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Stages of Spread of Islam in Japan

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Abstract: The article is dedicated to describe the history of Islam in Japan and cultural relations between the Japanese and Muslim peoples. The information of the article which is used to on this topic is represented on the basis of the medieval Muslim sources, Yuan dynasty's military reports, Ming dynasty's chronologies, Portuguese sources and contemporary Japanese literatures.

Keywords: Ibn Khordadbeh, "Lands of Waqwaq", Mongol invasions of Japan, Abdurrashid Ibrahim, Omar Yamaoka, The Kobe Mosque, "Greater Japan Muslim League", "Islamic Studies Boom"

Introduction.
There are very few sources of information on Islam in Japan and Japanese-Muslim relations. Some information on the subject can be found out from medieval Muslim sources, reports on the Yuan dynasty's march to Japan, chronicles of the Ming period and modern literature on Japanese culture. Thus, in medieval historical Muslim sources, the name "Japan" first appears in the works of Muslim cartographer Ibn Khordadbeh. He twice mentions the name "Japan" in his work as "Lands of Waqwaq": "East of China are the lands of Waqwaq, which are so rich in gold that the inhabitants make the chains for their dogs and the collars for their monkeys of this metal. They manufacture tunics woven with gold. Excellent ebony wood is found there. Gold and ebony are exported from Waqwaq" *(Lunde, 2005, p. 27).* Mahmud Kashgari's 11th century atlas indicates the land routes of the Silk Road and Japan in the map's easternmost extent *(Atalay, 1940, p. 30).*
Material and methods. The methods of comparative-historical, typological, hermeneutic and complex analysis of the literature were used to study the spread of Islam and the formation of Muslim communities in Japan.
Results. Information on the history of Islam in Japan can be found in the report on the Yuan[1] dynasty's march to Japan. According to the report, among the members of Kublai Khan's government, his most trusted deputies and advisers have been appointed representatives of various

[1] The Yuan Dynasty was founded by the Mongols during the Kublai Khan period and ruled China from 1279 to 1368. Then in 1368 the Ming dynasty came to power in China.

nationalities, especially Hui[2], Semu[3], Koreans and Chinese. When it became known that the Song dynasty[4] was supported by pirates, Kublai Khan launched military operations against Japan. The Koryo government sent a infantry and navy troops to help the Mongol army. Despite the protests of Confucian priests, Kublai Khan began to invade Japan, Burma, Vietnam and Java. He also tried to capture remote areas like Sakhalin. Eventually, after his death, in 1308, the local population came under the rule of the Mongol colonizers *(Walker, 2001, p. 133).*

Discussion. The history of Islam in Japan in the Middle Ages is also found in sources from the Ming[5] period. It can be concluded from the data in them that in the example of Muslims in China in the Middle Ages there were to some extent cultural ties between Muslim and Japanese peoples. During the 14th century Hongwu Emperor of the Ming dynasty made Ryukyu Kingdom a tributary vassal and ethnic Chinese settlers consolidated the islands for their ruler in Nanjing. During that period there was contact between the Hui, general Lan Yu of the Ming dynasty and theswordsmiths of Japan. According to Chinese sources Lan Yu owned 10,000 Katana, Hongwu Emperor was displeased with the general's links with Kyoto and more than 15,000 people were implicated for alleged treason and executed, including the general himself; his clan was faced with a genocidal punishment of nine familial exterminations. By the 15th century Yongle Emperor's ethnic Hui admiral Zheng He's fleets reached Ryukyu Kingdom attempting to consolidate once more the grip of the Ming dynasty over the Japanese islands between 1416 and 1419 *(Needham, Ronan, 1986, p. 132)*.

In medieval European records, information about the relationship between Muslims and Japan was also maintained by Portuguese sailors. According to the record, a Muslim who set out on a journey to spread Islam to the Japanese people sailed on a Portuguese ship to the islands of Malacca (an ancient city-state on the Malay Peninsula) in 1555.

The date of the first entry of Muslims into Japan, according to information found in Japanese on the history of Islam, dates back to the beginning of the XVIII century. In general, the history of Islam in Japan is short in time but rich in content, and the first Muslim communities in the country consisted of Indian and Malay Muslim sailors who came to Yokohama and Kobe to work under Meiji (1868-1890). In this regard, experts note that the establishment of relations between the Japanese and Muslim peoples will cover the near future. In particular, according to Hans Martin Krämer, the first acquaintance of the Japanese with Islam dates back to 1715. At that time, japanese Arai Hakuseki provided the first information about Islam to his compatriots through his work "Tidings from the West" *(Krämer, 2014, p. 621).* Hakuseki's book was unfortunately coloured by the perceptions of an Italian priest who had illegally entered Japan *(Gruber, C. J., Shalem, A., 2014, p. 302).*

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[2] The Hui people are an East Asian ethnoreligious group predominantly composed of Chinese speaking adherents of Islam distributed throughout China, mainly in the northwestern provinces of the country and the Zhongyuan region. According to the 2011 census, China is home to approximately 10.5 million Hui people, the majority of whom are Chinese-speaking practitioners of Islam, though some may practise other religions. The 110,000 Dungan people of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan are also considered part of the Hui ethnicity.

