

論文要旨

Summaries

第1部：第1章

男女隔離下のリヤドにおける女性による起業と消費の制度化

辻上 奈美江

サウジアラビアでは近年、女性がさまざまな側面から耳目を集めている。「上からの改革」が引き起こす社会変革は、これまでの差別・抑圧の対象としての女性のイメージの再考を促すレベルになっている。とはいえ、本研究は、サウジアラビア社会における家父長制が消滅したとは考えていない。同社会は、他の多くの社会と同様に家父長制が維持されている。だが、その家父長制を構成する要素には変化が見られる。本研究では家父長制の内側を、近年、存在感を高めている女性起業家と彼女らの起業活動を可能にしている社会・経済状況を明らかにしながら解明しようとするものである。

天然資源の輸出から得た収入で国家を運営するレント依存国家においては、雇用機会は政府が提供するものであり、国民にとって雇用は享受すべき当然の権利のひとつと捉えられてきた。にもかかわらず、人気のある政府系ポストが飽和状態のサウジアラビアでは、女性は必ずしも雇用機会に恵まれていない。安価な外国人労働力が豊富であることも相まって、民間企業は自国民より外国人を選好する傾向にあるため、自国民女性はあえて就労しないことを選択することもめずらしくなかった。結果的に、ごく最近まで、多くの女性が現金収入を得る手段を獲得することができずにいた。だが、エネルギー情勢の変動によるレントそのものの価値の低下と、それによるレンティア国家財政の逼迫、加えて急速な人口成長による一人当たりレントのすり減りが同時に進展する中、女性は家庭にとどまり、母として、妻としての役割を果たすべきといった価値観にも変化が起きている。若年層の女性を中心に仕事を求める動きが観察されているが、若年層女性の失業率は高く、既存の労働市場には参加しにくい。このような社会的・経済的状況下において、みずから起業する女性が存在感を高めている。背景には、2000年代前半から続いた国際石油価格の高騰とそれによる女性の購買力の高まりがあると考えられる。本研究では、デニズ・カンディヨティの「家父長制との交渉」を手掛かりに、高度に消費社会化した都市部の女性たちの生計と自己実現のための戦略を明らかにする。

Wahhabism and Public Morality of Islam in Saudi Arabia

Kenichiro TAKAO

This chapter describes changes in enforcement policies related to public morality in Saudi Arabia. Particular attention is paid to the Wahhabi doctrine of Islam, the political and social changes in Saudi society and the influence of Saudi Vision 2030 (a national reform project that began in 2016). This chapter studies policing activities by the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice. The Committee is a governmental body created to police people's behaviour (as a part of Wahhabism) to promote virtue and prevent vice. As a symbol of the state's embodiment of Islam, the Committee has had a significant impact on keeping the Islamic values of the country. However, it has also been criticised from both home and abroad for its sometimes violent policing methods, regarded as counter to the country's progress in modernisation and open policies. In this context, the chapter focuses on Saudi Vision 2030 as an influential factor on recent changes in the Committee. Saudi Vision 2030, which affirms the value of society based on Islam and is oriented towards Wahhabism on the one hand, disallows the present strictures of public morality of Islam in favour of characterising open policies on the other hand. Consequently, the Committee forfeited its role of policing public morality just before the launch of Saudi Vision 2030. In September 2019, the Saudi government put into practice the Law of Public Decency as an alternative to the Committee's policing. The law highlighted high-visibility cases among the Committee's policing such as cloth code and sexual harassment. The policing of morality is in effect based on this law, essentially similar to those by the Committee. As a reflection of the new era's initiative to replace old customs and signal changes in Saudi society, progressive policing policies have been publicly accepted by Saudi citizens. Today, the public morality of Islam in Saudi society is facing the era of secularisation due to the Law of Public Decency.

Analysis of ‘Salafī Jihādism’ as Cause of ‘Terrorism’: Interpretation by the Islamic Middle Way (Moderates) in Saudi Arabia

Satoru NAKAMURA

This chapter clarifies if the jihād in Saudi Arabia is terrorism or not by reflecting the latest academic achievements in Islamic studies and Saudi Arabian studies. This study aims at removing ambiguity in the concept of jihādism and terrorism.

