedicate themselves to the one and only God.

Since Islam was born into a preexisting mercantile culture, one tends to equate the perspective of the individual with that of Euro-American individualism. However, Islamic society values the primacy of patrilineal descent. Euro-American conceptions of human rights developed after the industrial revolution when large groups of peoples needed to be secured for labor. In the beginning, indentured servants and impoverished

farmers were freed from their feudal roles and could move away and choose their professions. Since Islamic nations did not undergo this process, the women are perceived to be still unliberated by the existing undemocratic institutions.

Admittedly, in the case of Islam, it is difficult to make religious faith the foundation for democratic movements and social reform. If enough individuals actively propose changes, reform is possible. Dr. He's article is interesting because it focuses on the element of choice when adopting non-indigenous religions of East Asia into the Confucian framework which is evolution of ancestor worship.

Dr. Nadler's Article

We would like to shift the discussion Dr. Arie Nadler's "Psychological Features Affecting the Israeli-Palestinian Relations and Thoughts about Facilitating Peace in the Middle-East." The study searches for solutions to the Palestinian crisis and is supported by both ethnic groups. The best scenario naturally would be to make Jerusalem the Israeli and Palestinian capitals the center of their nations. The article deals with the psychological barriers that are needed to move the peace process forward. This makes it difficult to end disputes that continually arise.

Since disputes between nations entail loss of life, destruction of property and extreme suffering, one needs narrative to justify one's position and demonize the enemy. In early movements, the Jewish people were perceived as a landless people returning to their land which was still unoccupied, but this land had long been settled by Palestinians. On the other hand, Palestinians argued that Jewish people had no ties to their land which was also a fabrication since the Jewish people have historical roots that date further back than 3000 years to Israel.

The victim mentality gradually developed into an identity that reflect special characteristics. They include: 1) the obsession over the damage and destruction in the past, 2) the tendency to try to convince others to recognize the brutality that was committed against them, 3) the lack of empathy toward others, 4) the transfer of pain and suffering from the past to the present by projecting enmity toward one's enemies.

The fourth element in particular is extremely problematic. The Palestinians had long suffered under Western colonial rule, so when the Jewish people arrived, the Palestinians transferred their enmity onto them. Their lack of empathy toward the suffering of the Jewish people created the psychological framework for the violence that would erupt. The negativity and futility of their victim mentality set up an agenda that would legitimize unethical actions by violent means. It is difficult to find a simple solution to

this problem since both sides are projecting their victim mentality based on past events onto the present and future. Theoretically, all people have free will to chart their future, but their victim mentality makes them neglect this possibility. In order to resolve this conflict, both sides have to recognize that they are simultaneously victims and aggressors. By departing from a single dimensional understanding of reality, both sides can begin to seek reconciliation.

Furthermore, the Israelis seem largely unaware of the special method of conflict resolution that is embedded within the Arab Islamic tradition. There is little awareness of the nuances of key concepts that affect the interpretation of what constitutes war and peace. These include: *sulf* (relative concept of war that affects treaties), *hudnah* (negotiations that lead to the termination of war), *salam* (Another name for God which also includes connotation of heaven). Both Jewish and Christian tradition have a dichotomic view on the difference between war and peace. Thus, the inability to understand each other's languages exacerbates the conflict's mentioned above.

One further point that this article alludes to is the fact that Palestinian refugees cannot return to their homes. This resulted from the split in their territory. The article that some action be taken for the sake of these refugees. Of course, this does not imply that he is dwelling on the victim mentality. Quite the contrary, this cycle must be avoided at all costs. The refugees are likely to be victimized in the future since no process exists yet to compensate the loss of their land and housing.

The value of this article lies in its application to various issues beyond the scope of this discussion. For example, it reveals how the psychological barriers created during the conflicts mentioned above can become applicable to subconscious levels of enmity in other historical disputes (specifically the example of East Asian anti-Japanese sentiments and the leaders' role in instigating this rhetoric comes to mind). This theory that relies heavily on psychological analysis can also be used to explain religious confrontation.

The articles that were composed in conjunction with these two presentations are invaluable in providing the theoretical framework of this essay.

Between the Heaven and the Human:¹ History, Paradox and Trend of Sino-Christian Theology Movement

Guanghu He

Introduction

When You Xilin² once wrote about Sino-Christian Theology,³ he asked, “Shouldn’t we understand it as ontological ‘Destiny’ of our society or ‘God’s Great Plan’, in a sense that goes beyond individuals’ will?” From the viewpoint of human history, “Destiny” or “Providence” is often realized through intentional and unintentional actions of human beings. Therefore, “inquiring into the relationship between the Heaven and the human (究天人之際)” (in the great Chinese historian Sima Qian’s words) is the necessary premise to “understanding of the changes from the past to the present. (通古今之變)”

1.

For the past two decades, many scholars have called Liu Xiaofeng and me as “Fathers of Sino-Christian Theology.” It means that the two scholars initiated the Sino-Christian Theology movement since mid-1990s in China. But I do not think so. Rather, I would like to emphasize that the concept of “Sino-Christian Theology” was raised firstly by Liu and then spread with Daniel Yeung, with resources of the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies in Hong Kong. Liu and Yeung did greatly contribute to the spread of this concept in mainland China, and I just gave some exact definition to it, arguments for its basis and significance, and discussions on the methods and approaches to it.

More importantly, I would like to emphasize that Sino-Christian Theology is just a Christian theology worked and written in Chinese language, in terms of the cultural resources and existential experiences of the Chinese. This theology can be traced back to the Chinese Nestorianism in 7th century and has begun with the Catholic missionaries in China at the turn of 16th and 17th centuries. If we say that Sino-Christian Theology began in mid-1990 with Liu Xiaofeng, Daniel Yeung and He Guanghu, how would we face the brilliant Christians from Matteo Ricci to Zhao Zichen who offered us those great works written in really beautiful classic and modern Chinese language?

Over the past two decades, I have explored the broad concept of Sino-Christian Theology and distinguished the “Christian studies or researches” from “Sino-Christian Theology.” I wrote in the introduction of *Sino-Christian Theology Reader*⁴ as follows.

Most of the essays of the three generations of the Chinese researchers in this field after the “Cultural Revolution” are not theological works in a strict sense, but works in Christian studies or at best, some writings about or on Christian theology.

The purpose of Christian studies by the “non-Christian” researchers is to learn some insights from Christianity and, with the insights which they think valuable, to reflect upon the problems in Chinese society. Of course, such efforts are beneficial to the Chinese people’s life. But, however, Christian theology is a discipline that explains and interprets the Christian belief systematically and methodically. It seeks to help people better understand and practice the Christian belief, to help them make their life better in this world, and eventually to help them free from the sin. Such understandings can be shared by the Christian and non-Christian Chinese researchers, so they have been working together in this field, disregarding the difference in their personal faith, having some common sense that Sino-Christian Theology has great value, which is important to the life of Chinese people.

Therefore, we can say that, according to *Study Guide of the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies*, Sino-Christian Theology (漢語神學) is a component and the core of Sino-Christian Studies (漢語基督教研究).⁵

2.

Historically speaking, we can find the appearance of Sino-Christian Theology in China is necessary. Here I would like to state the necessity of the theology from the viewpoint of Christian Philosophy of History.

From such a viewpoint, I once argued, in my essay *Cancer and Rebirth*⁶, that classical civilization developed in Greece and Roman Empire collapsed or died in the 5th century AD, after suffering from some “civilization cancer” caused by the distortion of human nature of many society members, which could be compared to the cancer in the human body. Then Christian civilization or Western Civilization was born in and grew from that cancer-affected body (i.e. in the same area and the same peoples). This became eventually a wholly new civilization. The spiritual features of Christianity, the life styles

and institutions created by Christians are essentially different from those of classical civilization, hence the term “Christian Civilization.” Finally, the modern civilization, which developed from it, has been leading the trend of the world from then on.

Arnold Toynbee identified twenty and more civilizations, but most of them have already diminished. On the one hand, Hindu or Indian, Islamic or Arabian and Confucian or Chinese civilizations have got much closer to modern civilization in the material aspect and, to lesser degree, in institutional aspects, i.e. are closest in the material aspect and second closest in the institutional aspect. On the other hand, the farthest is the spiritual aspect in which these old civilizations have been preserving their traditions and, to some degree, opposing the modern civilization.

Well, let me have a brief look at the history of Confucian civilization and its current situation, so we can see the necessity of the rise of Sino-Christian Theology in the Chinese civilization.

3.

Judging from scripts and relics of the Yin or late Shang dynasty (from 14th century BC.), Chinese civilization, from its birth to early adolescence, had a kind of religion as its spiritual basis. A basic characteristic of early Chinese civilization was the belief in “Supreme God (*Shangdi*)” or “Heaven (*Tian*).”

Two kinds of ancient scripts (i.e. oracle bone script and bronze script) were invented for religious needs and used for religious activities such as divinations and rituals. Ancient Chinese civilization and its political regimes had considered religion as important for the state, and had deemed obedience to the will of God or Heaven to be most important.

On the one hand, Chinese civilization required monarchs to “respect the Heaven and love the people,” but on the other hand, it accepted rulers as the “Sons of Heaven” (*Tian Zi*). The latter concept can be described as a “cancer gene” of Chinese civilization.

For three thousands of years, Chinese people had used the term “Son of Heaven” referring to the supreme leader in Chinese politics, since the rulers of Yin and Zhou dynasty (1066-256, BC.) held up their ancestors as sons of Supreme God or Heavenly Emperor (*Tiandi*), and equated worshiping Heaven with enshrining their ancestors. This insistence reflects the mythological thinking in the primitive and early civilization periods, that is, the belief that humankind's earliest ancestor is not humankind. Such an understanding that appeared in the early period of Chinese civilization has, for thousands

of years, not been abandoned, but rather been inherited.

We can understand that all the human beings were considered as descendants of “Supreme Being” in the early period of civilization. But we cannot understand at all that only one person, just for his political power and for no other reason, should be regarded as the descendant of “Supreme Being” or “Son of Heaven.” From modern or reasonable viewpoint, it is extremely absurd. Tragically, however, although the title “Son of Heaven” has been abandoned with the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911, Chinese people still have such a concept in their minds consciously or unconsciously even today.

The concept “Son of Heaven” mistakes the imperfect as the perfect, the worldly as the heavenly, the political as the religious, and the relative as the absolute. It distorted the Chinese civilization, made it into an unhealthy condition, bringing about many tragedies and disasters in Chinese history. However, “Son of Heaven” has already become a very important concept in Chinese political culture, and the political system established on this idea has been dominating all the fields of culture in China. Consequently, it is this “cancer gene of Chinese culture” that will eventually lead the whole civilization to an incurable state.

The concept “Son of Heaven” might absolutize monarchical tyranny by sanctifying it. Such absolutization had already taken place since the first Emperor of Qin Dynasty (221-206 BC) and had been institutionalized through reforming the “feudal system” into the “centralization system.” This institution has been inherited for over two thousand years. Confucians and Confucianism emphasized the idea that “Son of Heaven” should always “respect Heaven and love the people.” We can see that such a Confucian idea, which did not support the absolute authority of monarch, had been preserved, as was made clear by Mencius’s saying, “The people are to be valued most, the state next, the ruler least.” But such an idea could not bring about any effective governance system beyond monarchy. In the Chinese history, some Confucians resisted monarchical tyranny but failed. In the long terms, many of them fell into miserable situations, and Confucians, as an intellectual class, became obedient to and cooperated with the absolute monarchy, and so they gradually lost their dignity and trustfulness, especially in Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties (1271-1911).

On the other hand, Buddhists were conscious that “Son of Heaven” should be respected and relied on in China. Therefore the Discourse on “Monks’ Not Paying Homage to the Ruler”⁷ had changed into the assertion “Without reliance on the sovereign, it is difficult to sustain Buddhist practice.” Taoism, once enjoyed the rulers’ support during Tang, Song and Yuan dynasties in the middle ages, had been oppressed

together with folk religions and faded during the Ming and Qing dynasties. Since then, the influence of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism has become smaller than that of secular novels. The idea of “politics above religion” and the “pseudo-sanctification” of politics have led the whole society to “real secularization.”

In this way, to regard the monarch as the “Son of Heaven” and to consider absolute monarchy as a sacred principle have resulted in despotism. A desire for “infinite power” or “worship of power” is the universal sin of mankind. Historically, there are countless examples that committed such crimes happened in different civilizations. Histories of two large areas, however, have the most striking contrast -- the western and eastern sides of the Eurasian Continent.

On the western side of the Eurasian Continent, the Roman Empire (1st century BC -5th century AD) headed for military worship with its egotism and vanity, and its ruling class' greedy desires and arrogant pride caused the loss of social morality, which led to the destruction of the Empire. As the residents in that area had gradually become devoted to Christianity, the western side of the Eurasian Continent had experienced some rebirth, and a wholly new civilization was built, which had eventually developed to the most advanced and most influential civilization on the globe.

On the eastern side of the Eurasian Continent, after the Confucian principle “Worship the Heaven and Protect the people” (the rational part of theocracy) was put aside, and the nominal monarchy of Zhou dynasty was superseded by Qin's centralized tyranny (221 BC), Chinese civilization had fallen into a radically difficult situation. Because the idea “Son of Heaven” had not been changed even after repeated internal rebellions and external invasions, Chinese civilization had remained the state of autocracy, or even worse. In addition to “pseudo-sanctification” resulting “real secularization”, there was “high centralization” leading to “deep disorder.” The Xinhai Revolution (1911) abolished monarchical system on the surface, but in fact Chinese civilization did not avert actual autocracy, due to various wars and domestic conflicts. Because economic reforms from the 1980s to the present have not touched the political system, bureaucratic/crony capitalism combined with the centralized autocracy has further exacerbated the social condition, thus causing “completely decayed” situation.

Culturally speaking, all this is because of the institutionalization of worship of power that absolutizes and sanctifies political power. That corrupts human nature. The Chinese political culture can be traced back to the concept “Son of Heaven.” Such a “cancer genes of culture” has corrupted the human nature of Chinese bureaucrats and people since Qin dynasty, and has further infected the civilization. This kind of “cancer”

has corrupted the huge nation in just two decades with accelerated speed, like a “gene bomb”. So, nowadays the Chinese not only have to live with the polluted water, land and air, but also have to bear with the polluted human nature of more and more common people, especially of the numerous bureaucrats at all the levels, hence the numerous and enormous unjust things in everyday life.

Chinese civilization is now standing at a crossroad of life and death, and thus China must reconsider the great changes and their profound lessons from the past to the present in the neighboring countries as (the South and the North) Korea and Japan, also on the eastern side of the Eurasian Continent. And China must throw away the narrow and exclusive understanding of “national character,” and reconsider the history and its lessons of the revival or rebirth of civilization on the western side of the Eurasian Continent. After all, China needs philosophical and spiritual “reform and opening-up” and must accept, study, think and absorb Christianity.

“Theology” explores the divine nature, talks about God and denies the possibility of human being’s becoming “Son of Heaven” or the justification of secular being’s being sanctified. Therefore, it is urgently needed as a bitter but best medicine for the Chinese civilization. Actually, since the “reform and opening-up” in 1980s, some Chinese academics have come to study “Sino-Christian Theology” which disappeared 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, with many other humanities and social sciences in China. Now the revival and development of Sino-Christian Theology (and some other disciplines) are necessary for the survival of Chinese civilization and the development of China’s history, therefore it is inevitable. And on the other hand, since the rebirth and growth of theology are beyond the ability of the academics especially in China’s condition, such a surprising development can only be said, from the perspective of Christian Philosophy of History, to be a Providence or a Plan of God.

4.

In the same way, the Plan of God is beyond human consciousness and prediction. From this point of view, there are possibilities that unimaginable even irrational things could take place in the reality.

From the perspective of Christian Philosophy of History, the rebirth and growth of Sino-Christian Theology is “a large paradox”. Behind the large paradox, there were many various small paradoxes such as that most academics engaging in it came from other specialist fields, all of them were raised up in the atheist and anti-Christian settings,

nearly all of them took a positive even sympathy attitudes towards Christianity even though they were not Christians, while the non-Christian academics in the West took some negative attitudes to it. Observers noticing the anti-Christian tendency of Confucians and Communists in China (who have dominated Chinese culture) would say it would be impossible to influence the mind of much more Chinese people with Christian thought, but nowadays we seem to see the possibility emerging from the “impossibility.” That means that we seem to be witnessing a kind of miracle in salvation history happening in China.

In fact, if we shift our perspective from the small paradoxes in the small academic group in China today to a grand stage of the Chinese history and the world Christianity, we will be able to find the large paradox. It is a historical dialectic, in other words, that shows to us some positive meaning of historical “evil”, as it was argued in the “Theodicy.”

Since the so-called “family learnings system”⁸ in Han Dynasties (206 BC-220 AD) was superseded by the imperial official examination system in Sui (581-618 AD) and Tang (618-907 AD) dynasties and continued to Qing dynasty (1644-1911 AD), nearly all the Chinese intellectuals, as officials, have become the dependents of emperors, except the few elements with independent dignity thrown into some miserable situation. In final analysis, the power of autocracy and the dependence of Confucianism had come to strengthened each other. On the other hand, for Buddhism and Taoism, the idea “It is difficult to sustain religious practices without reliance on the sovereign” had been widely accepted and that had led to the situation of “politics above religion.”

Such a situation came to be worst for Christianity and Christian theology in the Chinese history. Because Christianity holds that only Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the humankind are creatures of God, so in front of God, all human beings are equal and sinners. Therefore, no monarchs could be raised up to the status of Son of God. So Christian theology is a theory against the concept “Son of Heaven”, the core of China’s traditional political ideology. For this reason, it is very difficult for Christian theology to be accepted by the Chinese rulers. This might be, at least unconsciously, the ideological reason for the so-called “China Rites Controversy” during Emperor Kangxi’s reign (1661-1722) in Qing dynasty. However, Christianity was harshly oppressed and persecuted many times in the Chinese history. Those oppressions were not only for political causes but also for ideological reasons.