[3] Semu is the name of a caste established by the Yuan dynasty. The Semu categories refers to people who come from Central and West Asia, it is told that there are 31 categories among them. They had come to serve the Yuan dynasty by enfranchising under the dominant Mongol caste.

[4] The Song dynasty was an imperial dynasty of China that began in 960 and lasted until 1279. The dynasty was founded by Emperor Taizu of Song following his usurpation of the throne of the Later Zhou, ending the Five Dynasties and Ten Kingdoms period. The Song often came into conflict with the contemporaneous Liao, Western Xia and Jin dynasties to its north. It was eventually conquered by the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty.

[5] The Ming dynasty officially the Great Ming, was the ruling dynasty of China from 1368 to 1644 following the collapse of the Mongol-led Yuan dynasty. The Ming dynasty was the last imperial dynasty of China ruled by Han Chinese.

In addition, the translation into Japanese of the life of Muhammad (1697), written by Humphrey Prideuax and full of controversial issues, added to the seriousness of these negative attitudes *(Krämer, 2014, p. 621).* After that, until 1899, there were no works in Japanese that provided information about Islam. Between 1899 and 1905, Sakamoto Ken'ichi, a Japanese scholar, wrote a biography of Islam based on European stereotypes and Muslim beliefs, followed by a monograph on the Qur'an in 1918. In turn, although he translated the Qur'an into Japanese in 1920, he made several mistakes in clarifying the content of the religion because the translation was based on European sources that were critical of Islam. Ken'ichi also, rather unusally, changed the meanings of some words from the book in order to fit Japanese cultural norms, such as translating the Arabic term for *"rabb"* (or "*lord"*) into jo¯tei 上帝 (*"Emperor"*). The word Kami (神; meaning God) is also used to refer to "*Allah" (Krämer, 2014, p. 621).*

When it comes to the spread of Islam in the land of the rising sun, relations between Japan and Turkey in the last two centuries is given special consideration. Because Japan's first diplomatic relations with Muslim countries took place in the late 19th century through Turkey. At that time, a Turkish naval ship ("Eltugrul Firkateini") loaded with gifts sent to the Emperor of Japan by the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II arrived in September 1890. On its way back, the ship crashed into rocks in Wakayama Prefecture as a result of a strong storm. Not a single sailor survived the tragedy, with the 533—600 strong crew all having drowned. Since then, the Turkish and Japanese sides have held various commemorative events every year to commemorate the victims of the disaster. In particular, on the occasion of the 125th anniversary of this tragedy, in 2015, another Turkish warship (Salih Reis) was sent to Japan symbolically in memory of Eltugrul Firkateini. In this regard, it can be said that this tragedy has become a "unique tool" for the strengthening of friendly relations between Japan and Turkey.

In the twentieth century, the history of Japanese-Muslim relations has been enriched by many significant events. First, it was important that the Japanese government expanded its relations with Muslim countries. Second, before World War II, Japan's financial support for the anti-government uprisings of the Muslim population in China and the former Soviet Union led to the influx of a group of Muslims (mostly Tatars) into the country. However, the "attempts" of the Japanese government to support the Muslim peoples of the above two countries actually ended tragically for the Muslims of the country. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s, the former Soviet Union pursued a "policy of repression". In turn, a major Muslim-led uprising in Xinjiang (Xinjiang, China) in 1937 was violently suppressed by the government. However, even during the height of World War II, Japan continued this policy, presenting itself as the "savior" of the Muslims *(Piscatori, 1986, p. 32).* In addition, after the 1943 parliamentary session, the Japanese government decided to "include certain groups of Muslims affected by the Anglo-American aggression in order to support them and provide them with political and cultural support" [15]. In 1945, after Japan was declared defeated in the war, US's report was published. It was stated that the creation of conditions for the acceptance of Muslims in their countries by influential people of Japanese descent during the war was to gain the trust of the Islamic world and to be used for political purposes. However, despite this report, representatives of post-war Japanese political circles expressed confidence that the Japanese people would not clash with the traditional religion of Shinto and Islam on any front, even in matters of faith *(Piscatori, 1986, p. 32)*.

Consequently, the interaction of the Japanese people with the population of the neighboring Muslim countries in certain directions has led to an increase in the number of converts to Islam among them. For example, Kotaro Yamaoka was the first Japanese Muslim to perform Hajj during

this period. After meeting the Tatar-Russian writer Abdurrashid Ibrahim, he converted to Islam in Bombay in 1909 and changed his name to Umar Yamaoka *(Ernazarov, 2020).*

Another Japanese convert to Islam during this period was Bunpachiro Ariga, who went to India for commercial purposes in the early twentieth century, converted to Islam under the influence of local Muslims there, and later changed his name to Ahmad Ariga. Another Japanese Yamada Toajiro converted to Islam and changed his name to Abdul Khalil during his twenty years as a merchant and unofficial ambassador in Constantinople from 1892 onwards *(Yamada, 1911, p. 30).*

As a result of the October Revolution, several hundred Turkic-Tatar Muslims from Central Asia and Russia were granted asylum after their entry into Japan, and small Muslim communities were formed as Muslims gradually settled in major cities. According to Japanese sources, their number in 1938 was about 600 people. As these Muslims interacted with the local population in various ways, some Japanese also converted to Islam.