After the September 11 incident, the ‘salafī jihādism’ is regarded as the cause of terrorism, and it almost equivalently means ‘salafī terrorism’. However, the concepts of salafism, terrorism, jihādism are not precisely defined, while the impression that salafism and jihādism are ideologies producing terrorism is defused to worldwide. It can be pointed out that the concepts of salafism and wahhābism are not elaborated to be defined and widely mentioned in confusion. The concept of jihādism is used in academic treatise even though the concept of *jihād* is not studied nor revealed in details. Jihādism is a concept correctly reflects the subjectivity of one who engages in violence, but it fails to distinguish terrorism from *jihād*, ignoring the objective difference between the two; a violence aims at defence of community or satisfaction of indiscriminate killing and one’s personal desire.

Thus this chapter applies three methods to solve above-mentioned problematics. The first is to examine and defines the concept of salafism. The second is to examine the tenets of *jihād* and *takfīr* by examining the outcomes of the latest Islamic studies both within and outside Saudi Arabia. The Encyclopedia of Wasafīya is referred as main source. The third method involves the examination of the latest research outcomes on Saudi Arabian political dynamism from the First Saudi State (1744/5–1818) through the Second Saudi State (1820–1889) to the current Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1933–). The religious views of the establishment side from the era of Muḥammad bin ‘Abd al-Wahhāb (1703–1793) to current is examined, as well as that of rebels and terrorism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The tradition of ‘purists’ nurtured in Saudi Arabian political history will be focused.

A large-scale research project on *wasafīya* (the political positioning of parties and factions in the centre, which is translated as moderation in Saudi Arabia) was initiated in King Saud University in 2009, and resulted in the publishing of *the Encyclopedia of Wasafīya* in 2015 as a six-volume series. This national challenge in Saudi Arabia adopted methodology enabling Muslims to form a reliable understanding of the Qur’ānic verses and the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad, resulting in research conclusions that limit *jihād* for defensive motivations, advocate judgements of excommunication with deliberation, and separate the Sunna from terrorist approaches. This emerging concept of *wasafīya* is the historical outcome of the de-politicised Salafism nurtured in Saudi Arabian political history.

アラブ首長国連邦の国民文化の象徴としてのブルカ ——国民アイデンティティと個人アイデンティティの狭間で

後藤 真実

本章は、1971年のアラブ首長国連邦建国（以下、UAE）以降、女性用仮面であるブルカがどのように国家言説に組み込まれ、国民アイデンティティを象徴するモノとなっていたのか、またその過程において、国民の仮面に対する見方や着用者である女性たちと仮面との関係性に対し、どのような影響を与えたのかを明らかにすることを目的としている。

ペルシャ湾沿岸地域において、仮面は婚姻可能女性を見分ける手段として、そして個々人の美的感覚や人格を反映するモノとして、多様に変化してきた。しかし1960年代後半から1970年代にかけて、石油資源を背景として社会の近代化が急速に進行したことに加え、1970年代後半以降により保守的なイスラームの服装が流行し、学校制服としても制定される中で、仮面は時代遅れまたは非イスラーム的なモノとしての認識が広まった結果、仮面着用者の数は減少の一途をたどっていった。一方、UAE政府は建国当初より、UAEの伝統文化の確立及び国民形成の一環として仮面文化の普及に取り組んできた。特に1990年以降、UAE国内の外国人人口の増加により、より国民アイデンティティの形成の重要性を感じるようになってからは、特定の仮面を「国民アイデンティティの象徴」として宣伝し始めた。この過程で、仮面は「エミラティ・ブルカ（UAE 仮面）」として、政治的な立場からの単一的な象徴的意味合いが付随されたのである。このような国家言説は国民にも浸透しており、ソーシャルメディア上では政府が宣伝する「エミラティ・ブルカ」とは異なる現代版の仮面である「ブルカ・ブシャナブ（髭の形をした仮面）」のような、一般に伝統的とはみなされない仮面やその着用者を非難するような言動も確認されるようになる。本論文では、このような状況下において、現代版の仮面を実際に着用しているUAE人女性や、新たな仮面の在り方を模索する若者女性への聞き取り調査を通じて、彼女たちの多種多様な仮面との関係や、それを巡る葛藤の様相を考察する。

Family Businesses in the Gulf Arab States and its Cooperation with the Governments: The UAE and Oman as Cases

Jun SAITO

This chapter provides an overview of how family businesses in the monarchical Gulf Arab states have developed their businesses in cooperation with the Emirati and royal families, focusing on cases from the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

Businesses owned and operated by specific families have a significant influence on the economy and society of the Gulf Arab countries. Family businesses also support the employment of labour and control most oil-producing companies in these countries. They have been prominent partners to foreign companies owing to their connections with the governments and their dominant shares in several industrial sectors. As a result, family businesses in Gulf Arab countries have played a role in attracting foreign investments. Some firms in the region own several subsidiaries and form ‘conglomerates’ that occupy an oligopolistic position in diversified industrial sectors. Conglomerates, owned and controlled by the founders’ families, have developed and expanded their operations under the influence of generous protection owing to their close relationships with the government and the ruling families.