However, what very unreasonable is that, as the political and cultural situations got worse and worse, sometimes even very dangerous, Christianity came to China during

Tang dynasty (in the 7th century), reentered China during Yuan dynasty (in the 13th century), rooted in China during late Ming dynasty (during the turn of 16th and 17th centuries), with the entry of Protestantism at the beginning of 19th century, and eventually spread all over China from mid 19th century to mid 20th century.

In the 20th century, China's political, social and cultural situations experienced dramatic and radical changes. Culturally speaking, during the first half of last century, the influence of Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and folk religions lost their influences due to the emergence of democratic and scientific ideas, but during the second half of the century, atheist and communist ideology had dominated China.

Furthermore, from the beginning of the 2000s, Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and folk religions have remarkably revived, and have come to get support from the political authorities. All the situations were disadvantageous for Christianity. But, however, the world has witnessed with surprise such a large paradox---- even after being oppressed to death or swept out from the society of mainland China in 30 years from 1950s to 1970s, Christianity has risen from ashes and have been growing very rapidly.

5.

In 1976 when Mao Zedong died, if anybody talked about Christianity, not to mention any theology, he would surely be recognized as a madman or idiot came from the Mars. In the 1980s, however, when *A Dictionary of Religion* (宗教詞典) and *Chinese Encyclopedia* (中國大百科全書) were published, the terms and entries about Christianity were included, so the knowledge about Christianity was introduced in objective manner for the first time since 1949. In late 1980s and early 1990s, the Sino-Christian Theology movement (in narrow sense, i.e. the trend of Christian studies by Chinese academics at that time) occurred and rapidly developed. Then during the turn of 20th and 21st centuries, numerous writings on or about Christianity began appear and flourished, including research papers, essays, monographs, translations, anthologies, journals, dictionaries and popular readers. And the influence of all the writings has expanded to different walks in life, including academics, businessmen, artists, lawyers, and possibly journalists and officials. These studies have a momentum which can be compared with the growth of Christianity in China today.

Keeping in mind the extremely difficult situation that political pressures have become more and more severe and the censorship on Christian books and journals has been systematically strengthened, I cannot imagine any other word better than “miracle”

to describe this development.

On the other hand, Sino-Christian Theology, with its small group of scholars, facing this old and giant political culture, the hard and totalitarian regime, and the enormously complex social and academic problems, is just like young David facing the giant Goliath. Only mention the academic area, Sino-Christian Theology, which has to stay on the marginalized status, has to deal with many multidimensional and interdisciplinary problems, including dialogue between Christianity, Confucianism, Buddhism and Islam; clashes among civilizations; relationships between ancient and modern cultures, between China and the West, between politics and religion, among the denominations and sects in Christianity, between modernity and pre-modernity, between modernism and postmodernism, between Christianity and the humanities such as literature, history, philosophy, ethics and aesthetics; between Christianity and social sciences such as sociology, anthropology, political and juridical sciences; and environmental problems, and so on.

Talking about the role played by Sino-Christian Theology in China's future, Daniel Yeung, Director of the ISCS⁹ said, "Sino-Christian Theology can promote the dialogue and integration of Christianity with various Chinese cultural traditions, and engaged in contemporary social improvements." It could join the reflection on, analysis of and criticism of the important issues regarding Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, Marxism and many social, ethical and environmental problems, "with Christian resources." Christianity could provide valuable ideas, proposals and solutions for many complicated public problems from its unique point of view.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that such studies experienced in the past a course from "Christian Culture Studies" through "Christianity Studies", to "Sino-Christian Theology." However, in terms of the social influences, we could see a trend from the intellectuals in humanities, through various walks in life, to the Chinese culture or Chinese civilization. So, we could hope that the trend of Sino-Christian Theology will enable it to play an important spiritual role for the rebirth of Chinese culture or Chinese civilization.

Notes

¹ This [abridged translation of] treatise is based on Prof. Dr. HE Guanghu's lecture, delivered at Doshisha University on November 9th, 2016. Footnotes were added by Li Jianfeng, Chinese-Japanese translator.

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- ² Professor at College of Chinese Literature, Shaanxi Normal University and Director of the Institute of Christian Studies at Shaanxi Normal University.
- ³ Sino-Christian Theology has broad and narrow meanings. The broad meaning refers to all Christian Theological Studies in Chinese language, while the narrow one refers to Christian (Theological) Studies in the areas of humanities in mainland China, which began in the 1990s.
- ⁴ He Guanghu and Daniel Yeung (eds.) *Sino-Christian Theology Reader* [漢語神學讀本] (2009) pp.7-15.
- ⁵ Sino-Christian Theology is a component and the core of Sino-Christian Studies [漢語神學是漢語基督教研究的核心與歸屬]
(<http://www.iscs.org.hk/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=224&Pid=3&Version=0&Charset=gb2312&page=0>) (Accessed July 6, 2017)
- ⁶ He Guanghu, *Holding a Candle in the Tunnel* [秉燭隧中] (2014) pp. 108-126.
- ⁷ This is a Buddhist idea that appeared in the Eastern Jin (317-420 AD) period. According to this idea, monks stand in a position of leading the masses on the path of enlightenment, drawing a line with the secular or imperial law. In the Tang(618-907 AD) period, Monks or the Buddhist law had become inferior to secular power or imperial law. In the Song(960-1127 AD) period, Monks had come to be completely obedient to secular power. That is to say, the politico-religious relationship between Buddhism and political power in China can be understood in the above three stages.
- ⁸ The early Confucianism had an education system in which a teacher invited to a family educated its children and relatives. In Han dynasties, the official scholars Boshi (Doctors) and then Confucian teachers passed their learnings to the students from generation to generation, the later generations just followed their teachers. In those stages, independence and freedom of learning were preserved. Such Confucian education and academic system was called Jiafa (家法).
- ⁹ *Communication of the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies*, Hong Kong [漢語基督教文化研究所通訊] (2013).
(<http://www.iscs.org.hk/Common/Reader/Channel/ShowPage.jsp?Cid=340&Pid=8&Version=0&Charset=gb2312&page=0>) (Accessed July 7, 2017)

Psychological Features Affecting the Israeli-Palestinian Relations and Thoughts about Facilitating Peace in the Middle-East

Arie Nadler

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1. General Historical Background of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict may be the oldest remaining protracted conflict on the world stage today. Although Jews and Arabs have lived together on the stretch of land between the Jordan river and the Mediterranean for centuries the relationships between these two communities turned conflictual when the national aspirations of these two peoples began to collide in the beginning of the 20th century. The aspirations of the Jewish people for self-determination expressed by the Zionist movement was met by similar development in the Palestinian community. The clash between the two national movements became more violent and seemingly insoluble with the problem of Palestinian refugees created with the establishment of Israel in 1948 and intensified in 1967 when thousands of Palestinians fled to neighboring Arab countries as a result of the 6 day war.

Without setting blame or guilt it can be said that after more than 100 years of violent clashes between the Jewish and Palestinian national movements the Jewish national movement, i.e., Zionism, created a prosperous and advanced Israel, while the Palestinians continue to be a stateless people many of whom live under Israeli Military Occupation. There is much more to be said about the historical roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But because I want to center my attention on some

social-psychological aspects of this conflict I will limit myself to this general review of its historical background.

The seeming insolubility of the conflict is perplexing. For close to 25 years the majority of us in the region know the shape of a hopeful peaceful solution: A two state solution that will satisfy Palestinian and Jewish peoples' aspirations for self-determination. Even more than that. We know the general contours of such a solution. Since the 1993 Oslo peace accords, through the Clinton peace plan in 2000 which was extended in the 2001 talks in Taba, and reaffirmed in the Geneva initiative in 2003 and the Arab-league Saudi based peace proposal the shape of things to come is clear. It consists of an independent Israel and an independent Palestine, that are separated by the 1967 borders with necessary land swaps, and a Jerusalem that is divided into an Israeli and Palestinian capital cities. If it so simple, one may justifiably ask, why is it so complex? If we know the shape of things to come, why not go there? Why continue fighting?

The answers are many and on different levels. I want to focus on one of these levels: The psychological barriers to a peaceful resolution of the conflict.

2. The Psychological Level: Conflicting Narratives

Conflicts between groups and nations are costly in terms of human lives, sufferings, and physical destruction. To deal with these costs people need to believe that their cause is just and legitimate and worthy to suffer for. Therefore, groups in conflicts develop narratives that justify their position and increase their members' readiness to endure the costs of conflict and continue to fight. Many of these narratives serve to legitimize the group's position and demonize the enemy (Bar-Tal, 2013).

Israeli-Palestinian relations have been shaped by such conflicting narratives from day one. Early Zionists spoke of the Jews returning to Palestine as a "people without a land returning to a land without people". This was of course erroneous. In the end of the 19th century, when the first Zionists began to resettle the land, Palestine had Palestinians living in towns and villages. This narrative continues to shape the attitudes of Israeli Jews today. A recent survey reports that 62% of Israeli Jews believe that "Palestinians are Arabs who settled in Palestine that belongs to the Jewish people" and that "they have no right in the land because they are not its original inhabitants". This narrative de-legitimizes the rights of Palestinians on the land. The Palestinian narrative is based on a similar de-legitimization of the presence of Jews on the same land. They claim that the

Jews have no real connection the land. They are viewed by Palestinians as Western colonists who came to exploit the indigenous peoples as they did all over Africa and Asia for centuries. Both narratives are based on fallacies. The land was not empty, and the Jewish people have historical roots in it for more than 3 thousand years. But, the adherence to these narratives together with denial of the adversary's narrative sustains the conflict. It bolsters the legitimacy of one's position as well as the illegitimacy of the enemy's.

These narratives go beyond telling the "story of the past". They also talk about the impossibility of peace in the future. Moreover, both sides have a negative mirror image of each other. They view the other as untrustworthy, cruel, violent and immoral, while viewing their own group as a beacon of righteous morality. In a recent survey 77% of Israelis regarded Palestinians as untrustworthy and 60% viewed them as having lower moral standards than other human societies. Although I have no comparable data on Palestinian image of themselves and Israelis, I am confident that these would be similar, or even more extreme, than those of Israelis.

I want to turn my attention now to the analysis of one particularly destructive narrative: That of "Victimhood" and the phenomenon of "competitive victimhood" and how it can be overcome.

a. The Narrative of Victimhood and Phenomenon of Competitive Victimhood

Let me introduce the concept of "victimhood" and "competition for victimhood" by a personal story.

A few years ago I taught a course on intergroup conflict in which a group of Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews met to discuss the relations between these two groups in the Israeli society. Some meetings were conducted in the shadow of violent events in the streets of Ramallah and Tel Aviv and some during more hopeful times when the prospects of a more peaceful future were in the air. But beyond these differences, one thing was always there: Each group claimed the role of victim to itself. Usually, around the second meeting Jewish participants would bring up 2000 years of Anti-semitism that culminated in the Jewish Holocaust, and the Palestinian participants would focus on their national disaster in 1948 (the Naqba), when Israel was created and many Palestinians became refugees. Each group put its pains and victimhood on display as if asking to convince themselves and others that they are the "Real Victims". It sometimes seemed like there was an empty chair in the middle of the room and each of the two sides was rushing to occupy the seat of the "The Real Legitimate Victim". They did not listen to

the other side's story. Empathy was not to be found. The only empathy was with the sufferings of one's group's (Nadler, 2012; Nadler & Shnabel, 2015).

This competition for victimhood is not unique to the Middle East. I heard the same conversations, with different content, when I had been in meetings with Serbs and Croats in the aftermath of the Balkan wars, and in dialogue groups between Cypriot Greeks and Cypriot Turks. I came out of these experiences thinking that (a) Groups in conflict work hard to adopt and maintain the victim's role, and (b) that this causes them to be blind to the other's pains and victimhood, prevents empathy and is a major stumbling block on the road to reconciliation.

What are the main psychological ingredients of victimhood? Our research and theorizing on interpersonal and intergroup contexts reveals 4 major characteristics of what we label as a "victim-state identity" (Berman, 2014). First is the preoccupation with with the victimization that the group had suffered. On the societal level this is expressed in the contents of the educational system, media channels and leadership statements. Past victimhood is given an even bigger voice during times of stress and under threatening conditions. The second characteristic is the constant demand that others recognize the group's victimhood. Beyond the preoccupation with victimization and demand for its recognition, victimhood is associated with lack of empathy for the suffering and pains of others. In the Israeli-Palestinian context, when Israelis view themselves mainly through the prism of being the victims of anti-Semitism and the holocaust they have no much patience for the Palestinians who suffer under military occupation only a few kilometers away. The fourth characteristic that our research reveals is that adopting a victim identity allows the displacement of aggression from the source of past pains and humiliation to a present day adversary. Thus, Palestinians who like other Arab societies may have suffered from centuries of exploitation and humiliation by the hands of the West divert their aggression onto the Israeli enemy who is taken to be the symbol of this past colonialist exploitation. This association of victimhood with displaced aggression and lack of empathy for others makes it a perfect psychological background for continued violence.

But the question of Why Victimhood is still unanswered. Generally speaking wearing the mantle of victimhood can be a negative experience for individuals and whole societies. It puts memories of pain, loss and powerlessness at center. So why do groups in conflict adopt it? The answer lies in the secondary gains that comes with being a victim. A major reason is the moral justification that comes with victimhood. Even when one's actions are abhorrent and immoral, victimhood exonerates the actor from guilt and

provides them with moral justification. It builds a wall between the group and the moral responsibility for its past wrongdoings against other groups (Shnabel & Nadler, 2015). When Israelis are preoccupied with being victims of the holocaust they can easily divert attention from looking at the lesser wrongdoings committed by them today. In one experimental study in social psychology it was found that when Jewish participants had been reminded of the Holocaust they felt less guilt over wrongdoings by Israelis against Palestinians than those in a control group. Similarly, Americans who had been reminded of the 9/11 terror attacks reported feeling less guilt about immoral actions performed by the US army in Iraq (Wohl & Branscombe, 2008). Moreover, victimhood absolves the group from the responsibility to do something to change the current violence to a more peaceful future. Victimhood spells passivity. When a nation adopts a victim identity the other side needs to make the first step forward. The sense of entitlement that comes with victimhood translates to the expectation that “If they make the first step forward- we’ll see”. The destructive nature of victimhood when both adversaries adopt this position needs no elaboration. The paralysis between two nations that compete for victimhood is a significant element for the protracted nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The destructive nature of competitive victimhood is not limited to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Other research indicates that attitudes of competitive victimhood expressed in sentences like “our group suffered much more than the other group during the conflict” are related to lower willingness to forgive the enemy and lesser readiness for reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the former Yugoslavia (Noor, Shnabel, Halabi & Nadler, 2012). This tells us something important about the destructive role of victimhood in conflicts between groups.

How do societies nurture victimhood-based identity in their members? Leadership has an important role in this. I’ll begin with an example from the Israeli side of the fence. We live in midst conflict. Under these circumstances leaders are needed to make sense of reality for people. To make sense of the threats that surround us Israeli leaders have, too often, evoked the holocaust and anti-Semitic persecutions as a basis for a victimhood-based collective identity. Anti-Semitism and the Holocaust are not imaginary events. They are real historical memories and force us to be vigilant in our relations with others. But when this turns into the only perspective through which we are told to view the world around us, it robs us of the hope of ever escaping from this past. When the holocaust is used by an Israeli leader as the rationale for pursuing policies in the present it implies that everything and anything is justifiable to prevent a future slaughter. By the same token, Palestinians who wear the badge of the Naqba as the defining element of

who they are, do exactly the same. In fact, when one is a powerless victim, even horrendous terrorism that targets children can be morally justified.

Leaders of victimhood whose eyes are set on the past cannot lead us to an existence that is free of the demons of this traumatic past. I am saying this as one who is committed to the right of Jewish people for a secure national home in their ancestral homeland. I also remind myself that the threats that surround us are not imaginary. The supreme leader of Iran calls publicly for the destruction of Israel and there are many in our region who would truly like to see us evaporate into thin air. What I am saying is that when a leader in a society like ours adopts a victimhood-based collective identity he or she implicitly tells listeners that the painful past determines the future. It is bound to repeat itself. These victimhood-based messages disregard the fact that we can and should mold our own future. A future-based hope is also an alternative. I think that the late Itzhak Rabin understood it.

b. How can Competitive Victimhood be Ameliorated?

In the last part of my talk I want to consider ways in which victimhood-based collective identity can be overcome. I shall consider 2 major routes that have been empirically tested: The first is the induction of Common Identity between the adversaries, and the second considers how acknowledging the other's trauma causes them to step off the podium of victimhood-based collective identity.

In many conflicts, especially ones that are costly in human lives and sufferings, both groups are victims and perpetrators of pain and humiliation. Research indicates that when Israelis and Palestinians are induced to view themselves as both being victims of the conflict, they are readier to reconcile. This is also true when instead of viewing the enemy as the exclusive author of aggression and violence they are reminded that both parties are perpetrators of wrongdoings against the other (Shnabel, Halabi & Noor, 2013).