In 1935, the Kobe Mosque was built with the help of a group of Turkish-Tatar merchants in Japan. The Tokyo Mosque, scheduled to be built in 1908, was completed in 1938 with the general financial support of the Muslims. Abdurrashid Ibrahim (1857-1944) who returned to Japan in 1938 and Abdulhay Kurbanali (1889-1972) were the first to work as imams in this mosque.

Japanese-Muslim relations before the Second World War consisted of many remarkable realities can be seen in the fact that the Japanese imperial government tried to formally strengthen the existing relations with the Muslim world. In particular, the Greater Japan Muslim League, founded in 1930 is the first official Islamic organization in Japan. Also in the 1920s, a "Muslim pact" was signed by people close to the emperor to guarantee the spread of Islam in Japan. Tsuyoshi Inukai (later the Prime Minister of Japan), Ryohei Uchida (a close confident of the emperor) and Mitsuru Toyama (a prominant politician in Japanese politics) were noted signatories. Abdurrashid Ibrahim was represented by Muslims in signing the pact. As a practical expression of this pact, on October 2, 1927, the "Tokyo Muslim School" began its activity in a three-room building in the Okubo district of the capital of Japan *(Эрназаров, 2017).* Of course, such a historical event, which took place in the short history of Islam in Japan, has made a spiritual change in the lives of a small number of Muslims of all ages there.

After the Second World War, there were some shifts in the history of Japanese-Muslim cultures. This can be seen in the fact that after the oil crisis of 1973, there was another "wave of interest in Islam". As it became known that the Middle East and its vast oil reserves were important to the Japanese economy, it prompted the Japanese media to spread widespread information about the Muslim world.

During World War II, the occupation of some areas in China and Southeast Asian countries by the Japanese military led them to make contact with Muslims. Those who converted to Islam through them returned to Japan and established in 1953 the first Japanese Muslim organisation, the "Japan Muslim Association", which was officially granted recognition as a religious organization by the Japanese government in June 1968. While the number of members of this organization was 65 in the first period, in 1959, when Sadiq Imaizumi died, the number of its members doubled.

Omar Mita, the second president of the association, converted to Islam in one of the countries occupied by the Japanese Empire. Prior to becoming a Muslim, he worked for Manshu Railway, a Japanese government-controlled company in China's northeastern province. He became a Muslim in Beijing as a result of his contact with Chinese Muslims. Omar Mita returned to Japan after the end of the war and later made the pilgrimage, becoming the first Japanese Muslim pilgrim in the post-war period. He also made the first translations of the Qur'an into Japanese *(Anis, 1998, p. 329).*

As a result of these events, by 1982 the number of Muslims in Japan was estimated at 30,000 (half of whom were indigenous Japanese Muslims). The reason for the increase in the number of Muslims was due to the fact that during the economic crisis of the 80s, Muslims made up a significant part of the population who migrated to Japan to earn money from Southeast Asian countries. The marriage of Muslim men to local Japanese women during their labor activities in Japan has led to an increase in the number of adherents of Islam. Some sources state that the number of Muslims in Japan in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries was about 100,000 *(Farah, 1987, p. 58).* In fact, it is still controversial to show the exact number of Muslims in Japan. Serious research on this issue has been carried out by Japanese scientists Hiroshi Kojima (National Institute for Population and Social Security Research) and Keiko Sakurai (Waseda University). Their estimates suggest a Muslim population of around 70,000, of which perhaps 90% are resident foreigners and about 10% native Japanese. In general, the lack of a clear figure on the followers of Islam is not unique to Muslims. Japanese government did not organize the registration of members of religious organizations because it was a matter of freedom of conscience. As Michael Penn states, "the Japanese government does not keep any statistics on the number of Muslims in Japan. Neither foreign residents nor ethnic Japanese are ever asked about their religion by official government agencies" *(Penn, 2006).*

Conclusion. In short, the history of Islam in Japan is short in period but rich in content. According to relevant sources, the relations between the Japanese and Muslim peoples date back to the 11th century and have been developing steadily since the 19th century. Muslims in Japan have established very warm relations with the local population. At the same time, economic, cultural and scientific ties with Muslim countries play an important role in Japan's foreign policy. In particular, the Great Japanese Muslim League, formed during World War II with the support of government officials, sparked a "wave of Islamic studies" in Japan. During this time, more than a hundred books and magazines on Islam were published in Japan. The main purpose of this organization was to explain to the Japanese armed forces and intellectuals about the Islamic world. As a result, since the beginning of the twentieth century, relations have been established between Japanese and Islamic research institutes.

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