Succession is a crucial concern for many family businesses. These families are generally very prolific, and their inheritance is often divided among several individuals. Even if the founder has created a huge family business group in his/her lifetime, the division of assets among numerous descendants, makes it difficult to take advantage of economies of scale within the market. In some Middle Eastern countries, rulers are centralised and actively intervene in the succession issues of domestic family firms, thus, there have been instances where conglomerate assets have been decentralised against the will of their founders.

Many influential families in the UAE and Oman have actively cooperated with the Emirati and royal families in the countries’ economic development while holding key positions in government ministries and related agencies. In the case of the UAE and Oman, family businesses that have actively contributed to the government’s economic management have expanded their business by passing it on to the founders’ descendants, without any splits or closures.

Ethnic Diversity in Oman: Integration of non-Arab and ‘Zanzibari’ Omanis since 1970

Mayuko OKAWA

This chapter explores the ethnic diversity and the process of national integration in Oman since the seizure of power by Qaboos bin Said in 1970. While the Arab Gulf states are known for a large population of immigrants, their nationals are recognised as being generally homogeneous. However, Omanis consist of not only the majority Arabs, but non-Arab nationals who arrived in Oman a few centuries ago. In addition to these old immigrants, there is a particular group who were granted Omani nationality soon after they immigrated from Africa in the 1970s, while the government has not granted Omani nationality to new immigrant workers arriving mainly from Asian countries. The newcomers from Africa are called ‘Zanzibaris’ in the present Omani society, who had immigrated from Oman to Africa in the 19th to mid-20th century. I illustrate the integration of such ethnically diverse immigrants into the process of Omani nation-building in both the aspects of policy and identity.

First, Qaboos undermined the legitimacy of the traditional and tribal solidarity in which political references were formerly rooted. Instead, as Marc Valeri noted, he assimilated tribal elites into the state apparatus and bureaucratised them as official intermediaries between individuals and the public administration while depriving them of any potential for political harm to the new regime. Additionally, Qaboos ‘tribalised’ the non-Arab nationals who could not claim Arab tribal descent, by establishing the sheikhs of tribes for their community and giving them tribal names. Thus, the regime’s political strategy of domesticating the local elites has been successful.

Regarding national or ethnic identity, the Arabness of ‘Zanzibari’ Omanis is controversial. Since they mostly comprise Swahili-speaking people of mixed African origins, they have not been regarded as pure Omanis or Arabs by the Omani Arabs who have been living in Oman since before 1970, although they have claimed Arabness by referring to their genealogy, which was traced patrilineally. For the Omani Arab, Arabness is defined by language, behavior, and descent — often collectively referred to as *hasab* and *nasab* in Arabic.

While all Omanis are legally considered equal, stereotypes exist that make it difficult for ‘Zanzibari’ Omanis to be fully integrated into the Omani society, particularly in regard to marriage. Many Omani Arabs disallow their children from marrying into Zanzibari-Omani families regardless of their social status or wealth. Although the state declares their unification in the ‘Omani’ national identity, the social cleavage can appear in economic and social contexts in the post-Qaboos era.

Water Resource Usage in Oman

Yohei KONDO

Since ancient times, people living in the Middle East and North Africa have developed and refined their skills to secure water resources. This chapter works on traditional water resource utilisation methods in Oman. It then overviews the development of water resource utilisation in domestic modernisation after 1970, with particular reference to desalinisation projects. In addition, the author highlights the issues and challenges that the people of Oman currently confront.

Before the use of electricity, people in Oman dug up the groundwater to live. People have settled by the wadis—where they can find groundwater. They also lived near water sources in mountainous areas. The development of the wadis was limited, since the flow of floods was pre-determined by God, according to Omani scholars, and it was inevitable to accept it rather than resist it. However, people in Oman have developed the technology of vertical wells and horizontal wells to secure groundwater. Furthermore, they have put in place detailed rules for securing and using water resources. They stipulated that all residents should participate in the maintenance of the irrigation system named *falaj* in Arabic, and water resources were used carefully as common property.