Sharing a common identity with the adversary as a "victim" or a "perpetrator" implies a relatively complex world-view in which "we" and "they" are all human beings that suffer and inflict suffering during conflict. This perspective is radically different from the uni-dimensional world-view associated with victimhood-based collective identity where our group is the innocent victim and the enemy group is the guilty perpetrator. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with a complete evil. Reconciliation is more likely when group members replace their tendency for a victimhood-based social identity to a more complex view that allows them to view

themselves and the “enemy” as victim and perpetrator. Echoing a similar position Desmond Tutu (1999) wrote that victims will forgive their perpetrators only if they could understand them, and Staub (2006) has based his work on reconciliation in Rwanda on a similar premise. This work encouraged Tutsi victims to understand the conditions and situations that drove the Hutus to behave as they did and accept the fact that under similar circumstances they could have had also succumbed to the social pressures that their tormentors had yielded to, and committed atrocities against the other group. This is an “in vivo” demonstration of the way in which replacing the black-white view of entitled victims vs. guilty perpetrators, into a more complex understanding that we are all united by our frail humanity that includes the potential for being cruel perpetrators and powerless victims, can further reconciliation.

The above indicates that ridding oneself of the exclusivity of victimhood-based collective identity plays a constructive role in intergroup relations. Yet, somewhat paradoxically, the opposite is also true. Substantiating and acknowledging victimhood also paves the road to reconciliation. A good place to begin the development of this argument is by considering its opposite: The effects of denying the group’s victimhood. A recent real world example for this is the negative impact that the public policy of Iran’s denial of the holocaust has had on Israelis of all walks of life and political persuasions. It made the collective identity of Israelis as victims more entrenched and increased their fears and concerns. For the victim the denial of victimhood is a re-victimization.

In our research we have demonstrated the positive effects of acknowledgment of the group’s victimhood by the adversary, on conciliatory attitudes towards the enemy in a number of studies conducted with Israeli-Jewish and Palestinian participants. In this research Israelis learned that a *majority or minority* of Palestinians acknowledge the victimization of Jews during the second world war, and Palestinians learned that a *majority or minority* of Israeli-Jews acknowledge their sufferings as refugees. I shall briefly describe the results of one such field experiment. Israeli Jews had been told that they will participate in two unrelated studies. In the first they would read about the findings of a recent poll conducted among Palestinians, and in a second they will participate in a large survey on various aspects of social and political attitudes. In the ‘acknowledgment of victimhood’ condition participants learned that 73% of Palestinians believed that the holocaust had been a heinous crime against the Jewish people. In the ‘denial of victimhood’ condition participants learned that only 23% of Palestinians held this position. In a different context they had received the large survey questionnaire

which included over 100 questions covering different topics. Among these there were a few questions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its possible resolution. I shall briefly summarize the results. In general, the information that 73% of the Palestinians acknowledge the Holocaust as a heinous crime against Jews led Israelis to trust Palestinians significantly more and express more conciliatory attitudes towards them than when only 23 % of Palestinians had been said to hold this position. But of greater interest are the responses indicating that the acknowledgement of the holocaust by Palestinians led more Israeli Jewish participants to support a two-state solution based on *the return of Israel to the 1967 borders with a land swap, "partition of Jerusalem to an Arab and Jewish cities and the administration of the sacred places by a joint Israeli-Palestinian body"*, than in the low acknowledgment condition. A parallel experiment in which Palestinians-Israeli citizens had read a survey indicating that 73% or 23% of Israeli Jews, agree that the creation of Israel caused much sufferings to the Palestinians showed a similar pattern of findings. For example, when their sufferings as a stateless refugees had been acknowledged they were more willing to agree that in a final settlement Palestinians need to give up on their demand for an unlimited "right of return" of Palestinian refugees into Israel, than when it had been acknowledged (Hameiri & Nadler, 2017).

This sends a hopeful note. The simple gesture of acknowledging the sufferings of the adversary led to softening of conflict-related attitudes. It led participants to advocate more pragmatic attitudes. It seems to have allowed them to step from behind the wall of the victimhood-based identity that has been a destructive force in our region.

Acknowledging the adversary's victimhood is not a magic cure but may be an important first step to building trust. The mutual readiness to acknowledge the other's victimhood expresses people's success in freeing themselves from the shackles of their need to monopolize victimhood and the self-centered identity that such an attitude nourishes. Unfortunately, all too often leaders in our region, and elsewhere, view victimhood as a zero-sum competition. They seem to believe that acknowledgment of the other's pains detracts from their group's justice and power.

Let me summarize by going back to where I began. The intractable nature of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is anchored in conflicting narratives in general, and competitive victimhood in particular. Yet, this is not an unchangeable fate. There are ways we can use that will ease our move out of a traumatic past into a more hopeful future. Acknowledgment of the other's victimhood is such an important first step.

3. Final Thoughts on Conflicting Narratives in Cross-Cultural Perspective

Cultures have different mechanisms and processes regarding the reconciliation of conflicts between individuals and groups. For example, in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict parties are not sensitive enough to the adversary's cultural context. Most Israelis are not familiar with ways to end conflict in Islamic and Arab cultures. They are not familiar with the nuances that exist between concepts such as Sulha, Hudna and Salaam. Although I am not an expert on Islamic or Jewish culture and philosophy, I think that the Jewish culture is less nuanced than the Islamic-Arab culture regarding the gradation that exists between war and peace. I think that the Jewish culture, and maybe Judeo-Christian tradition in general, has a more dichotomous view of the distinction between war and peace. Not being aware of such cultural nuances may exacerbate conflict rather than ease it.

On a more general level, the distinction in social psychology between independent and interdependent selves is relevant here. This distinction was originally conceptualized as representing the differences between people raised in Eastern cultures like Japan and those raised in Western cultures like the US (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Briefly stated the Western self is labeled as an "independent self" driven by individualistic motivations for personal success and self enhancement, while the Eastern self is an "interdependent self" that is said to be driven by motivation for group achievement and social harmony. This results in many behavioral differences. For example, the independent self seeks to make itself heard in the group even at the cost of conflict with others, and the interdependent self seeks to maintain social harmony even at the cost of suppressing own individuality. These, and similar cultural, differences have direct implications to the field of conflict and reconciliation. The meaning of reconciliation and related concepts such as victimhood, perpetrator's guilt, apology and forgiveness are culturally determined.

I choose to conclude with these general comments. Much of the social sciences, social psychology included, is a Western-based science. This has resulted in a relative lack of attention to differences in social behaviors across cultures. Yet, the practices of ending conflict are anchored in cultural values and beliefs. Viewing reconciliation processes through a cross-cultural perspective is increasingly important in today's globalized world where new information technology are narrowing geographical distances between people and cultures.

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Unstable Balance between Theocracy and Democracy: A Preliminary Study of Religious Democracy in Iran

Kenji Tomita

Abstract:

President Hassan Rowḥānī, immediately after his re-election in the Iranian presidential election on May 2017, provoked religious-political controversy over the relationship between democracy and theocracy with Muslim elders.

The issue of consistency between Islam and democracy has become one of the fundamental problems not only for Iranian Shī'a but also for the modern Islamic world including Sunnis since 19th century, particularly after 20th century. Therefore, the current domestic controversy in Iran must be also significant for the whole Islamic world as a case study even if there is uniqueness of Shī'a doctrine on the background of the issue.

As regards this issue, I would like to review the BBC Persian news article and comment for Iranian at first, then combining with the textbook for Iranian high school students for reference to see official positions and the constitutionalist argument of Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī who had been a Shī'a religious leader in the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11. This review will shed a thoughtful light on problems of modern Islam.

The Constitutionalism that Nā'īnī advocated was based on cooperation between the religious community and the people in order to restrict power of the despotic and arbitrary tyrannical monarch. While this structure had basically remained until the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 that Āyatollāh Khomeinī led, the despotic monarch as common enemy, eventually playing a role of promoting cooperation between the religious community and the people, had been lost with the abolition of monarchy by the revolution. It can be seen that this structural issue has continually aroused friction and controversy between constitutionalists and anti-constitutionalists. In addition, we cannot deny the aspect that the United States (and Israel¹) has taken over the role of tyrannical monarch more than before.

Keywords:

President Hassan Rowḥānī, Nā'īnī, Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11, Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, Democracy and Islam

1. Controversy over Religious Democracy

1-1. Background

First of all, prior to reviewing the perspective discrepancy and controversy between President Rowḥānī and religious conservatives' heavyweights, occurring just after the Iranian presidential election, we will briefly explain the facts in this context.

In the Iranian presidential election on May 20, 2017, incumbent President Rowḥānī won the election massively against the cleric presidential candidate Ebrahīm Ra'īsī who was seen as a rival. He was said to be a man who Supreme Leader Khāmene'ī had expected as his future successor, and some of religious heavyweights and elders had recommended him as the next president to look ahead to the future.

On the other hand, a series of tense incidents took place in neighboring countries. On the same day [May 19] of the Iranian presidential election, US President Donald Trump started on his first excursion and visited Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, and met together with more than fifty Arab and Muslim leaders to set up a campaign to contain Iran. On June 5, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt have broken diplomatic relations with and imposed sanctions on Qatar that was suspected of interfering with the campaign. On June 7, IS, or Islamic State, launched a terrorist attack on the Majles (Parliament) building and the Āyatollāh Khomeinī mausoleum in Iran. Only two weeks later, on June 21, the King of Saudi Arabia sacked the crown prince to make his own son Defense Minister Moḥammad bin Salman the heir to the throne. Meanwhile, on June 23, many people had gathered in public squares of Tehran to celebrate Jerusalem Day,² chanting an anti-Rowḥānī slogan "Death to Hypocrite" and criticized President Rowḥānī by comparing him to former President BanīṢadr.

Here, I will explain the historical background of the word "hypocrite (*monāfaq*).” At the beginning of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, the Islamic Republican Party or IRP (Khāmene'ī and the late Rafsanjānī were top officials of the party), promoting the establishment of "Governance of the Islamic Jurist (*faqīh*)" that Āyatollāh Khomeinī advocated, had been steadily expanding its power. However, other various political and religious groups had also joined the Iranian Revolution but were forced to drop off or to be inferior to the growing IRP. They gathered under President BanīṢadr after he had been elected to the first President of Iran as a stronghold to resist and prevent the IRP's domination. Those groups included pro-western citizens of Tehran, and the People's Mujahedin of Iran also known as the MEK (*Mojāhedīn-e Khalq*) that had a mixed idea of left-wing ideology and Islam. *Monāfaq* is a word Āyatollāh Khomeinī pointed to the

MEK. Afterward, the MEK leader Mas'ūd Rajavī exiled to France with then-President BanīŠadr, and most members of the MEK were forced to exile to Iraq that was at war with their own country at the time. In conjunction with their exile, a series of bombing terrorism aimed at the IRP headquarters and other places have occurred, advocating resistance to the domination of the IRP. Therefore, Iranian demonstrators who attended rally at Jerusalem Day 2017 had compared Rowḥānī to BanīŠadr in an attempt to help evoke such situations of the Islamic Revolution.

Under these circumstances, the controversy over and opinions about religious democracy have appeared in the center of Iran. At first, I will introduce a news report from BBC Persian news website.³

1-2. News Report: Theocracy or Democracy?

“On May 20 [2017], incumbent President Rowḥānī overwhelmingly defeated a rival and conservative hardliner candidate Ebrahīm Ra'īsī in the Iranian presidential election and returned to the presidency.⁴

Rowḥānī published the words that Supreme Leader and Grand Āyatollāh Khāmene'ī uttered in 1987 [when he was president of Iran] on Instagram, saying “significance of election of rulers by the people,” which was seemed to be Rowḥānī's answer to criticism from conservative clerics against him.

For instance, a conservative cleric Aḥmad Jannatī chairman of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership, said, “Considering people's opinion and views as sources to justify the Islamic governance contradicts the fundamentals of Islam and should be rejected. This was a reaction to what Rowḥānī said by quoting *Nahj al-Balāgha (The Peak of Eloquence)*, a collection of sermons, letters and quotes of Imām 'Alī.⁵ At that time Rowḥānī said:

“The concept of people's opinion [the will of the people] is not a gift from the post-Renaissance West. We also have had a religion [of the Twelver Shī'a Islam] respecting ‘a Leader of the Faithful [i.e. Imām 'Alī],’ which is based on the governance relying on people's opinion. Imām 'Alī who had been introduced by the Prophet as his successor and the leader (of Umma, i.e. Community of the Faithful) to them considered himself that he had sovereignty [indeed he had been appointed by the Prophet as his successor as mentioned above] but listened to and relied on people's opinion through election. That is, Imām 'Alī had trusted people's opinion and made the legitimacy of governors and governance subject to people's pledge of

allegiance under the Islamic regime.” This Rowḥānī’s view was similar to what Supreme Leader Khāmene’ī had once said, but rejected by the Assembly of Experts for Leadership.

Grand Āyatollāh Nāṣer Makārem Shīrāzī also said, “It is not people that elect a ruler in Islam. God decides who rules.” And Shīrāzī said to President Rowḥānī, “As for *velāyat* [guardianship or leadership], the Qur’an mentions it many times but your argument is only based on a text of *Nahj al-Balāgha*. Obviously, in the Twelver Shī’a Islam, it is not people but God that chooses Imām.”

The Assembly of Experts for Leadership released its statement with signature of chairman Jannatī after Makārem Shīrāzī had expressed the above opinion. The statement said, “People’s leadership or political and social leadership does not refer to an agreement or consensus of people’s opinion and hope. What matters is *velāyat* or [to lead the people in] the spirit of Islam.” It added, “Before quoting from *Nahj al-Balāgha*, you should pay attention to the fact that Qur’an sanctifies the status of *velāyat* like that of the Prophet.” It also said, “The pledge of allegiance does not mean listening and knowing people’s opinion but, more importantly, [people’s] obedience and [people’s] pledge of allegiance to holy leaders of Islam. So, we must not compare it to contemporary public opinion and election.”

About a week ago, Supreme Leader Khāmene’ī severely criticized Rowḥānī government and said, “we must not repeat the experience of 1980 [when our country had been governed by President BanīṢadr immediately after the Iranian Revolution] that caused a bipolar society and a hostile relationship bisecting people. This seemed to be his severest criticism against President Rowḥānī.

However, after winning the presidential election, Rowḥānī said the result of this election showed that the majority of the people had agreed with him, not rivals.

1-3. Comment on Controversy between Theocracy and Democracy in Iran

The following is a comment on BBC news website about this controversy.⁶

“President Rowḥānī’s remarks uttered a few days ago especially on democratic foundation under the [current Iranian] Islamic regime provoked criticism and refutation from some prominent Iranian clerics. About the governance of Imām ‘Alī, Rowḥānī said, “Imām ‘Alī considers people’s opinion [the will of the people] and election as the

foundation of leadership and governance.” Further, he said, quoting Imām 'Alī, that those who were elected by the people have sovereignty over the society. In response to this Rowḥānī's view, Grand Āyatollāh Makārem Shīrāzī said, “Rowḥānī is only focusing on a small part of *Nahj al-Balāgha* but ignoring other texts. The highest priority text we should refer to is Qur'an.”⁷ And Shīrāzī quoted some verses of Qur'an and said, on the basis of those verses, that those who rule the society have to be designated by God. Other religious heavyweights including Meṣbāḥ Yazdī and Nūrī Hamadānī severely criticized Rowḥānī's view and said, like Makārem Shīrāzī, that sovereignty was divine and irrelevant to the people.

It can be said that such differences of views go back to the era of Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11. The two worlds (i.e. the Shī'a world and the Sunnī world) had accepted one political system until they encountered the expansion of the Western democratic system. The caliphate system had expanded and been accepted widely in the Islamic world. On the other hand, the Shī'a world had a tendency toward the sultanate system since the Safavid dynasty. Under this system, ulamas were also regarded as collaborators to power as part of sovereignty. But after the theme of delegating sovereignty to the people through election and of limiting caliphate's and sultanate's power had been presented, the contradictory ideas between Popular Sovereignty and God's Sovereignty appeared as political controversy.

The axes of this controversy were the two clusters of Qur'an verses (and two supplementary *hadīth* groups belonging to each cluster, and various political acts of political and religious leaders in the early Islam period.) Unconditional supporters of democracy cited the Qur'an verses on consultation (*shūrā*)⁸ and insisted that the Prophet had governed through consultation with the people. Opponents, however, cited the Qur'an verses on God's Sovereignty⁹ and stated that God would monopolize sovereignty.

Depending on how to solve the contradiction between these two different clusters of sources of the Islamic law (verses of Qur'an), three general perspectives have been presented. First, the democratic perspective fully accepted the framework of (modern Western) democratic system and regarded it as a legal and legitimate system from the standpoint of Islam. Those who supported this view are participants of the Freedom Movement of Iran led by Mehdī Bāzargān who was the prime minister of the interim government after the Iranian Revolution. In his book *The Afterlife and God: The Aim of the Sacred Mission of the Prophets*, Bāzargān said that the Qur'an verses on sovereignty were (telling) the spread of the God's authority to create the world, and that

unconditional and absolute authority of God on the day of final judgment is related to the field of the Hereafter and such context is irrelevant to the Islamic political system [that is directly related to secular politics, i.e., what people do rather than God does.] Bāzargān fundamentally opposed the use of the term “Islamic governance” but rather cited the term “governance of Muslims.” This difference indicates that, because basically there is no specific governance system in Islam, and therefore the issue of sovereignty depends on people’s consensus, if Muslims occupy the majority in a society, the system arising from there will naturally be in harmony with Islamic values.

This argument had also spread among thinkers in the Sunnī world. 'Alī 'Abd al-Raziq (1887-1966) insisted in his controversial book *Al-Islam wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm* (Islam and the Principles of Governing) that there was no specific political system in Islam, and he regarded the democratic system as [one of] the system harmonizing with the values of Islam. Because his book provoked anger of cleric elites of the Azhar Academy, he was expelled from there. However, his followers have been still increasing among religious thinkers in both Sunnī and Shī'a worlds.

