

Revival of Sufism and *Tarīqa* in Nineteenth-Century South Asia

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Place and fieldwork: Pakistan

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- Research background

The Mujahidin movement is an Islamic revival movement that had a big impact in South Asia in the first half of the nineteenth-century. This movement was called the “Indian Wahhabi movement,” and it has been pointed out that this movement was connected to the eighteenth-century Wahhabi movement in the Arabian Peninsula. However, the leaders of the Mujahidin movement had different opinions to Sufism and saint cults. They used Sufic terms and did not deny saint cults completely. Recent research lacks an in-depth analysis of the works of Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl, an ideologue of the Mujahidin movement, and many scholars have pointed out that the movement inherited the ideas of Shāh Walī Allāh, who was a grandfather of Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl’s and the one of the greatest Islamic thinkers in South Asia.

- Research purpose and aim

The purpose of this study is to examine the possibility that the Mujahidin movement had a significant impact on the revival of Sufism and *tarīqa* in nineteenth- and twentieth-century South Asia. Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl’s works about Sufism had a significant impact on the Islamic revival movement after 1857. The Mujahidin movement had elements of *tarīqa*. This had a promoting role of visualization of the difference between the Muslims and the Hindus. The roots of religious conflict were formed in the first half of the nineteenth-century. In addition, by considering a view on saint cults of Mujahidin movement, it is possible to clarify the nature of South Asian Islam in this era.

Based on this, I researched the reality of Sufism, *tarīqa* and saint cults in Panjab province, Pakistan.

- Results and achievements by fieldwork

In Lahore, I observed the most famous Sufi shrine, the tomb of Dātā Ganj Bakhsh. There have been increasing security fears in recent years. Some Islamic extremists oppose visiting Sufi tombs because grave-worshipping is a “bad” practice in their perspective. The root of this criticism is derived from the Mujahidin or Wahhabi movements. In another Sufi shrine, I participated in a “Sufi night” which was a religious music concert. I met not only Pakistani but also European and Korean people. I discovered that these aspects of Sufi culture have a role as tourism resources. In addition, I bought many Urdu or English books in Urdu bazaar, including Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl’s works and Urdu translations of Shāh Walī Allāh’s works. The clerk in a bookshop told me that Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl’s works are prohibited in Pakistan. However, this is unclear because I was able to find his book in another shop.

In Jandiala Sher Khan, near Lahore, I went to a Muslim festival that celebrates a famous Sufi’s death

anniversary. In this festival, I watched a Sufi recital show and I interviewed a member of the festival committee.

In Balakot, I went to the tombs of Saiyid Aḥmad Barelvī and Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl. I found signboards pointing to their graves, which made me think some Muslims come here to visit them

- Implications for and impact on future research

At this point in the field research, I feel that insufficient information about the tarīqa has been obtained. In addition, I have not had sufficient time to investigate why Shāh Muḥammad Ismā‘īl’s works are prohibited. I would like to investigate these points in the next stage. As further research, I would like to research the situation of Sufism, tarīqa and saint cults in Sind Province and other areas, and to examine in the Islamic books that have been published in India.

Tomb of Saiyid Aḥmad Barelvī





Balakot



Tomb of Shāh Muḥammad Ismā'īl