With the installation and operation of desalinisation plants as part of its modernisation policies, the Omani government has succeeded in supplying sufficient water to its inhabitants. However, they become so dependent on desalinisation, that they cannot maintain their current lifestyle without it. In addition, while the rate of desalinisation is increasing, natural water resources are still being used for agricultural water; sometimes they consume it more than necessary. The depletion of natural water is alarming in the realisation of a sustainable society in Oman. In addition, Oman is pressed to secure the energy required for desalinisation. However, the use of fossil fuels for desalinisation projects harms the global environment, including contributing to global warming. The establishment of alternative clean energies and effective reuse of wastewater seem to be urgent issues for the solution of water problems.

The Omani government has played a significant role in the Israeli–Palestinian peace process (Middle East Peace Talks) as well as human resource development in the field of water security. This chapter takes the activities of the Middle East Desalination Research Centre (MEDRC) as its example in Section IV.

ゆるやかにつながる——カートとイエメン人

大坪 玲子

カートはエチオピアを原産とする灌木で、その新鮮な葉には軽い覚醒作用が含まれる。娯楽が非常に少ないイエメンでは、カートを噛んで過ごす午後の数時間は社交の機会となっている。本章はカートの流通と消費からイエメン人社会を考察する。

イエメンは部族的な紐帯が強いことで有名である。サナアで供給されるカートの多くは部族領土で栽培され、部族の名称で呼ばれる。当然、カート商人は地縁血縁関係に頼って商売し、カートを噛む人々もまた地縁血縁関係に基づく人々と集まっているのではないかと予想される。

実際のところ、カート商人は非常に“浮気者”である。商売を始めるときは地縁血縁関係に基づく人と始めたり、故郷の村でカートを仕入れたりするが、その後は自分や消費者の嗜好に基づいて、仕入れるカートも仕入れる場所も変える。しかもバザール経済で想定される堅い信頼関係は、カート販売にはむしろ不利になる。なぜならカートは日々品質が変わるため、自分が仕入れたいカートの品質を維持するのなら、堅い信頼関係に頼るよりも、複数の仕入れ先を確保しておく方が有利だからである。

イエメンでは1970年代にカートの消費が広まった。当時は共同体の成員が集まってカートを噛むべきで、1人で噛むことや噛まないという選択肢はほとんど認められなかった。2000年代になるとカートは個人の楽しみになり、噛み方の選択肢も増えた。一緒に噛む相手としては友人や家族が多く、噛む場所も多様になった。

イエメン国外に住むイエメン人たちはどのようにカートを噛んでいるのか。エチオピアのD市に住むイエメン人の開くカート集会には、ホストの友人であるエチオピアの様々な民族出身の人々が集まる。オランダのB市にはかつてカートを噛むための部屋があり、そこにはイエメン人、ソマリア人、エチオピア人、スーダン人、オランダ人が集まった。カートは民族や国籍を越えて人々を集める力があるが、それは強制的ではなく、ゆるやかなものである。

Slaves in Medieval Yemen

Tamon BABA

This chapter discusses slaves in Medieval Yemen especially under the Rasūlids during the 13th and 15th centuries, focusing on the human movement and formation and development of human groups in this area. From 1st millennium B.C., various peoples continued to come into Yemen as military slaves, domestic slaves, and free citizens. The Aksum dynasty in Ethiopia, the Ziyādids, and the Najāhids stimulated African people particularly from Ethiopia to reach Yemen as military soldiers or domestic slaves. As a result, people with various ethnic features began to populate the Red Sea coastal plain, Tihāma. After the Ayyūbid conquest, people of Turkish and Kurdish origin started to appear in Yemeni source, while the African people were also imported to Yemen. The Rasūlids, who were of Turkish origin and inherited the Ayyūbid administrative system, purchased African people as domestic slaves and Turkish and Kurdish people as military soldiers. In fact, tariffs from the Port of Aden under the Rasūlids recorded that male slaves (*ʿabd*), female slaves (*jāriya*), and castrated male slaves (*khādīm*) from East Africa were traded at the port. In addition, a Rasūlid source told that *ʿabds* descended from slaves of the Najāhid ruler Fātik and the Mahdid ruler Saʿīd lived in Tihāma and had military powers, sometimes following the Rasūlid sultans and other times rebelling against them. Indeed, though more than 100 years under the Rasūlids had already passed, they preserved their identities and formed human groups. While we do not know how they developed after the Rasūlids' reign, some researchers have said that these *ʿabds* became akhdām, modern Yemen's lower social class. Thus, the features of the movement, formation, and development of slaves in Medieval Yemen are characterised by diversity and people of Northeast African origins, which might continue to affect modern Yemeni human movement and formation.