The second perspective definitely refused democracy and saw that the foundation of governance could not come except from God. Proponents of this argument opposed the term “Islamic Republic” during the early period of the Iranian Revolution, but instead they recommended the term “Islamic governance.” They did not deny election and the people’s opinion [or the will of the people] but took a position that it should not be the basis of political system. They thought that election would be merely a means of stimulating and strengthening a sacred legitimacy of Islamic rulers. Thus, the term “extension of hand (*baṣṭ-e yad*)” is used to mean that Islamic rulers expanded their power by way of accepting the people.

In other words, the second perspective did not think that the people’s opinion [or the will of the people] would be the source of legality and legitimacy of Islamic rulers, but that Islamic rulers should be elected by religious experts based on criteria established by God. (In that case, the role of) The people’s will is merely a factor that gives rulers political power. This view is a basis of the system of [electing] Supreme Leader in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Supreme Leader, or the first ruler of the Islamic Republic of Iran, is a kind of leader having full authority. The people cannot elect him directly, but prominent clerics only elect him among clerics within the framework of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership. Of course, those clerics are elected by the people through election.

The controversial point here is that in this system, contrary to the [Western]

democratic system, the people are severely restricted in their voting rights and could not elect non-clerics as members of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership, and therefore the people cannot directly elect Supreme Leader.

The third perspective is synthesis of the above two, and many thinkers have presented it in a similar way. One of the most outstanding thinkers in this perspective is Muḥammad Baqir al-Sadr (1935-1980), a martyred cleric in Iraq. First of all, he assumed that the matter of ruling (or governance) belonged to God and it was sacred. He said, however, that God imposed a condition on rulers who God elected and if they could not fulfill the condition, they would lose control, and he added it depended on people's acceptance. As a result of this condition, Al-Sadr thought, legitimacy of Islamic rulers would be based on people's election. What this synthesis does mean is that if a ruler elected by God cannot fulfill the condition of people's acceptance, or if the ruler attempts to impose its rule on the people and government, he would lose legitimacy given by God.

Accordingly, rulers who have legitimacy by God must take on the position through democratic means, and the people should accept their obligation that they have to be based on a religious viewpoint of electing a ruler from the perspective of God. If the people do not fulfill their obligation, whatever crimes they may commit, the ruler has no right to exercise enforcement or punishment against the people.

But several rehashed controversies over this theme [i.e. balance between theocracy and democracy] show that there is still room for discussion about the current Islamic regime in Iran. The political structure of Islamic Republic has been built on balance between religious legitimacy of *velāyat-e faqīh* (guardianship and leadership of the Islamic jurist) and people's acceptance through the framework that many people participate in election.

Maintaining this balance has always been difficult and made the groundwork for situations where both of those who supported the ruler designated by God and those who upheld democracy could be dissatisfied. Such conflict and controversy will continue, like a flow of political change in Islamic Republic, until either of them dominates and the other is suppressed.”

* * *

It can be said that behind this friction between Muslim elders and President Rowḥānī, there are structural features of the current Iranian regime i.e. the Islamic

Republic of Iran. For instance, among those features is included a “problem” that Article 5 and Article 6 of the current Iranian Constitution prescribe Popular Sovereignty and God’s Sovereignty, respectively, before and after, as the footnote notes.¹⁰

However, we can find there that the current Iranian regime has an attitude which does not negatively regard this as a “problem” but view it positively as a noteworthy “feature” as below.

For instance, the official textbook for Iranian high schools, *Modern History of Iran* (for the third grade of high school students of all courses) explains as follows.¹¹

“As prominent polemicists of Islamic Awakening in modern history, the following three names can be cited: (i) Nā’īnī [of Iran]; (ii) Hassan al-Banna [who was an Egyptian school teacher, known for the founder of the Muslim Brotherhood]; and (iii) Khomeinī. Among them, Nā’īnī [as a revolutionary constitutionalist ulama during the Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11] revealed for the first time his idea of Islamic Constitutional Governance System (*Hokūmat-e Mashrūṭe-ye Mashrū’e*) in his book and presented a kind of Religious Democracy (*Mardomsālārī-ye Dīnī*) against the Western secular democracy. [On the other hand, Faḍlu’llāh Nūrī, a leader of conservative ulamas, breaking away from and hostile to the Islamic Constitutional Movement] had [drafted and] added an article prescribing that [at least] five first-grade Mujtahids shall monitor anti-Islamic legislation in Parliament, as Supplementary Article 2 of the Constitution¹², and signed it with his own blood [proclaimed on October 8, 1907].”

* * *

F. Nūrī (Faḍlu’llāh Nūrī) saw the Constitution that constitutionalists had been proposing would weaken the Sharī’a or Islamic law and pave a pathway for the invasion of Western colonialists into Iran.¹³ Democrats in the Constitutional Movement insisted on their position, leading to secularism, that all the people, irrespective of their religion, shall be equal before the law. On the other hand, F. Nūrī and other ulamas argued that the social privilege of Muslims should be maintained and that any legislation in Parliament should not be allowed until the Ulama Committee approved it to be compatible with the Sharī’a or Islamic law.¹⁴

Despite differences in position and mutual suspicion, the majority of public opinion at the time insisted that the establishment of an advisory parliament to restrict the arbitrary authority of monarch would protect Islam and lead to prevention of tyranny and domination of Western powers.¹⁵ Under the rise of a popular movement, Moẓaffar

ad-Dīn Shāh Qajar called Parliament on August 1906 and then the Constitution was finally passed on December 27, 1906 with the signature of the King who died soon after then (on January 8, 1907). However, because it had been passed in such a hurry, the momentum towards reviewing the Constitution had risen under the new King Moḥammad Alī Shāh Qajar. It was at this time when F. Nūrī drafted the supplementary article of the Constitution that would grant [at least] five Mujtahids the authority to monitor anti-Islamic legislation in Parliament. Moreover, the reactionary new King executed a coup d'etat with a view to abolishing the Constitution in June 1908. At this conjuncture, constitutionalists resisted the King's coup d'etat based in provincial cities and then advanced to Tehran from 1908 to the summer of 1909. The King escaped to Russia and was dethroned (in July 1909) and F. Nūrī, siding with the reactionary King, was hanged by constitutionalists on July 31, 1909.¹⁶

Since then, F. Nūrī had been generally hated by the people due to his anti-Constitutional attitude. But after the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, he has begun to be reevaluated as a hero who defended Sharī'a.¹⁷

Accordingly, also in this textbook, while constitutionalist Nā'īnī is acclaimed as the first advocator of the Islamic Constitutional system, reactionary F. Nūrī¹⁸ who opposed constitutionalism is highly evaluated as a person who "added an article, granting five Mujtahids the authority to monitor and prevent anti-Islamic legislation, as the supplement of the Constitution." I would like to point out here that the textbook takes a position to suggest that the foundation of "Religious Democracy (*Mardomsālārī-ye Dīnī*)," different from the Western secular democracy, was laid down by both constitutionalists and conservative ulamas against them.

Additionally, Nā'īnī is one of three persons Khomeinī named as precursors ahead of himself in his theory of *velāyat-e faqīh* (Governance of the Islamic Jurist) published in 1970. Therefore, Nā'īnī is an important person to the current Iranian regime that is based on the Khomeinī's theory of *velāyat-e faqīh*.¹⁹

Nā'īnī (Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī, 1860-1936) wrote a book titled *Tanbīh al-Umma wa Tanzīh al-Mella*, or *Admonition and Refinement of the People*.

I have two versions of the book now. One version, published in 1999, has commentary and summary by Sayyid Maḥmūd Ṭāleqānī (1910-1979).²⁰ According to information cited in other publication²¹, the first edition seems to have been published after 1955. But the book in my hand is 9th edition and the compliments seemingly sent by former President Khātāmī (1997-2005) for publishing are printed on the back cover. The other version of the book has commentary and analysis by Sayyid Javād Vara'ī and the

first edition seems to have been published after 2003.²²

This Nā'inī's book *Admonition and Refinement of the People* consists of introductory chapter, five main chapters, and conclusion. This treatise focuses on briefly looking at the main points of the book, and for that purpose, I used the overview by an Iranian, i.e. Ṭāleqānī's summaries and commentaries, which originally have been placed separately in each chapter of the original text as footnotes. In my treatise, however, I will only introduce summaries of three chapters, i.e. introductory chapter, and the 1st and 2nd chapters, which Ṭāleqānī attached to footnotes of the original text.

2. Nā'inī's book *Admonition and Refinement of the People*

2-1. Summary of Introductory Chapter

- 1) It is apparent that the social order belongs to governance and that governance assumes guardianship of the right to rise up for public beliefs and ideas, otherwise governance will disintegrate and become corrupt. And it [governance] must preserve the seeds [nature] of Islamic society,²³ and keep social rights and norms, like walls to protect individual interests and rights, which ulamas consider to be the most important duty [of governance].
- 2) Governance has two basic duties. One is to keep domestic order. This is to make every social class and individual follow each norm and to give rights to inherent right-holders. The second is to prevent foreign interference and its greed [y exploitation]. Since ancient times, monarchs have set norms, utilized defense forces and politics, and applied legal and scientific knowledge of ulamas and intellectuals for those purposes. As for unspecified parts, the Holy Law of Islam has made up for them by prescribing detailed provisions and clarifying duties.
- 3) Monarchy can be also categorized into the following two types.²⁴
Tamallokīyah : The first type is normless, unlimited and self-indulgent monarchy which governs on the basis of selfish [and arbitrary] judgement and material desire. That is to say, the monarch is a tyrant against himself, and his greed trumps down his own best solution, good sense and noble affection. In addition, the nation and state are also made a prey to his greed.

Velāyatīyah : The second type of monarchy is in contrast to the first one, and only

keeps rights and norms. The monarch has no privilege other than *velāyat* [guardianship or leadership] over various things and the enforcement of laws, and exists for the people. This type of governance is noble since it [the monarch] is willing to self-sacrifice for legal practice and public interests.

- 4) Both types of monarchy are different in features and influences. The first type of monarchy works for its own greed but the second one is based on *velāyat* over various things and a kind of trust system, which restrains appropriation, irrespective of whether the monarchy emerged by legitimate right or robbery. Although the trustee might commit a breach of trust, all the people can ask him to account for it. Therefore, we call it “a responsible limited [power] monarchy.”

In general, [God-given] human nature is often rebellious and tyrannical. Nevertheless, can we find an above-mentioned noble monarch among such humans? It is best to find a governor or a monarch [e.g. the Hidden Imām] who is innocent and ruled by godlike will, otherwise in some cases we can find just persons. But both cases are not [realistic nor] common. [Therefore,] what might be possible is to obey the following two basic norms.²⁵

- a) To define tasks and boundaries (or norms) between governors and other classes: The breach of trust will bring down the person in charge. This is very similar to the category of “Trust (*Amānat*)” in Islamic law, and even a slight breach of trust by a guardian will inevitably lead to the dismissal of the person. Such tasks and boundaries are regarded as conforming to the Islamic law only if they are not contrary to Sharī‘a.
- b) To elect a monitoring committee to control; [the people] elect sage and sane persons [as committee members] to monitor politics and international affairs; and monitor the activities to prevent their breach of boundaries. The monitoring committee leads the forum for consultations in central and local level; the government is responsible to the committee; and the committee is responsible to the people. As regards the Islamic legitimacy of the committee, Sunni Muslims regard “*ahl-e ḥal o ‘aqd* [those who will appoint or dismiss rulers or caliphates as a representative of Muslim society (like a tribal chief)²⁶]” as “the authority holder or person in charge,²⁷” which is election in

itself.

But the Twelver Shī'a Islam considers that a deputy of Imām [i.e. the Islamic jurist] will take charge of those tasks. Therefore, a Mujtahid [i.e. a qualified jurist of Islamic law as a general agent of Imām] or someone who is permitted by the Mujtahid must be included in members who are elected by election. On this basic structure, two sacred fundamental principles, i.e. "freedom" (to be liberated from others' will) and "equality" (all people can get involved with various rights) are confirmed. The monitoring authority and responsibilities originate from these two principles. The implementation of the monitoring and responsibilities had brought a remarkable progress in the early Islam period, but the Muslims had lost those two principles in the Umayyad period.²⁸

- 5) In the theology and the Words of Imāms, leaving yourself to personal intention was considered subordination (slavery), and the fights that a series of Prophets had waged were struggles to unleash human beings from subordination (slavery) to someone other than God. This subordination (slavery) has two aspects. One is the subordination (slavery) to monarchs, and the other is to heads of various religions.
- 6) In the early Islam period, the monitoring had been fully implemented, so there was no slavery. The fundamental principle of equality between the people and the governor had been also carefully and accurately implemented. Holy acts and words of Prophet Muḥammad and Imām 'Alī had been inscribed during this period.
- 7) Although the rise up of true religious scholars and the enthusiastic Faithful had intention to regenerate the holy Islamic laws and norms based on Qur'an and Sunnah, scholarly puppets controlled by religious tyrants had ostensibly said, "Women must become corrupted and shameless imprudent," while concealing their true intention of maintaining a political tyranny. (If the true intention of puppets is as such, the implementation of the Constitutionalism could have prevented apostasy and corruption. But tyrants had hidden themselves behind the trench of laws and regulations [of the monarchical decrees] and rather spread such apostasy and corruption more widely.) In this way, they had arbitrarily interpreted

“freedom.” Regarding “equality,” they had also made an arbitrary interpretation that all individuals should be equal whether they were adults or children and whether they were unbelievers or Muslims. But these interpretations had nothing to do with the core of freedom and the basis of the Constitutionalism.²⁹

2-2. Summary of Chapter 1 & 2

- 1) Looking at the establishment of governance and monarchy in the history of humanity, regardless of whether they were established by the Prophets, heads of various religions, or wise men (or whether they have emerged in the human growth process,) monarchs and rulers had placed the foundation of their governance on watchmen [or monitors] and limited *velāyat*. They had had the right to deal with various things arbitrarily within the range of authority over donated properties which custodians had as trust or trustees had as *waqf*. Monarchs and rulers were equivalent to the monitoring watchmen and custodians, and they had to return all authority to their owner. Therefore, according to Words of wise men in Islam, a sultanate is a *valī* [the person who gained the authority to deal with human matters in the Umma (Community of the Faithful) on the basis of truth, good and welfare from God. Originally God alone has such authority. But as the next step, a Prophet and an Imām chosen by God will become a *valī* and lead the Faithful. At present because the twelfth Imām has been hiding, as the second best way, a qualified jurist will become a *valī*] and is called a shepherd [or the deputy caliphate] and, we the Twelvers believe, [the sultanate] has to be appointed by true owner [i.e. God]³⁰ or the true *valī*. From the viewpoint of various religions, the basis of governance has been historically the establishment of the order and *velāyat*. If a ruler or *valī* has changed the situation and a wolf has come, instead of a shepherd or watchdog, the people, irrespective of their religion and norms, would not remain indifferent or silent. This is because in such case, people's honor, the tribe, wealth and life will be critically threatened by tyrants. For this reason, Qur'an, hadith and history books teach us that [even] repressive governance had been based on self-restriction and consultation system. Even the pharaohs and the Queen of Sheba were no exception.³¹
- 2) Chapter 2 sets forth that monarch's authority should be restricted and its obligation should be determined as much as possible, even if the monarchy was originally established by non-legitimate robbery. In order to determine the

obligation, I will describe the three principles of the Islamic law.

- i) The principal religious ordinance to forbid evil is mostly obligatory in every case. Even if it is impossible to do so in some cases, it is not necessarily permitted to fail to fulfill its obligation in other cases. And when a series of related crimes are committed, we should forbid each crime individually, rather than banning all the crimes together.

- ii) We, the follower of the Twelver Shī'a Islam, believe that a Mujtahid with all qualifications [i.e. a jurist qualified to interpret the Islamic law] is a deputy of Imām. Clearly in this case the deputy deals with the matters of *ḥisba* [the matters of *ḥisba* are legal guardianship (*velāyat*) of children, mad persons [or widows] or the like, the expropriation of properties without owner and unclaimed *waqf* assets and the use of them for its own purpose, and so forth.]³² Also because the maintenance of public rights and the order is completely the matter of *ḥisba*, in this case, an ulama obviously becomes a deputy of Imām and is naturally obliged to perform the duty.

* * *

【Author's Comment】 [Here I would like to point out that the subject of *velāyat* is limited to *ḥisba*, i.e. *velāyat* (guardianship or directorship) over the matters of legal guardianship (*velāyat*) of children, mad persons [or widows] or the like, the expropriation of properties without owner and unclaimed *waqf* assets and the use of them for its own purpose, and so forth. In 1970, Khomeinī delivered a series of lectures on *velāyat-e faqīh* at a theological college in Najaf, which was embodied in the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. Because the need to expand the subject of *velāyat* had been recognized during the process of practicing the theory of *velāyat-e faqīh*, the wording -- the subject matter that an Islamic jurist as Supreme Leader should perform *velāyat* is *moṭlaq* (or absolute/unlimited and unrestraint) -- was added to Article 57 of the revised Constitution of 1989.

Consequently, the above opinion that Ṭāleqānī described in the form of summary of the Nā'īnī's argument stating that the subject of *velāyat* was limited to *ḥisba* has become an "outdated" interpretation different from that of the current Iranian regime after the

Islamic Revolution. It can be said that difference between the two interpretations is so large, moreover critically large, that they might cause misunderstandings and problems in some cases.]

* * *

- iii) What is obvious about the matter of *waqf* owned by the populace and the upper class is that even if *waqf* is unlawfully usurped by a traitor and the owner cannot recover it, it will not result in the extinguishment of the owner's obligation to restrict the usurpation, and that even if the owner lack the authority to restrict the usurpation of all benefits of *waqf*, its remaining duties will not go away.

