

Appeasement and sectarian conflict in the modern Middle East: Jordan and Sunni-Shiite problem

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Place of fieldwork: Jordan

Name: Fukiko Ikehata

Key Words: Jordan, Sectarian Conflicts, Sunni, Shiite, Appeasement, Amman Message

Research background:

The sectarian conflicts in the Middle East are often described as Sunni-Shiite conflicts. However, in my study, I would like to explain these conflicts through three ideologies, which struggle with each other. After the Iranian Revolution, Shiite revolutionary tendencies increased. This movement radicalizes individuals in some cases. Sunni Jihadism is also a radical ideology, the rise of which became apparent on September 11, 2001. The third main ideology is Sunni Conservatism, represented by Saudi Arabia or Jordan. Through the struggle of these ideologies, the structure of sectarian conflicts in the Middle East can be much better grasped.



↑Jordanian King Abdullah II. There are many photos of him in Jordan



↑The Mosque built by King Abdullah and named “Abdullah Mosque”

Research purpose and aim:

Jordan, where I conducted my fieldwork, is the typical example of Sunni Conservatism and opposed the other two radical ideologies through appeasement policy. For example, in 2003, Jordanian king Abdullah published “the Amman Message.” It emphasized commonalities over sectarian differences and called on Jordanians not to condemn each other as non-believers. It represented Jordanian policy, which insists on the importance of ecumenism, against both Sunni Jihadism and

Shiite Revolutionism. My study focuses on “the Amman Message” and will clarify Jordanian attitudes in the context of conflicts and appeasement in the Middle East.

Results and achievements of fieldwork:

During fieldwork in Jordan, I went to the language school in Amman and learned the Arabic language. I visited many bookstores to buy Arabic books for my study. Moreover, I visited some researchers or NGOs to ask about the Amman Message. Many Jordanian people kindly gave me some information and the experience of staying in Jordan will be very useful for my study.



←The bookstore in Amman. I visited it many times and bought many Arabic books.

Implications and impact on future research:

In this fieldwork, I could hear about the situation of Jordan from Jordanians themselves. This experience was very useful for my study. However, I spent most of my time studying the Arabic language and was not able to interview enough researchers or institutes. If I visit Jordan again, I would like to interview more institutes and ask deeper questions.