

On the Study of a Peaceful World without Wars in the Middle East

Finding the cause of conflicts in the Middle East dates back to the Ottoman Empire, in the Middle Ages. According to Akira Mizuguchi who is a professor of the Keiai University (2006), the chaotic situation became clearer after borders were drawn, because humans moved through the empire without regard to religion or ethnicity before then. These minor differences have led to major conflicts. There are countries in the Middle East that are still experiencing civil wars, and one of the reasons is religions differences. Therefore, people in Middle East need to understand and accept the differences in culture, customs, and ideas rather than treating differences as out of their common sense.

The religion of the Ottoman Empire was mainly Islam. They were very tolerant of other ethnic groups because of the many opportunities to interact with them in commerce. This means that the treatment of the Ottoman Empire was just better than that of other countries. Of course, the treatment between Muslims and non-Muslims was different, but if they paid taxes, non-Muslims were also allowed to practice their own religions. This is why the Ottoman Empire existed longer than other Islamic countries at that time. Yet, the Ottoman Empire did not last forever. One of the reasons that caused it decline was division in the Ottoman Empire caused by the influence of nationalism. Nationalism is a concept that emphasizes their own nation and distinguishes themselves from others, and eventually brings about the idea of independence. The Ottoman Empire was influenced by the concept of nationalism that was spreading through Europe at that time, and Islam in the Middle East, which had a complex structure of ethnicity and religion, became divided within the empire according to Hideki Iwaki who is a doctor at Soka University (2014). The reason for the empire's division is distinct, but it was not the only thing that caused conflict.

In 19th century, the Ottoman Empire continued to lose wars against stronger European countries which embraced the industrial revolution earlier. Almost all of the Balkans, as well as parts of the Ottoman Empire like Montenegro and Serbia gained independence from the Ottoman Empire due to the Treaty of Berlin and interference from other countries. In addition, this matter promoted independence movements of other ethnic groups. This led to religious conflicts that had been avoided until then, according to Yuzo Nagata, who is a researcher of Toyo Bunko Research Institute (2011). Of course, this led to conflicts between independent countries, but it also led to domestic infighting. This is because when the Empire was

divided, it drew its borders without making a clear distinction about the people of all religions and races together. Thus, unclear distinction and independence has created the cause of ongoing conflict.

Why do different religions lead to conflict? This cannot be said in general, but it seems that the heresy of other religions and the structure itself that creates a status caste based on religion and a gap between the rich and the poor are problematic. As mentioned earlier, it is undeniable that different treatment make a gap economically. To solve these problem, they abuse religion as the reason for conflict. According to Hideki Iwaki, the Ottoman Empire, however, could dominate vast regions over 600 years by the idea of tolerance rooted such as the recruitment system for non-religious and ethnic groups, highly mobile societies and adoption of suitable systems for each areas. Thus, it is possible for people to live together, even if the cause of the conflict removed. The coexisting system like before the collapse strongly supported the secure in the country. These indicate the importance to understand and accept the differences in religions.

Even now, in the Middle East, they continue to wage war for many different kinds of reasons based on nationalism created by the interference from European superpowers. One of the reasons is religion differences, but they have to solve the economic problems at first. The gap between the rich and the poor made by the difference treatments based on their religions is more likely caused the beginning the war. So, the government should not make the economic disparity from their religions. In addition, they should adopt the coexisting system like the Ottoman Empire, and not to wage war that to abuse religion as the reason for it in the first place. The attitude to be tolerant of religion, understanding, and recognizing each other without prejudice is the most important thing to reduce the conflict in the Middle East.

(751 words)

Reference

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