Once the above three principles of Islamic law have been confirmed and clarified, the next point to note is that the unrestricted [self-indulgent] monarch will also become a usurper of God's Rights because the unconditional and absolute command [*hokm*] and the will belong to God. It is not only usurpation of the Imām's status but also that of rights, lives and property of Muslims. But restricting such usurpation by law as much as possible would be to limit usurpation of Rights of God and Creatures even if the problem of usurping the Imām's status [as the leader of Umma] is still to be solved.

* * *

【Author's Comment】 [However, the unsolved problem Nā'inī (and Tāleqānī) left here has been solved by Khomeinī's theory of *velāyat-e faqīh* saying that based on the doctrine of the Twelver Shī'a Islam regarding the Islamic jurist as the general deputy (*Nā'ib al'Āmm*) of the Hidden Imām, the Islamic jurist assumes leadership and governance as the deputy of Imām instead of monarch after the abolishment of monarchy. Because even if the Constitutional system succeeded in limiting tyrannical authority of the despotic and arbitrary monarch, the usurpation of the status of the Hidden Imām as the original leader still remained, and the problem yet to be solved. In terms of putting an end to this usurpation problem, both the abolition of monarchy and the governance and leadership by the deputy of Imām (the Islamic jurist) are important. This is the doctrinal significance of the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979, and also leads to the evaluation of Nā'inī as a precursor of Khomeinī's theory of *velāyat-e faqīh*.]

* * *

Therefore, limiting and changing the unrestricted authority of monarchs through those who are elected by law [and lawmakers] will strengthen deterrence of tyranny and usurpation more than before. [Asking] Whether such limitation is compatible with the Islamic law does not mean to suspect that the aim of limitation might be replacing power, rather than challenging tyranny and usurpation [in front of us]. Restricting usurpers of *waqf* will become compatible with the Islamic law by taking the form that the usurpation is made under the presence of approval and monitoring authority, not in the absence of it. When there is no such regulatory authority, however, [the following two problems will occur:] 1) such wrongful seizure means usurpation of the authoritative status [of Imām]; and 2) it is also incompatible with the Islamic law. Likewise, unlimited and unconditional seizure is like dirt defiling the place, which cannot be cleansed unless the essence is cleansed. But limited seizure and power are like defiling the place [not the essence], and so it can be cleansed. There is no doubt that it is allowed to prevent brutal enforcement or oppression against Muslims' property, lives and rights under the religious order that forbid evil. (But tyranny is a stinky sewage sink that will bring about all kinds of evil and apostasy, and it is useless to prohibit evil unless they are dried up.) Consequently, it is the most important obligation to restrict tyranny by these obvious Islamic principles and laws.

In addition, it is apparent to those who have knowledge of origin and reasons of progress and development, and decline and destruction of nations or ethnic groups that progress and eternity are based on “limited governance” and “constitutional governance” as the history of Islam proves it. On the contrary, it is clear from the recent situations of Muslims, if despotic, arbitrary and unrestricted rulers increase, the downfall will soon come. Accordingly, it is the most important religious obligation to replace tyranny in order to protect Muslims, together with [dealing with] relations with neighboring worlds.

* * *

Ṭāleqānī's summary of the Nā'īnī's argument (though this treatise refers only to introductory chapter and 1st and 2nd chapters) is as above. Additionally, if referring to Boozari's analysis, it can be understood that the role of the ideal ruler who Nā'īnī advocated is, equivalent to the role of the trustee of *waqf* [religious donation], the

management and equal distribution of property, and that such a *velāyat* (guardianship and leadership) is an ideal that the ruler should pursue as the authority granted to the Prophets and Imams.³³

3. Opinion of Anti-Constitutionalists (1)

In the above 1-2 and 1-3 titled as “Theocracy or Democracy?” and “Controversy between Theocracy and Democracy in Iran” for each sub-chapter, I introduced the recent political and religious controversy in the center of Iran. Finally, in relation to it, I would like to attempt to make mutual reference and relativization between the past and the present through additional consideration of the opinion of anti-constitutionalists who refuted the constitutionalist argument of Nā’inī at that time.

* * *

1) Rights and Status of Individuals

Constitutionalists saw that “freedom”, “equality” and “political participation” were the ultimate goals that a series of Prophets had pursued since ancient times. In contrast, anti-constitutionalists emphasized the need to draw attention to “fear of God”, “grace of God” and “the Hereafter” instead of this world. In other words, constitutionalists advocated the political rights and social equality of individuals, liberation from slavery, political participation, and through these means, the pursuit of social justice and well-being.

Anti-constitutionalists considered rulers’ coercion as necessary, saying that a fair and balanced society can be established only through personal faith and its practice, that the idea of individual freedom and equality is contrary to Islam, and that there are different levels that individual human soul can reach, and in this respect, people will not be equal and cannot acquire moral virtue without training.³⁴

This idea recalls the words of Makārem Shīrāzī, a heavyweight of the religious community, strengthening the spirituality [or soul], which I introduced in 1-2 of my treatise. He said, “People’s political and social leadership does not refer to an agreement or consensus of people’s opinion and hope. What matters is *velāyat* or [to lead the people in] the spirit of Islam.”

And as I saw in 1-3 of my treatise, the above idea also supports the following evaluation in the comment on BBC news website, saying “Other religious heavyweights including Meṣbāḥ Yazdī and Nūrī Hamadānī criticized Rowḥānī’s view severely.....such differences of views go back to the era of Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1905-11.”

- 2) Regarding Sharī‘a and the legislation, or the relationship between revelation and reason, anti-constitutionalists took a position to overemphasize and rely upon the documentary knowledge (*naql*) derived from the revelation i.e. Qur'an and hadith, but disregard human reason (*'aql*). This position was closer to the Akhbārī Shī‘a school although they belonged to the Uṣūlī Shī‘a school. This is why anti-constitutionalists thought that sacred texts like Qur'an and hadith had answers to every timeless human problem, and thus argued that Muslim society, unlike non-Muslim society, did not need to solve problem by way of legislation. Anti-constitutionalists saw that human beings themselves had no legislative power, and that such legislative attempt itself would intervene in the legislation that the legislator God had already done, thereby making their status equal to that of God, which was a heretic act. From this point of view, anti-constitutionalists doubted legitimacy of the Constitutionalism, and also criticized a majority rule.³⁵

On the other hand, constitutionalists believed, from the standpoint of the Uṣūlī Shī‘a school, the correlation and harmony between the core of “revelation” as sacred law and the human “reason.” Such belief had played an active role in making new regulations that are consistent with Sharī‘a. That is to say, the Uṣūlī Shī‘a school not only regarded Sharī‘a as non-variable targets and just guidelines (difficult to realize), but also opened up for human beings a dynamic field to create new regulations through their active commitment to such targets and guidelines. Based on this thought of the Uṣūlī Shī‘a school, constitutionalists welcomed the idea of *Majles* (Parliament) as an institution that reasonable human beings are involved in legislation. It can be said that the stream of reformists³⁶ from former President Khātāmī³⁷ to incumbent President Rowḥānī have seen this as [the result of] the Iranian Constitutional Revolution to which Nā‘īnī contributed³⁸ and stood in a position to evaluate constitutionalists positively. (As for the controversy between reformist, former President Khātāmī and his conservative rival, leading cleric Meṣbāḥ Yazdī, see footnotes 36 and 37.)

4. Conclusion

By the Constitutional Revolution in the early 20th century, the idea that Nā'īnī had advocated led to the establishment of Iran's first Constitution and the opening of Parliament. And the Supplementary Article 2 of the Constitution (adopted on October 8, 1907) granted (at least) five ulamas as legislators the authority of monitoring and preventing any legislation contrary to principles of Islam and the law of the Prophets in Parliament. (This article, however, has never been implemented.)³⁹

Although the Constitution was established at the Constitutional Revolution as mentioned above, under the two reigns of the Pahlavi dynasty that continued after then, Reza Shah, the first monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty, had reigned as an autocratic monarch wearing army shoes, and Moḥammad Reza Shah, the second monarch of the Pahlavi dynasty, had also become an autocratic monarch after a coup d'état against Moṣaddeq in 1953, with the support of the United States (and the collaboration with Israel). In this way, the Constitution had been modified and emasculated, which had triggered a great popular uprising, and leading to the establishment of the Revolutionary regime which has looked up to Khomeinī as a leader.

Meanwhile, Nā'īnī's idea of Constitutionalism, which had become to exist in name only but kept smoldering and therefore the original flame of the great cause of Constitutionalism did not disappear, has been passed to the current Iranian regime after the Islamic Revolution. And the function of monitoring the anti-Islamic legislation in Parliament has become in operation owing to F. Nūrī's effort.

The problem is, however, that there is a structural difference between the situation in the Constitutional Revolution and that after the Islamic Revolution. As mentioned above, Nā'īnī's premise was "the existence of a despotic and arbitrary tyrant" but the monarchy has been abolished and disappeared after the Islamic Revolution led by Khomeinī. After the monarchy's fall, a new system has emerged that would allow the Islamic jurist to rule the people as the deputy of Imām. However, its scope of supervision has been extended from the traditional *ḥisba* to the "absolute and unrestricted"⁴⁰ authority specified in the 1989 revised Constitution, while conditioning that as long as it remains within the framework of the people's public interest and religion.

At first sight, this absolute and unrestricted supervision is reminiscent of the coming-back of the tyrannical monarch, but regarding this concern, the textbook for university curriculum explains as follows.⁴¹

The textbook says, "The term of *moṭlaq* (absolute/unrestricted/unlimited) specified in this 'unrestricted *velāyat*' was additionally attached to 'Velayat' in the Article 57, to

avoid restrictive interpretation of Article 110 (Leadership Duties and Powers) of the Constitution.”⁴² And even if the authority of *velāyat* is unlimited, it “remains within the framework of people's public interest and religion, and therefore it cannot go against the framework of the people’s public interest. In this respect, *velāyat-e faqīh* is greatly separated from tyranny because it does not take account of the people’s public interest, nor respect God's Orders.”⁴³ Therefore, the textbook says, the Islamic jurist who has come to rule the people instead of monarch cannot become like a despotic and arbitrary monarch.

At the beginning, the people and the religious community, while both resisting tyrannical monarchs, have not denied the monarchy itself but basically cooperated in common purpose of restricting the authority of tyrants. But after the monarchy had been driven into abolition by Khomeinī's theory of *velāyat-e faqīh* and the Iranian Revolution of 1979, they lost the common rival. What derives from this structural change may be a constitutional system based on conventional function with its main purpose of restricting the tyranny of a new ruler, or a religious leader. In this case, a new challenge that the people and the religious community need to address after the abolishment of monarchy may be to revise and readjust their roles, functions and mutual relationship.

If the people and the religious community are seeking abroad a substitute for the tyrant who had been their common enemy and heading towards maintaining their traditional partnership, we can also think that it might relax and make room for their mutual relationship. In the theory of *velāyat-e faqīh*, Khomeinī had cited the words of Imām 'Alī, saying “Be an enemy of oppressor and helper of the oppressed” and advocated the expansion and continuation of the Revolution, saying “All the ulamas and Muslims have obligation to overthrow the governances and establish the Islamic governance.”⁴⁴ And the same meaning is also emphasized in the Preamble and other parts of the current Iranian Constitution,⁴⁵ which indicates a problem not caused by friction accompanying a structural change but by doctrinal idea. However, we will need to note other doctrinal aspect in the doctrine of the Uṣūlī Shī'a school as well, which urges the Faithful to pay attention to [the change of] space-time conditions as the basis of the interpretation of religious law (*ijtihād*), and therefore basically prohibits the Faithful from following (*taqlīd*) the dead Mujtahids.

The comment on BBC news website said, “Several rehashed controversies over this theme [i.e. balance between theocracy and democracy] show that there is still room for discussion about the current Islamic regime in Iran.” Can it also be understood as meaning that the emergence of a new argument replacing Nā'īnī's is being awaited? Or

rather, should we find value and significance worth evaluating in maintaining a current fine and exquisite balance?⁴⁶

As we have already seen, the Iranian textbook evaluates the achievement of constitutionalist Nā'inī who had advocated the Islamic Constitutional system, while also referring to the supplementary article of the Constitution that orders five Mujtahids to monitor anti-Islamic legislation in Parliament, which was drafted by F. Nūrī who had distrusted, departed from, and finally opposed constitutionalists. Based on these facts, the textbook suggests that in conjunction with both efforts, a religious democracy, different from Western secular democracy, was spun out. This attitude of the Iranian textbook is interesting because even if it is only a description in the school textbook, it is also representing the current Iranian government. As the name implies, “religious democracy” encompasses legitimacy derived from both God and the people, and therefore it involves friction. As regards this, the textbook cites Nā'inī as a representative thinker, while also mentioning F. Nūrī daringly. Consequently, it can be said that the current Iranian government is seeking adjustment that both the religious authority who has legitimacy derived from God and the people who represent the will of the people can publicly acknowledge their actual interdependency each other.⁴⁷

Notes

- ¹ On the tension between Revolutionary Iran and both U.S. and Israel, see the following: TOMITA, Kenji, *The Arab Spring or Awakening Islam?: From the Perspective of Iran*, *Kirisutokyo Kenkyu (Studies in Christianity)*, Kirisutokyo Kenkyukai, Vol. 78 No. 2 (December 2016) (拙論「アラブの春か、イスラームの目覚めか—イランの視点」『基督教研究』基督教研究会、第78巻第2号、2016年12月)
- ² Since Khomeinī set a day to remember anti-America and anti-Zionism, Iranians had held the annual demonstration on the last Friday of the fasting month. In 2017, it was June 23.
- ³ <http://www.bbc.com/persian/iran-features-40358390> (view date: June 21, 2017)
- ⁴ Rowḥānī won the presidential election with 57% of the vote. On the other hand, conservative hardliner Ebrahim Raisi secured 38% of the vote. The voter turnout rate was over 70%. See SUZUKI, Hitoshi, On 12th presidential election in Iran, *Middle East Review of IDE-JETRO*, the interim report (view date: June 24, 2017) (鈴木均「イランの第12回大統領選挙をめぐって」『中東レビュー』暫定原稿、2017年6月24日閲覧)
- ⁵ Nahj al-Balāgha.
- ⁶ <http://www.bbc.com/persian/blog-viewpoints-40397132> (view date: June 25, 2017)
- ⁷ The opinion of Grand Āyatollāh Naser Makārem Shīrāzī
<http://www.bbc.com/persian/40318345> (view date: June 18, 2017)
- ⁸ See, for instance, Qur'an 42:38 and 3:159
- ⁹ See 33:2, 33:3, 64:1 and 67, etc.

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- ¹⁰ *Article 5*: During the occultation of the *Wali al-'Asr* (may God hasten his reappearance), the leadership of the Ummah [Muslim community] devolve upon the just and pious person, who is fully aware of the circumstances of his age, courageous, resourceful, and possessed of administrative ability, will assume the responsibilities of this office in accordance with Article 107.
- Article 6*: In the Islamic Republic of Iran, the affairs of the country must be administered on the basis of public opinion expressed by the means of elections, including the election of the President, the representatives of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, and the members of councils, or by means of referenda in matters specified in other articles of this Constitution. (The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, adopted October 24, 1979, amended July 28, 1989)
- (Source: International Constitutional Law Project http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir_indx.html)
- ¹¹ Official Textbook for Iranian High Schools, *Bīdārī-ye Eslāmī, Zamīne-ye Tarīkh-e Mo'āsar-e Irān, Sāl-e Sevvom-e Āmūzesh-e Motavasete-ye Kollīe-ye Reshte-hā*, 1392, p. 39.
- ¹² 'Constitutional Revolution', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed., Yarshater E., Vol. VI, Costa Mersa, California: Mazda Publishers, p. 180.
- ¹³ ① Momen, M., *An Introduction to Shi'ī Islam*, New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1985, p. 249. ② Browne, Edward G., *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, New Edition, ed., Abbas Amanat, Washington, DC: Mage Publishers, 1995, p. 147.
- ¹⁴ YOSHIMURA, Shintaro, *A History of Modern Iran: Struggle against Dependence in a Hundred Years*, Yushisya, 2011, p. 51 (吉村慎太郎『イラン現代史—従属と抵抗の100年—』有志舎、2011年、51頁); SANO, Tosei, *History of Modern Iranian Intellectuals - Taqizade, his Life and Nationalism*, Minerva Shobo, 2010. (佐野東生『近代イラン知識人の系譜、タキーザーデ、その生涯とナショナリズム』ミネルヴァ書房、2010年)
- ¹⁵ 'Constitutional Revolution', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, p. 171.
- ¹⁶ Browne, Edward G., *op. cit.*, p. 149, p. 180.
- ¹⁷ Momen, M., *op. cit.*, p. 250, & 'Constitutional Revolution', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, p. 171.
- ¹⁸ Regarding F. Nūrī's attitude towards the Constitutionalism, see Kasravī, Ahmad, *Tārīkh-e Mashrūte-ye Irān, Jolde dovvom*, p. 829, Mo'assese-ye Enteshārāt-e Amīr Kabīr, 2536 (Imperial Calendar). In this book, Kasravī regarded Nūrī as a great enemy to the Constitutionalism.
- ¹⁹ Two other persons that Khomeinī named as precursors are Mullā Aḥmad Naraqī (died 1829) and Kāshif al-Ghiṭā (died 1812). See Emām Khomeinī, *Velāyat-e Faqīh, Jahād-e Akbar*, Tehran, Enteshārāt-e, Seyyed Jamāl, date of issue unknown. (R・M・ホメイニー著、富田健次訳『イスラーム統治論・大ジハード論』平凡社、2003年、152頁)
- ²⁰ Sayyed Maḥmūd Ṭāleqānī (1910-1979) was born in a political ulama's family in northern Ṭāleqān of Iran. He began preaching in Tehran after learning at Qom Seminary. He took part in the oil nationalization movement of Prime Minister Mosaddeq and cooperated with A. Kāshānī, the religious leader at the time. Ṭāleqānī has been involved in social activities such as running a Qur'an interpretation cram school with Bāzargān for 40 years. Leaders and executives of People's Mojahedīn of Iran (PMOI) were learning in this cram school. Ṭāleqānī advocated social justice, equal distribution of wealth and relief of the oppressed, and were trying to find out how far those could be achieved through reinterpretation of the Islamic law in consultation with religious community. He projected his ideal image of government on Imām's reign that he

had been thinking about. “The Islamic government which is entrusted to Imām exists to establish equality and has authority to monitor the acquisition and disposition of property in the public interest and restrict freedom of individual economic activities and collection of natural resources as public assets. If someone has shares that go beyond fairness, that authority should be restricted. In this respect, the authority of the Islam government is broad and exceeds the statutory law.” See S. Bakhash, *The Reign of The Ayatollahs: Iran and the Islamic Revolution*, Revised Edition, New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1984, pp. 167-170.

