

An Other Other? :

The Qur'ān, Islam, and Religious Identity in Modern Japan

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Religious identity in modern Japan has largely been shaped by the impact of Christianity. Indeed, recent research has emphasized that even the Japanese concept of religion itself is a product of the influence exerted by the Christian West in the nineteenth century. That having been said, the role of Judaism in Japanese discourses of self-identity is well known. Yet Islam, the third great monotheism, has hardly received the attention it deserves given its importance in pre-1945 discourses.



Going beyond studies of Japanese Pan-Asianism that treat Islam as a merely political factor, I will highlight the religious dimension of the Japanese reception of Islam, i.e. the way it was perceived as an alternative other different from Christianity. The subject will be approached through Japanese translations of the Qur'ān, which will be

analyzed semantically and contextualized historically.

Hans Martin Krämer is assistant professor for Japanese Studies at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. He obtained a PhD in Japanese History from Ruhr University in 2006 and has since then been a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard University and the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto (Nichibunken). He has published a monograph on the history of higher education reform in twentieth-century Japan, co-edited a volume on historiography in modern Japan, edited a journal issue on "Defining Religion, Defining Heresy in Modern East Asia" and is currently working on a manuscript on the appropriation and translation of religion in modern Japan.

No registration necessary

Lecture in English