- ²¹ Boozari, A., *Shi'i Jurisprudence and Constitution: Revolution in Iran*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 237. In the bibliography of this book, the 1955 version compiled by Ṭāleqānī is included.
- ²² Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī, *Tanbīh al-Ummah wa Tanzīh al-Millah*, ed., Mahmūd Ṭaleqānī, Tehran: Sharkat-e Sahami-ye Enteshār, 1378/1999.
- ²³ Boozari, A., *Shi'i Jurisprudence*, pp. 105&206. Footnote No. 24.
- ²⁴ Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī, *op. cit.*, p. 62.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- ²⁶ *A Glossary of the Islamic Technical Terms (Persian –English)*, Second edition, 2008, p. 83.
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- ²⁸ Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 65.
TOMITA, Kenji, *Shiite Islamic Studies Textbook in Iran*, Akashi-shoten, 2008, p. 185 (富田健次『イランのシーア派イスラーム学教科書』明石書店、2008年、185頁)
- ³¹ Moḥammad Ḥosein Nā'īnī, *op. cit.*, p. 78.
- ³² *Ibid.*, p. 79.
- ³³ Boozari, A., *op. cit.*, p. 105.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 101.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-102.
- ³⁶ On Reformists and Conservatives: Various political forces had joined the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979 and shared only one goal to overthrow a monarch, but they had had different political philosophy. So many of them had been gradually ousted and excluded in a series of election process toward regime-building after the Revolution. Finally (in the end of 1981) the governance of the Islamic jurist which Khomeinī advocated had been consolidated under the one-party system of Islamic Republican Party. However, when an issue of formulating a new "socio-financial construction" plan has emerged as the next stage of regime-building, a new conflict over its policy occurred inside the party. It was one between conservatives and reformists. Over the socio-financial construction policy, conservatives advocated liberal economy while reformists supported planned economy. In the religious doctrine, conservatives, mainly higher-ranking elderly Islamic clerics and called the traditional law school (*Feqh-e Sonnatī*), insisted on emphasizing the Qur'an and hadith. It reminds us of the Akhbārī Shī'a school before the 18th century, but, unlike the Akhbārīs, they acknowledged reason as one of the sources of law and insisted that they would stand for the Uṣūlī school. They emphasized, however, even if the utilization of reason was permitted, it must not be limitless beyond Qur'an and Sunnah. That is to say, they said that in judging the law, reason was only used for a matter not clearly stated in the Qur'an and Sunnah, and unlimited abuse of reason would damage the Qur'an and Sunnah themselves. On the other hand, most ulamas who supported reformists were younger and lower-ranking jurists, and they were often called the

Dynamic Jurisprudence (*Feqh-e Pūyā*). They advocated the active use of reason to align the Islamic law with social needs and the changing times. The late Khomeinī basically adopted a neutral position for both parties. While the current Supreme Leader Khāmene'ī took a pro-conservative approach, the late Rafsanjānī took a pro-reformist attitude. Former Prime Minister Mūsavī and former president Khātāmī are in the reformist stream, but they are held under house arrest and imposed restrictions on public activities as of 2017. See TOMITA, Kenji, *Āyatollāhs' Iran: Contradiction and Development of the Islamic Governance System*, Daisan-Shokan, 1993, pp. 39-42 (Author added.) (富田健次『アーヤトラーたちのイラン: イスラーム統治体制の矛盾と展開』第三書館、1993年、39-42頁に加筆)

³⁷ Controversy between Reformist Khātāmī and Conservative Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī: Former President Khātāmī expressed that even if the Iranian Islamic Regime (*velāyat-e faqīh*, i.e. the government of the Islamic jurist) emphasized the divine/theocratic nature, it could not acquire legitimacy until being incorporated in the Constitution, that is to say, it became effective by the people's will through a national referendum. And he said, "This regime came to exist based on people's opinion. The Constitution will be approved by people's opinion and also organizations of the state will be established by people's opinion. The Islamic Republic of Iran means that our people determined to rule the state based on values and criteria of Islam."

In opposition to Khātāmī, a conservative heavyweight Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī said, "Regardless of whether the people accepted or not, Muḥammad was chosen as a Prophet by [the will of] God Himself, not by God who took account of the people's demands..... It was also God who chose the Twelve Imams. In this case, the role of the people was only to accept the governance..... It is the same today in the era of the Hidden Imām. The governance of the Islamic jurist was decided by God and preached by the Hidden Imām. Whatever role the people take on has nothing to do with legitimacy of governance. However, the realization of governance depends on the people's acceptance. Even in the phase of electing a particular jurist [as a leader] from general jurists, the people have no role to play in respect of legitimacy of governance by the said jurist. The people are "discovering and knowing" a qualified jurist, but the act of discovering and knowing does not give legitimacy of his governance. This is the same as the sighting of new moon. What we entered the month of Ramadan is justified, not by whether new moon is visible or not, but by whether new moon is objectively present or not." As for the relationship of the Constitution and the authority of the jurist, Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī also said, "[The authority of the jurist as the leader] does not stand above God's decrees and laws [i.e. the Islamic law], but above the Constitution. Accordingly, the Constitution has become effective not because many of the people voted in favor of it, but because it was acknowledged by the jurist as leader." See Emām Khomeinī, *Velāyat-e Faqīh, Jahād-e Akbar*, Tehran, Enteshārāt-e, Seyyed Jamāl, date of issue unknown, Comment 1, p. 298, pp. 302-303 (R・M・ホメイニー著、富田健次訳『イスラーム統治論・大ジハード論』平凡社、2003年、解説1、「ホメイニー師の思想と現代」298頁、302—3頁)

³⁸ Ibid., p. 102.

³⁹ KAGAYA, Hiroshi, *Modern History of Iran* (Sekaiishi Kenkyu Soshō 18), Kondo Shuppansya, 1975, pp. 196-7 (加賀谷寛『イラン現代史(世界史研究双書18)』近藤出版社、1975年、196-7頁); Edward G. Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909*, New Edition, ed., Abbas, Amanat, Washington, DC; Mage Publishers, 1995, pp. 372-3.

⁴⁰ Article 57 [Separation of Powers] in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (amended in 1989): The powers of government in the Islamic Republic are vested in the legislature, the

judiciary, and the executive powers, functioning under the supervision of the absolute/unrestricted [*moṭlaq*] religious Leader and the Leadership of the Ummah, in accordance with the forthcoming articles of this Constitution. These powers are independent of each other.

(Source: International Constitutional Law Project http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir_indx.html)

The words “/unrestricted [*moṭlaq*]” in the above were inserted by translator according to the original Japanese treatise.

⁴¹ Moḥsen Javādī & ‘Alīreḏā Amīnī, *Ma ‘āref-e Eslāmī (2)*, Nahād-e Namāyandegī-ye Maqām-e Mo‘azzam-e Rahbarī, Dar Dāneshgāh hā, pp. 164-167.

⁴² Article 110 [Leadership Duties and Powers] in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (amended in 1989):

(1) Following are the duties and powers of the Leadership:

1. Delineation of the general policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran after consultation with the Nation's Exigency Council.
2. Supervision over the proper execution of the general policies of the system.
3. Issuing decrees for national referenda.
4. Assuming supreme command of the Armed Forces.
5. Declaration of war and peace and the mobilization of the Armed Forces.
6. Appointment, dismissal, and resignation of:
 - a. the religious men on the Guardian Council,
 - b. the supreme judicial authority of the country,
 - c. the head of the radio and television network of the Islamic Republic of Iran,
 - d. the chief of the joint staff,
 - e. the chief commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps, and
 - f. the supreme commanders of the Armed Forces.
7. Resolving differences between the three wings of the Armed Forces and regulation of their relations.
8. Resolving the problems which cannot be solved by conventional methods, through the Nation's Exigency Council.
9. Signing the decree formalizing the election of the President of the Republic by the people. The suitability of candidates for the Presidency of the Republic, with respect to the qualifications specified in the Constitution, must be confirmed before elections take place by the Guardian Council, and, in the case of the first term of a President, by the Leadership.
10. Dismissal of the President of the Republic, with due regard for the interests of the country, after the Supreme Court holds him guilty of the violation of his constitutional duties, or after a vote of the Islamic Consultative Assembly testifying to his incompetence on the basis of Article 89.
11. Pardoning or reducing the sentences of convicts, within the framework of Islamic criteria, on a recommendation from the Head of judicial power.

(2) The Leader may delegate part of his duties and powers to another person.

(Source: International Constitutional Law Project http://www.servat.unibe.ch/icl/ir_indx.html)

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 158-9.

⁴⁴ Khomeinī (富田訳、41 頁)

⁴⁵ For instance, “The Form of Governance in Islam” in the Preamble of the current Iranian Constitution says, “With respect to the Islamic content of the Iranian Revolution, which was a

movement for the victory of all the oppressed people over their oppressors, the Constitution prepares the ground for continuing this revolution at home and abroad. Specifically, it strives to expand international relations with other Islamic movements and people in order to pave the way for the formation of a single, universal community,..... to also assure that the continuous struggle for the emancipation of the deprived and oppressed nations of the world is strengthened.” Also, Article 154 of the Constitution says, “The Islamic Republic of Iran considers human happiness throughout human society as its ideal. It considers independence, freedom, and the governance of justice and truth as the right of all the people of the world. Consequently, while it completely abstains from any kind of intervention in the internal affairs of other nations, it supports the struggles of the oppressed for their rights against the oppressors anywhere in the world.” (This translation of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1989 Edition) is published in *Iranian Studies*, 47:1, 159-200 (2014). <http://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/en/ir/ir001en.pdf>) See also YAMAOKA, Dai, “<Translations> The Concept of the Shi‘ite Islamic State in Modern Iraq: Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr’s “Origin of Power” *Kyoto Bulletin of Islamic Area Studies*, Vol. 1 (April 2007), Center for Islamic Area Studies at Kyoto University. (山尾大「現代シーア派のイスラーム国家論：ムハンマド・バーキル・サドル『イスラーム国家における力の源泉』、『イスラーム世界研究』京都大学イスラーム地域研究センター、2007年1号) Although his study is about a view of Iraqi (non-Iranian) Shī‘a, it is suggestive for understanding this issue.

⁴⁶ KUBO, Kenichi, “Ambiguous Governance of the Jurist: Leaving Room for Realization of Democratization.” (December 2, 2009, *Yomiuri Shimbun*) (久保健一「曖昧な法学者統治；民主化実現の余地残す」*讀賣新聞* 2009年2月12日号所載) His analysis is suggestive, and reminds us of the fuzzy theory of the Iranian scholar lotfī ‘Alī ‘Askarzādeh who died in September 2017.

⁴⁷ For instance, some conservative ulama also acknowledged “the realization of governance depends on the people’s acceptance” although “whatever role the people take on has nothing to do with legitimacy of governance.” See also the underlined part of Meṣbāḥ-Yazdī’s opinion cited in footnote 37.

Examining the “Spirit of Revolution” in the Contemporary Iran’s Security Policies

Hisae Nakanishi

Abstract:

Since the Arab Spring of 2011, the Middle Eastern situation surrounding Iran has been chaotic. After the collapse of the Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003, Iran was faced with two big challenges: how to negotiate the “nuclear development suspicion issue” that had begun in 2002, and defense for its neighbor, Iraq. Iran’s politics and diplomacy have generally been explained as a conflict between conservatives and reformists. Regarding the “Spirit of the Islamic Revolution” that goes beyond such factions, I will analyze the values that exist at the core of Iran’s security policies, primarily from 2011 to today, and explore how those values have been emerged and modified. The “Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps,” whose powers have expanded politically, economically, and socially under the Ahmadinejad administration, is an organization that embodies the “Spirit of Revolution” that began during the revolution. This paper considers the role that this organization played in the Iran nuclear issue and in Iran’s policy toward Iraq in the previous and the current administration is crucial in the way the Spirit of Revolution has manifested today. Furthermore, regarding defense in Iraq, which is home to two major Shia holy sites, Iran has carried out so-called “soft power” approach. Despite the fact that the “Spirit of Revolution” that has continued since the revolution preserved the essence of the revolution, there has been a transformation in its embodiment. With regard to how Iran works out foreign policy in confrontations with Saudi Arabia and the U.S., the “Spirit of Revolution” framework inevitably continues as long as its structure is maintained. On the other hand, the kind of flexibility that Iran has demonstrated within that framework is a key not only for Iranian security policies but for politics in the Middle East at large.

Keywords:

Iran, security, Shia Islam, soft power, Iranian Revolution

Introduction: Locating the Issues

The “Arab Spring” that began in the spring of 2011 has still impacted the Middle East region till today. The antigovernment protests that happened in Syria of that year later grew into a civil war which also continues to this day. The “Islamic State” that seized Mosul in Iraq in June 2014 has expanded its territory into Syria. Even though its power is weakened, it still maintains some areas of control in parts of Syria and Iraq as of August 2017.

While both Iraq and Syria are in a state of chaos, Iran has been a major actor that influences the stabilization of both countries. The Gulf states, with the exception of Qatar and the U.S. all assert that the expansion of Iranian influence in both countries was the cause of destabilization in Iraq and Syria.¹ On the other hand, Iran is concentrating its efforts on driving out the “Islamic State” in both Iraq and Syria. Iran has shared some interests with America, but differences in their interests have been revealing more visibly.

In July 2015, Iran agreed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) among six nuclear-negotiation countries. This agreement signaled to the international community that a breakthrough was realized and that the “nuclear development distrust” that had spanned ten years was at least dissolved. It is commonly observed that this agreement was made because of the inauguration of the Rouhani government in September 2013.² Thus, the achievement of the agreement was generally attributed to a “moderate” foreign policy of the current government. On the other hand, Iran’s missile development and launching tests have continued even after the JCPOA. As a matter of fact, Iran’s missile policy that has been interpreted as distrustful by the nuclear negotiation team was the legacy from the period of the previous Ahmadinejad administration (2005–2013).

Furthermore, the deterioration of public order in Iraq has continued until today due to the instability developed after the Saddam Hussein’s regime collapsed. Under these circumstances, Iran is sending its Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) into Iraq and Syria.³ A special unit called the Qods Force is a part of the IRGC that has been established by Supreme Leader Khomeini after the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1979. Defense of Iraq and actual intervention in Syria has constituted a core of security policy for Iran.

Iran, which espoused a moderate and flexible policy in the nuclear agreement, is adopting this kind of militant policy in Iraq and Syria. It has been also pointed out that the

missile development issue is becoming an obstacle to improving relations with the U.S.

Thus, Iran is advancing two different but parallel lines of diplomacy. How can this be explained? In general, it is commonplace to distinguish between the previous administration, in which the conservatives were predominant, and the current one, which is backed by moderates. The two mutually contradictory Iranian diplomacies appear to make sense, if the two different administrations have developed two different policies. This leads to a general explanation that the two streams of conservatism and reform are in simultaneous and parallel conflict, and that the differences between the moderate and the hard lines are manifested depending on which one has superior influence at a time.⁴

Nevertheless, there are aspects of Iranian diplomacy that cannot be explained in such a spectrum of conservative and reformist orientation. While President Rouhani criticizes the missile launch tests that were carried out by the IRGC,⁵ he acknowledges the tests as an effective tool of and the core of Iranian national defense, and does not criticize the IRGC when it comes to its involvement in Iraq.

In this case, what are the central factors stipulating Iran's concept of security, and its security policy? Mahmood Sariolghalam, a well-known researcher of modern Iranian politics, explains that there are two approaches to Iranian security policy: a "revolutionary paradigm" approach and an "adaptable" or "flexible" approach.⁶ He perceives the former as creating the foundation of Iranian foreign policy, and claims that this has been consistently and firmly protected after the revolution. In this paper, the author uses the term "Spirit of Revolution" to coin what Sariolghalam claims as "revolutionary paradigm," and analyzes how that is reflected in Iranian security policy in this article.

The latter approach, namely adaptable approach, is generally referred to as the realistic line or the policy that former president Rafsanjani employed during the national reconstruction period following the Iran-Iraq War. Because the Rouhani administration also has been backed by Rafsanjani, he has been considered to have emulated the previous policies. It is pointed out that the JCPOA of July 2015 was arranged because of the "realistic" line of President Rouhani, who took office in the administration with support from Rafsanjani.⁷ However, it is not deniable that the former approach has been neglected in the discussion of the security policy of the Rouhani government due to an image that Rouhani is distinctively different in his diplomatic approach from the past administration

that often upheld “the Spirit of Revolution” that emerged immediately after the Iranian Revolution.

A question here is how much the Spirit of Revolution has changed over time. This article will examine this concept seen through Iran’s diplomacy. This article, focused on the period from 2011 when instability in Iraq and Syria got deepened with the start of the Arab Spring, to the present.

Reaching the Iran nuclear agreement took more than six years, substantially from 2011 to today. It also brought about what could be called a seismic, major transformation in regional politics. On the other hand, the political environment surrounding Iran also underwent an upheaval. The ten years between Iran’s nuclear talks starting in 2005, to 2015, were a period in which public order in Iraq generally worsened. It was also within those ten years that economic and financial sanctions on Iran were intensified, starting from 2012.⁸ and Iran began to face the signs of an agreement on nuclear negotiations during and after 2012.⁹ Furthermore, the process of moving from a provisional agreement in 2013 to the JCPOA of 2015 overlapped with the period of Syria’s conflict descending into civil war following the 2011 “Arab Spring,” the Islamic State’s territorial expansion from Iraq to Syria in June 2014, and the intensification of combat in response to that. Under these circumstances, Iran’s two major security issues were how to negotiate the issue of distrust over nuclear development, and the issue of Iraq’s defense.

In this case, what role does this “Spirit of the Islamic Revolution” play in Iran’s domestic governance to begin with? In the first section I will examine changes in the domestic role of the “IRGC” that were established after the Iranian Revolution. In the second section, I will discuss the “Spirit of Revolution” in the relationship with Iran’s basic principles, manifested both inside and outside the country in the nuclear negotiation process. Thus, in the third section, I will examine how the “Spirit of Revolution” has developed in Iran’s policy toward Iraq.

1. Implementing Iran’s “Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps”: Expansion of the IRGC’s Organizational Power

The issue of who determines Iran’s security policy is a question that has been analyzed by various researchers in both Iran and the West. Until now, studies discussing Iran’s system of government had been common, but there are diverse actors in Iran’s

policymaking process, and its structure is multilayered. For that reason, it has been clear even in typical research trends that this issue could not be a easily explained.¹⁰ Within the post-revolutionary system of the “Guardianship of the Islamic Jurist”, it goes without saying that Supreme Leader Khamenei is the nucleus of state authority. Nevertheless, there are some aspects that indicate that the Supreme Leader does not really decide all domestic and foreign policy on his own despite the regime’s authoritarian nature.

At the time of the presidential election in June 2009, there was an antigovernment movement called the Green Movement, calling for a ballot recount. Yet, President Ahmadinejad was re-elected without responding to the citizens’ demand. It has been pointed out that this decision of neglecting the demand of the citizens brought about a political atmosphere that damaged the legitimacy of the Supreme Leader’s rule.¹¹ Furthermore, in July 2009, the president and the Supreme Leader were at odds over the issue of nominating the first vice president, and the relationship between the two subsequently deteriorated. To put it another way, before the relationship deteriorated, self-discretionary power was granted to the president.

During the Ahmadinejad administration, a policy of economic privatization was adopted. However, this policy strongly benefited only the president’s bodyguard-like associates in reality. Moreover, the majority of cases that had been passed off as subcontractors of state-run businesses were merely IRGC-related companies¹² (to be discussed further below). This type of state-led corruption became a source of the contested relationship between the Supreme Leader and the president, as the Supreme Leader started to recognize this practice of the president as a shameful act and unaccountable to the people.

How corruptive Ahmadinejad was became clear after Rouhani came to power, when it was revealed that most of the oil revenue under the second Ahmadinejad administration went to the personal accounts of 63 people.¹³ One person connected to all 63 was Esfandiar Rahim Mashaei, whom the president had nominated as first vice president. The Supreme Leader’s opposition to the president’s nomination of Mashaei in July 2009 was a message saying, “I will not turn a blind eye to such rampant corruption; I will put an end to it if the president crosses the line.”

Owing to a lack of space, this article will not touch on the details of Iran’s policymaking process. Instead, the focus is made on the way the IRGC was established as a revolutionary organization after the Revolution, and has persisted to be an important actor both in domestic affairs and diplomacy since the Revolution.¹⁴ The IRGC was

originally established as a quasi-military organization by Khomeini who aimed for restraining Iran's regular army because of the fact that the regular army emulated the Pahlavi system even after the Iranian Revolution. Thus, the IRGC started to have its own army, air force, navy, special forces, and intelligence which have functioned separately from the regular army. The IRGC played a significant role as a military force to fight on the front lines together with the regular army during the Iran-Iraq War. It is said to have expanded to 350,000 people.¹⁵ True to its name "Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps," IRGC's mission is to protect Iran's Islamic Republic System from both internal and external threats: it pledges allegiance to its founder, Supreme Leader Khomeini who provides direct supervision. Defense of the Revolution has been defined as "support of the Islamic jurists in implementing the Sharia and Islamic morality."¹⁶

IRGC saw its importance in domestic affairs arising under the first Khatami administration (1997–2001). In response to the student protest that occurred at a Tehran University student dormitory on July 12, 1999, Basij, the domestic security organization under the command of IRGC, raided the dormitory and casualties ensued. This incident was a symbol of the rising power of the IRGC.¹⁷ Tehran University students started a protest movement in response to the prohibition of the reformist newspaper *Salam*. This occurred in the context of speech and publication under the Khatami administration.

As for that administration, President Khatami made the establishment of civil society as his domestic slogan, and promoted a policy of exercising citizen sovereignty and facilitating political participation. He also aimed to free Iran from its international isolation through a foreign policy of "dialogues between civilizations."¹⁸ The concept of constructing a "civil society in Iran," which caused much excitement among university students and reformists at that time, was due to its inclusion of criticism of the "Islamic government (Hukūmat-i Islāmī)" that Iran's Islamic system had constructed after the revolution. *Salam* was the newspaper that had published that slogan. In it were aspects that conflicted with the conservative ideology of "guarding the Iranian Revolution," which IRGC took as the doctrine for its activities. Taking advantage of this incident, IRGC and Basij raised their level of contribution to maintaining public order within the country. Because Ahmadinejad, who was inaugurated in 2005, was once a central figure in the Alliance of Builders of Islamic Iran (E'telāf-i Ābādgarān-i Īrān-i Islām), he was a person of influence known as a conservative hardliner.

Under his administration, IRGC's political intervention and economic gains expanded remarkably. He implemented a policy of privatizing state-run businesses. But

in reality, this was favoritism toward IRGC-affiliated companies, as explained previously. These types of policies were implemented one after another between 2006 and 2011. “Khātām al-Anbiā,” established in 1989, is a construction company controlled by IRGC. Competitively, it was a monopoly that received orders from the government for oil and natural gas mining projects and construction of related pipelines, as well as infrastructure improvement projects, including harbor maintenance, road and subway construction, urban development, and dam construction. Data show that the company received funds of over \$11.7 billion in the five-year period between 2006 and 2011.¹⁹

Furthermore, under the Ahmadinejad administration, the “oil stabilization fund,” which had been established in 2000 by Khatami as a policy to stabilize the oil-dependent economy, was drawn on to pay for the above infrastructure improvement projects: \$1.5 billion from this fund was circulated as public-works spending between 2006 and 2011.²⁰ Because the \$11.7 billion figure above comes from different data concerning this \$1.5 billion, the numbers do not match. But it is easy to surmise that the amount withdrawn from sources other than the fund were a part of opaque economic management. In that sense, even if we split the difference, one cannot deny that a great deal of capital flowed to IRGC-affiliated companies. At that time, in 2009, the president of the Anbiya Company was Rostam Ghasemi, who President Ahmadinejad nominated as oil minister in 2011.

Additions to nuclear-related facilities, missile development projects were also placed under the organizational control of IRGC.²¹ Furthermore, IRGC members came to monopolize membership of the parliament’s internal security committee,²² and contributed to policymaking for strengthening political intervention into Iraq, whose security situation was deteriorating.²³ This overlapped the period in which Iraq’s security was deteriorating from sectarian opposition following the Iraq War and the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime in 2003.

2. Iran’s Nuclear Development Question and “Resistance”

2.1 The concept of “Resistance” in the Nuclear Negotiation Process

The main ideologies of the Iranian Revolution were independence, resistance, and anti-Zionism. Independence meant Iran choosing the path of Islam that Khomeini called “neither West nor East,” the concept touted as a political opposition to Western colonialism.²⁴ The spirit of this independence was closely related to the values of the other spirit of revolution, that of resistance. Resistance is the opposition to Western

hegemony, and toward Western values as well as toward cultural invasion. It is also connected to the other revolutionary value of “anti-Zionism”: opposition to Zionism. In this sense, independence, resistance, and anti-Zionism are three inseparable values and standards, and they are still repeated in the Supreme Leader’s remarks to this day, as the principles that form the core of the Spirit of Revolution.

Because Iran’s nuclear development issue began in 2002, these three concepts formed the central logic of Iran’s government as a response to Western suspicions about Iran’s nuclear weapon development.²⁵ Iran asserted that as a signatory of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), member nations were guaranteed the right to carry out uranium enrichment. Furthermore, it asserted that “Western countries harbor suspicions about Iran’s potential to develop nuclear weapons, and are interfering at the level of uranium enrichment. Thus, Iran insisted that Iran’s opposition to such intervention was natural and actually the *resistance* which originated from the Spirit of Revolution. By so doing, as Iran claimed, Iran has preserved its ‘independence’ from foreign influence.”

President Ahmadinejad repeatedly made anti-Israel remarks as suspicions arose over Iran’s development of nuclear weapons. His insistence that the Holocaust never happened especially incited Israel’s hostile feelings toward Iran. Until the time of the Joint Plan of Action, the provisional agreement of November, 2013, Israel repeatedly declared that Israel would appeal to its military strikes unless Iran gave up its uranium enrichment. As a response to such threats, both President Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Khamenei continued to declare that Iran would not yield to them.²⁶

On November 25, 2014, the Supreme Leader said that “regarding the nuclear issue, America and European colonialist nations gathered and tried with all their might to make Iran surrender, but their efforts were in vain,” and maintained that they would not succeed in the future, either.”²⁷ These statements were made one year after the provisional agreement of November 2013 when it had been proven that Iran was compelled to drastically reduce its uranium enrichment activities. In practice, Iran’s right to enrich uranium was successfully preserved and secured throughout the provisional agreement, the framework agreement, and JCPOA, namely the final agreement.

It is to be noted that in 2011, two years before the provisional agreement, Iran successfully enriched uranium to 20% at the Fordow facility. This activity led to international criticism. Yet, right up until the provisional agreement of 2013, Iran adhered

to this number in the negotiation hoping that this level of enrichment could be internationally approved.²⁸ If we take into account that Iran had no choice but to accept a far lower concentration after the provisional agreement, we need to raise a question: whether it can be said that that right had been ensured as expected. However, to Iran, publicizing that “we succeeded in negotiating the preservation of that right,” which should have been guaranteed under the NPT, was important since Iran was able to preserve its national pride.

On the other hand, Iran’s claims about “the right to enrich uranium,” and its continued implementation of missile development, were not undertaken merely in defiance of Israel. It was true that the more Iran succeeded in techniques to raise the density of enriched uranium, the more the international community raised the idea of threats toward Iran. However, to Iran, technological innovation also had another important aspect that was equal to nuclear deterrence. For Iran, the idea that “the development of science and technology itself will enhance Iran’s independence from foreign influence” was closely linked with the ideology of independence that has been preserved since the time of the revolution. Iran has thought that it would preserve its political autonomy and therefore would be able to continue as “a self-supporting nation.”

Khamenei stated on March 14, 2005 that “it is difficult for global arrogance [in reference to America, Israel, and Western countries] to accept that a talented Iran is making rapid progress in science and technology fields, especially in the field of nuclear development. They want Iran to remain dependent on oil.” In this, we can see the pride with which Iran could boast to the world not only of its oil, but also its accomplishments in the fields of science and technological innovation. At the same time, one can observe the idea that Iran was considering that Iran’s becoming a major technological country was a means of overcoming its oil-dependent economy. This notion is, as a matter of fact, connected to statements about “resistance economics,” which will be mentioned later.²⁹

Iran’s pride in its progress in science and technology was also acknowledged by the nuclear negotiation team members during the final stages of the nuclear negotiations. Two months before the framework agreement of 2015, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi made the following remarks to the author:

Iran now has the technology to enrich uranium to a concentration of over 20%. The international community should know that Iran has no intention of producing uranium at concentrations lower than this in the future. The more that the world

recognizes that Iran's science and technology have reached this height, and the more that the world understands that in spite of this Iran has no plans to enrich high-grade uranium, the easier it will be to understand that Iran's nuclear technology has peaceful aims.---

2. 2 Construction of the “Resistance Economy”

As mentioned above, the concept of “resistance,” a major pillar of the Spirit of Revolution, has been manifested during the nuclear negotiations. On the other hand, as nuclear development suspicions intensified, this concept of resistance was also developed as a statement of the “Resistance Economy,” a statement to construct an independent economy under the harsh economic sanctions that had been imposed on Iran.

The term “resistance” has sometimes appeared in the Supreme Leader's speeches over the last fifteen years in the context of an ideal situation for Iran's economy. However, emphasis began to be placed on the single term “resistance economy” in 2013. On February 9, a few days before the Iranian Islamic Republic Day of that year, Khamenei proclaimed that Iran would aim for a “Resistance Economy” (*iqtisād-i muwaomat*).³⁰ The “Resistance Economy” is “the construction of an Iranian economic pattern based on social values and standards, national resources, and high-quality manpower, to reduce the vulnerability of Iran's economy in the face of international economic sanctions.”³¹

This proclamation took place about six months before the provisional agreement that would become the breakthrough for nuclear negotiations. The Iranian economy had been struck with repeated economic sanctions, but the ones that had affected it most severely were the financial sanctions and the Iranian oil embargo of 2012. Because of these measures, Iran's currency, the rial, crashed by nearly 20% relative to the dollar from 2011 to 2013. Furthermore, according to data from Iran's Central Bank, the inflation rate over the previous ten years rose sharply starting in 2010, and had risen to nearly 25% in the spring of 2013.³² The Supreme Leader emphatically propagated the “Resistance Economy” as a political and economic slogan just as the rising cost of living was casting a dark shadow over the lives of Iranian citizens.

In other words, the idea of resistance, one of the pillars of the Spirit of Revolution from the time of Revolution, was developed into Iran's adherence of the advancement of nuclear technology and related science and technology while the nuclear negotiation processes continued. This evolvment was actually coincided with the time in which IRGC expanded its authority in domestic politics and economy Furthermore, it is to be noted that

the resistance economy was emphasized by the Supreme Leader as the time was getting closer to reaching an agreement. It was partially because Iran foresaw the possibility of the rapid advancement of the foreign investment that would obstruct resistance economy. Thus, this emphasis was made guarding against such a new economy to come.

How was resistance, the Spirit of the Revolution, represented in foreign policy? In the next section, I will examine how the concept of resistance developed within the security policy toward the neighboring country of Iraq.

3. Policy Toward Iraq: Iran's Shia "Soft Power"

3. 1 The Regime's Relationship to the Ulama in Najaf (the Shia Holy City)

The security of Iraq is the most important issue for Iran, historically, politically, economically, and militarily. From historical and religious perspectives, Iraq is home to the two major holy cities of Shia Islam, Karbala and Najaf. Due to this significance of Iraq, Iranians have visited these holy cities for more than one thousand years. Pilgrimages to these holy cities have continued till today including the period of the Iran-Iraq War.³³ Several tens of thousands and, at times, hundreds of thousands of Iraqis have lived and studied theology in Qom, a base of Iranian Shia theology.

After the fall of the Hussein's regime in 2003, Iran tried to establish hegemony over Iraq. After the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, it was important for Iran to support Iraq's central government in order for Iraq to maintain at least its national integrity, particularly after the Ba'ath Party lost its power which led to the power vacuum.³⁴ Based on this policy, Iran directly supported the establishment of the Shia administrations of al-Maliki, and then of al-Abadi. These moves were understood as an expansion of Iran's influence in the Middle East. America also hoped for political stability in Iraq, and on that point America and Iran had shared interests. It is conceivable that both administrations were established because of the coordination of both parties.³⁵

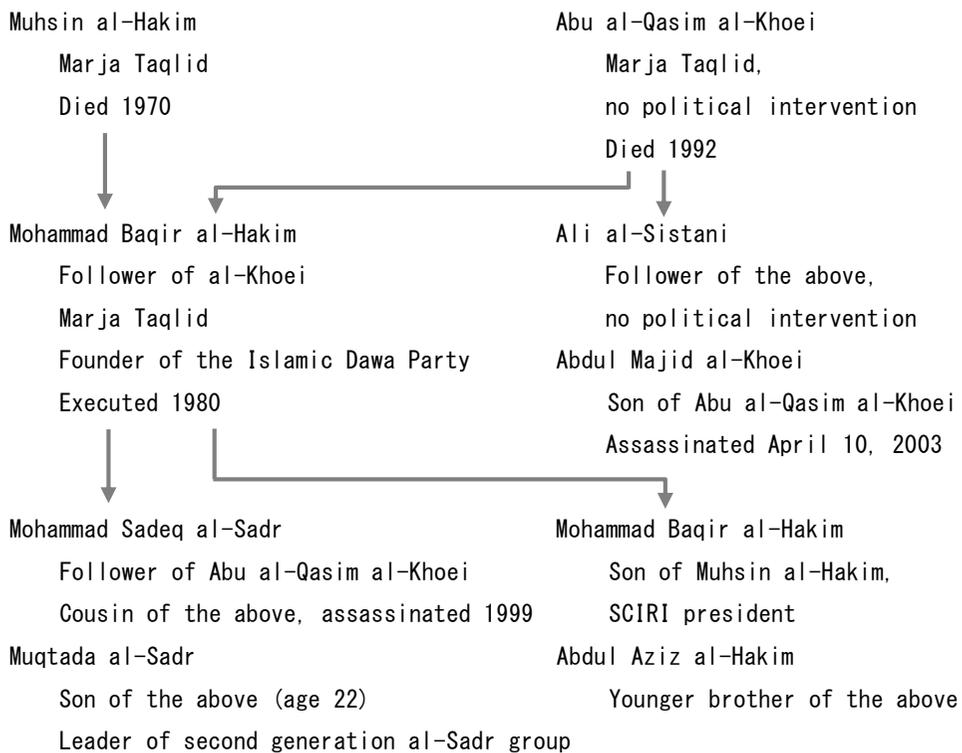
On the other hand, Iran considered that the long-term stationing of foreign troops (in practice, the American military) in Iraq would be a security threat in order to achieve the expansion of its own influence, for that reason, Iran wanted the American military to withdraw from Iraq. The American military withdrew in 2011, but there were still 5,000 troops remaining as of March 2016.³⁶ Under these circumstances, Iran tried to expand its influence in Iraq on the grassroots level, sometimes cooperating with Shia forces and

sometimes creating conflicts of interest with them. Under these situations, what kind of approach did Iran take?

Iraq's Shias were not a monolith under the Saddam Hussein's regime, and this is the case until today. During Saddam's regime, Shia influences were often assassinated and persecuted as they were understood as anti-establishment forces. As Figure 1 shows, during the Saddam's regime, if we classify them generally, there were two marja taqlid, Muhsin al-Hakim and Abu al-Qasim al-Khoei, who died in 1970 and 1992, respectively. After that, there were two followers of al-Khoei, Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr and Ali al-Sistani, but the people who have been important politically for their relationships with Iran are Ali al-Sistani, Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, and Muqtada al-Sadr.

Figure 1. Iraq's Ulama Lineages in the Final Years of the Saddam Hussein Regime

Chief Shia Ulama Lineages and Anti-Establishment Organizations



[Source: Hiroshi Matsumoto “The Iraq War: Information and Analysis,” Japan Institute of International Affairs website, http://www.jiia.or.jp/report/us_iraq/ulama.html (accessed June 30th, 2017)]

Ali al-Sistani went into exile in Iran during the Saddam’s regime, and founded “Iraq Islam Revolutionary Council” in 1982 together with the Twelver Shia Ulama leader Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, who was also in exile in Iran at the time.³⁷ It is said that Iran established both a charitable enterprise division and a military affairs division within this organization, but according to Matsunaga it is unclear whether the Badr Corps formation period was close to the time of the Revolutionary Council’s establishment.³⁸ The Badr Corps is a militia that was set up by a combination of IRGC and exiles from Iraq for training the local militias during the Iran-Iraq War.

Muqtada al-Sadr has preserved anti-Americanism from the anti-Saddam war period to the present, and contributed to the restoration of security in Iraq until about 2010, in the struggle between al-Qaeda and the old regime. However, available information does not clarify to what extent American weapons were provided, and to what extent Iran’s military support made difference.

Basically, by positioning Prime Minister al-Maliki and al-Abadi in the central government in 2016, Iran stuck to its fundamental policy of maintaining Iraq’s territorial integrity. For this strategy of Iran’s, Iran’s historical connection with the holy cities was helpful. In Najaf, located in southern Iraq, has about as many theological schools as Qom in Iran. Those Ulama who have controlled the Hawza (seminaries) have been exercising their influence. Yet, the degree of Iran’s power over Najaf’s Ulama requires future studies.

Upon returning to Iraq, al-Sistani moved his base to Najaf, and harbored worries that Iran’s influence would become more powerful in Iraq. For that reason, he gradually distanced himself from Iran. Conversely, it was said that there were as many as ten thousand of al-Sistani’s followers in Qom, and their *zakat* payments created a firm foundation for his financial affairs. In that sense, it was not necessarily the case that the relationship between al-Sistani and Iran was especially close after he moved to Najaf.

A dramatic change that surrounded Iran has occurred in June, 2014 when Mosul fell to the control of the Islamic State (IS). The Iraq’s Shia groups all shared their interests to combat against the Islamic State. Iran-backed Prime Minister al-Abadi surpassed Prime Minister al-Maliki in balancing out conflictual Sunni and Shia groups. It is to be noted

that Iran's sending IRGC Quds Force into Iraq started after al-Maliki came to power in Iraq, and conducted military trainings for Iraq military soldiers as well as provided logistical support for them.

However, what eventually contributed to driving out the Islamic State was the public mobilization squads of the Shia militia. The Quds Force conducted military drills for these public mobilization squads, and Iran proudly stated that this was what led to the liberation of Mosul. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the extent of Iran's participation in combat against the Islamic State in Iraq was at a level that could not be called "sending troops." The Quds Force continued activities that were limited to support for military command, namely logistical in nature, such as supplying weapons and ammunition, and providing secret operations by a small number of army commanders.³⁹ In a report by the American Enterprise Institute, an American think tank with a strongly hawkish bent, Iran was presented as constantly conducting armed interventions in Iraq. Be that as it may, Iran insisted that it was only exercising "soft power," and the Supreme Leader has repeatedly stated that this is more effective than military power.⁴⁰

It is said that in driving the Islamic State out of Mosul, not only Iran's IRGC, but many other troops were involved, such as the American military, Iraq's regular army, and the Turkish military. The problem now is that it is likely that a revival of sectarian or factional confrontation may re-emerge in Iraq. This is because different groups had fundamentally different interests despite the fact that they cooperated temporarily in the fight against their common enemy, the "Islamic State." In that sense, although the IRGC Quds Force was greatly successful in sweeping out the Islamic State, the degree to which that will strengthen Iran's influence in Iraq will depend on future trends.⁴¹

3. 2 Mobilization of Pilgrimages to the Shia Holy Site Karbala (Arba'een)

I have already mentioned Iran's assertions about the importance of "soft power" for its security policy. Over the last several years, Iran has employed the notion of the term "soft." The meaning of soft includes the Quds Force's logistical, not directly military, engagement support through military drills and arms reinforcements. However, these "soft" activities seem to be along with the other dimension: Iran attempts to increase its presence in Iraq by using the cultural and religious components of Shia Islam.

One of them is Ashura, the biggest commemoration day in Shia Islam, originated in the "Battle of Karbala," a tragic incident that took place in Karbala where Ali's army combatted Yazid's army of the Umayyads and Ali's son Husayn was martyred in 680.

Every year, Ashura is commemorated by Shia Muslims on the tenth day of the month of Muharram of the Islamic calendar.

Shia Islam also has the other memorial service called Arba'een. This is an event held on the fortieth day after Ashura, and is a walking tour that covers the 80km from Najaf to Karbala. It originates in the same year as the battle of Karbala. It has been said that on the twentieth day of the month of Safar, those who had been prisoners of war in the "tragedy of Karbala" stopped in Karbala to visit the grave of Ali's son Husayn on their way to al-Sham in Syria.

During the Saddam Hussein's period in Iraq, Arba'een memorial services were prohibited. But, they were revived in 2003, immediately after the fall of Saddam's regime. It is said that even now the number of Iranians who participate in these services is in the range of hundreds of thousands to one million people per year. However, Iran's government promotion of this Shia event is a trend of the last two years, and took the shape of national mobilization.

Iran's Supreme Leader started the mobilization calling for Iranian citizens to participate in Arba'een memorial services through public broadcasting around 2015. On November 16, 2015, Supreme Leader Khamenei said "Love and faith, reason and affection, are uniquely Muslim traits. The participation in Arba'een by people from all over the world, on an unprecedented scale, is surely the guidance of God."⁴² According to the Tasnim News Agency, the number of Iranian participants in the 2016 Arba'een (November 26) was up by 22%, from 1.6 million in 2015 to 2 million in 2016.⁴³

The Arba'een memorial services became more than just a religious and cultural event because of changes in the political environment surrounding Iraq and Iran. The 2014 fall of Mosul with the occupation of the Islamic State, under an anti-Shia banner, was one of those changes. In 2015 and 2016, al-Sistani of Najaf (Iraq) and Khamenei of Iran called for the citizens of both countries to participate in Arba'een. Thus, Iraq and Iran have been presented as a unified community of Shia believers beyond national borders. It is to be noted that people participating in these memorials carried portraits of these two men when they paraded in groups from Najaf to Karbala.

One week before Arba'een, Iran's public broadcasters reported scenes of Iranian participants boarding buses and heading for the border with Iraq for the November 2016 Arba'een. They also reported the participants walking all the way from the border to Karbala. Iran's strengthening national mobilization to the 2016 Arba'een should be understood in the context of a diplomatic crisis that took place in January 2016, when Iran had severed diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. Iran's intentions were observed as

trying to turn the Karbala pilgrimage into an event that would surpass the pilgrimage to Mecca. At the very least, Iranians who viewed Iran's public broadcast reports, and those who participated by walking to Karbala, recognized the Iranian government's intention to stir up Arba'een in opposition to the Mecca pilgrimage.⁴⁴ Saudi Arabia is also starting to show some wariness about the reality of this Shia event happening on a large scale every year.

Here, one can observe how political contexts have impacted the way both commemorating events have been practiced and more importantly politicized. Ashura, originally being a religious and cultural ceremony has had specific political meanings within the contexts of the time. During the Iran-Iraq War, the bereaved families and relatives of soldiers who died in battles in Iraq used to parade through the towns holding portraits or photographs of the soldiers who were presented as martyrs. The essence of Ashura is protest against the "injustice" of the Yazid army's killing of Husayn. Yet, Husayn's memorial overlaps the memorial rites for Iranian martyrs in Iraq. In the same way, the Arba'een memorial services have also taken on a political sense of protest against the injustice of the Islamic State which had expanded its influence in Iraq and murdered people particularly since 2014.

Conclusion

Iran's domestic affairs and diplomacy are often depicted as a confrontation between conservatives and reformists. The term "moderate," positioned as the middle ground between the two, is also formulated by this binary framework. Yet, this relativistic depiction does not necessarily represent what each political wing actually employs for its policy and/or strategy. Moderates have at times also been called realists. The question is which term is more reflective of real politics. President Rohani has been called both moderate and realist.

The first Rouhani administration, which was established in September 2013, implemented the nuclear JCPOA in July 2015. The Rouhani administration, which is said to have made a realistic choice in the nuclear negotiation process, completed its first four-year term, and was re-elected in May of this year. However, the economic sanctions have still not been lifted in accordance with JCPOA, and Iran's relationship with America is, if anything, worse now than it had been two years ago. That is caused in part by the Trump administration steering diplomacy close to Saudi Arabia and Israel, but it is not the only reason.

The reason is that even in the so-called moderate Rouhani administration, some policies taken over from the previous administration still remain strong. The ideology of the so-called “Spirit of Revolution” that began with the Iranian Revolution still exists to this day, and has paved the foundation of Iran’s security policy. Of the three values of the Spirit of Revolution (independence, resistance, and anti-Zionism), anti-Zionism is in the process of disappearing in comparison with the previous administration. However, both independence and resistance distinctively surfaced in the nuclear negotiation process. When it comes to Iran’s policy toward Iraq too, the revolutionary organization IRGC, which expanded its authority both politically and economically under the previous administration, has been seen participating through advisory capabilities in the restoration of security in Iraq and in the battle against the Islamic State.

In Iran during the season of Ashura, black cloth flags with “Ya Hussain” (Oh, Hussain) written on them wave in the towns. These are called the flags of the spirit of martyrs. I have spent the last seven years visiting Iran wondering why everyone has to commemorate martyrs to this extent, knowing that Iran is today not at war. When the season of Ashura comes around, the neighborhood scenery completely changes to the point that one would imagine as if one could hear military marches. The dark image of going into mourning during Ashura has also become striking in Iran over these last ten years. The rush to construct high-class shopping malls and high-rise condominiums has continued in an economically sanctioned Iran, and people have fun shopping even while grumbling about things being expensive. These two contrasting scenes give a true account of contemporary Iran.

It goes without saying that Iran’s political system is one of “Islamic jurist rule,” and the Spirit of Revolution is preserved as an embodiment of that system. Because of the destabilization of both Iraq and Syria following the Arab Spring, Iran has had no choice but to be involved in the security issues of both countries. The defense of its neighbor Iraq especially can be called “Iranian defense.” Nevertheless, the reality is that Iran’s method of involvement with Iraq is completely different from how it was during the Iran-Iraq War. Without demonstrating direct military force, it is consistently demonstrating soft power in the form of logistical support.

By emphasizing the importance of Arba’een as a unique Shia memorial domestically and abroad, Iran is encouraging its position as a world leader of Shia followers. That reflects Iran’s Shia doctrine. The spirit of “resistance,” one pillar of the Spirit of Revolution, ostentatiously shows Iran’s manpower through mobilizing a mass of two million people. What is interesting is that the people participating are not always the most

religiously devout. Most young people who participated have been said to have gone to Iraq in a mood of going out for a picnic, catching a ride on buses provided by the government. While the “Spirit of Revolution” is clearly continuing, examples like this portray the reality of subtle changes.

The antagonism between Iran and Saudi Arabia has accelerated over the last year and a half. This is generally perceived as antagonism between Sunni and Shia, and is depicted just as if Sunni and Shia are battling in Iraq and Syria. However, the reality is that Iran is not sending in large numbers of troops for military action in those places. It has adopted a policy of acting between “military affairs” and “civilians” with a good command of what it calls “soft power,” of supporting local regular armies and militias from behind the scenes. On the other hand, Iran, which continues missile development and launch testing, is criticized by America for radical military conduct. The road to improving the relationship with America will not be smooth. However, it is conceivable that this old-yet-new-again “Spirit of Revolution” will continue for a while as a useful value with respect to declaring national defense in the present regime. What should be closely observed is to what extent “flexibility” will be demonstrated within this framework.

Notes

- ¹ House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade, Nuclear Deal Fallout: The Global Threat of Iran, May 24, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/the-global-threat-of-iran.pdf> (Accessed August 2, 2017).
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unit.

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Editor's Postscript

We are pleased to present you with the thirteenth issue of the *Journal of the Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (JISMOR)*.

The Center for Interdisciplinary Study Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR), together with School of Theology, Doshisha University, held two workshops: "Between the Heaven and the Human: The Macro-History, Macro-Parado and Macro-Trend of "Sino-Christian Theology" Movement" (on November 9th, 2016) and "Cross-Cultural Aspects of Reconciliation: Psychological Features Affecting the Israeli-Palestinian Relations and the Path to Peace in the Middle East" (on November 20th, 2016). The former reviews the history of Sino-Christian Theology Movement and points out its proactive role in the Chinese Civilization, while the latter examines Israeli-Palestinian Relations from a psychological viewpoint: that is, each one justifies their own actions from a sense of victimization, and it suggests the possibility of reconciliation between them by leading them to recognize the aspects of victimizer of each own. This issue contains the two public lectures on these occasions.

The issue also contains two articles submitted by Professor Kenji Tomita, School of Theology, Doshisha University, and Professor Hisae Nakanishi, Graduate School of Global Studies, Doshisha University.

CISMOR, founded in 2003, has carried out interdisciplinary and comprehensive research on the monotheistic religions (Islam, Judaism, and Christianity) and their worlds. But now the Center expands its research areas, as you see in the lecture by Professor Guanghu He on Christianity and the Chinese Civilization. It is our sincere desire to deal with a wide range of topics as well as narrowly defined "monotheistic studies" so far. We appreciate your continued support for *JISMOR*.

March 2018

Yasuharu Nakano, Chief of Editorial Committee

Guidelines for Submissions

Revised on March 31, 2014

1. *JISMOR* is an online journal published annually in or around March in Japanese and English, and is made publicly accessible on the Doshisha University Academic Repository and the website of Doshisha University Center for Interdisciplinary Study of Monotheistic Religions (CISMOR).
2. In principle, eligibility for contributing papers is limited to research fellows of CISMOR and individuals recommended by at least one research fellow of CISMOR.
3. Each submitted paper will be peer-reviewed, and the editorial committee will decide whether to accept it or not for publication.
4. In principle, submissions are limited to unpublished papers only. (If you intend to submit a paper that has been published before, you should obtain the permission of the relevant institution for the publication of your paper in *JISMOR*.)
5. Please send a resume of your paper (written in approximately 400 characters in Japanese or 150 words in English) via e-mail by the end of May to the address shown below. Any format is acceptable.
6. Your paper should be received by the editorial committee by the end of July.
7. Please prepare your paper both in Word format (see below) and PDF format, and submit them, as e-mail attachments.
8. To submit a paper, please use a template for Microsoft Word, which can be downloaded from the CISMOR's website. (<http://www.cismor.jp/en/publication/index.html>)
9. The paper should be written in either Japanese or English.
10. The paper should be written from left to right.
11. The paper should be 16,000 to 24,000 characters long if written in Japanese and 6,000 to 9,000 words long if written in English.

Research notes, book reviews, and research trends should be within 8,000 characters if written in Japanese and within 3,000 words if written in English.

12. The first page of the paper should include: the title of the paper; the name of the author; the organizational affiliation; an abstract (in approximately 400 characters if written in Japanese and 150 words if written in English); and five key words. If you write the paper in Japanese, please write the title, the name of the author, and the organizational affiliation in both Japanese and English.
13. Footnotes should be provided collectively at the end of the paper. No bibliography is shown, in principle.

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Specifically, in transliterating Hebrew and Greek words, please comply with the guidelines specified in Chapter 5 (p. 25 onward) of P. H. Alexander, et al., eds., *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical and Early Christian Studies*, 1999 (hereinafter referred to as “SBL”), as much as possible. While SBL specifies two systems of transliterating Hebrew words—academic and general-purpose—you may use either one that better suits your purpose. (Use of SBL is also recommended for transliterating the words of ancient languages such as Coptic, Akkadian, and Ugaritic.)

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