Civil War in Yemen: Causes and Circumstances

Hiroshi MATSUMOTO

The purpose of this chapter is to clarify the causes of the Yemeni Civil War. The Islamic sectarian confrontation and the proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been considered as factors for this war. However, the main cause for the war was the endogenous political instability in Yemen. The sectarian confrontation and the hostile relationship between Iran and Saudi Arabia were subsidiary factors.

Initially, the civil war was a battle between the Houthis and the Hadi administration, but since 2018, the civil war mainly comprises the armed organisations of the Southern Movement (Hirak) instead of the Hadi administration. Therefore, I have tried to determine the characteristics of the civil war in Yemen by analysing the formation and development of the Houthis and the Southern Movement.

Historical and traditional peculiarities, such as the political influence of local tribes in Yemen, have attracted attention, which is also a factor for the civil war. However, since the unification of North and South Yemen in 1990, Yemen has seen political normalisation due to democratisation and acceptance of the structural adjustment by the IMF and World Bank. This political normalisation resulted in a new instability depicted by the Houthis and Southern Movement. Therefore, the Houthis and Southern Movement have not arisen from the historical background of Yemen, but from the backdrop of major, new political changes after the unification.

The Houthis originated from the northern Zaydi revival movement. However, the tribesmen from Hashid and Bakil tribes, who were members of the Zaydi, had weak religious identities. Following the Iraq War in 2003, heavy anti-American elements were added to the Houthis movement, and many young tribesmen joined the Houthis. Nevertheless, the essential reason for their participation in the Houthis was not anti-American, but the decline of political influence of Hashid and Bakil since the unification, and the associated dissatisfaction with the tribal chiefs and elders.

Historically, Hashid and Bakil, with their mighty militia, had the strongest political influence in North Yemen, and the central government had to respond to their various demands. However, with repeated democratic elections following unification, the more populous southern area in the former North Yemen gained primacy, and the influence of Hashid and Bakil gradually diminished. Moreover, structural adjustment brought further changes to Hashid and Bakil.

The Yemeni economy was in danger of bankruptcy due to the Gulf War in 1991 and the Civil War in 1994, depleting both the central government and Hashid and Bakil. However, only the central government recovered due to the structural adjustment. President Saleh used this opportunity to weaken Hashid and Bakil.

The structural adjustment of funds and interests enabled Saleh to distribute interests and gain an advantage over the tribal chiefs of Hashid and Bakil and their relatives. The tribal chiefs moved to urban areas such as Sanaa, where they initiated businesses. In rural tribal societies, where there was no tribal chief, the control and mediation functions of the tribal chief were lost, and the young tribesmen became less compliant with the tribal chiefs and elders. The political influence of the tribes and tribal unions therefore diminished as they lost their sense of solidarity.

Hashid and Bakil were once the strongest powers in Yemen, but in just a decade, they have become subordinate to the government. These tribes were the peculiar forces of Yemeni politics. The diminishment of their power was the normalisation of Yemeni politics, a phenomenon more important than democratisation and structural adjustment. Unhappy and disillusioned about the downfall of Hashid and Bakil, the young tribesmen found a new identity in the Houthis movement, and the Houthis became the recipients of their dissatisfaction.

The people of former South Yemen also suffered from the adverse effects of democratisation and structural adjustment after the unification. Following the Civil War in 1994, the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) lost their influence, and the political parties representing the interests of people in former South Yemen disappeared. Furthermore, the number of retired people in the restructuring of military and civil servants involved in the structural adjustment was higher in the regions of South Yemen than North Yemen. The former South Yemen was a victim of democratisation and structural adjustment, and consequently, the Southern Movement aimed for peaceful separation of South Yemen established in 2008.

The enervation of Hashid and Bakil led to the reinforcement of the Saleh administration; the Houthis and Southern Movement were merely local forces. However, the Arab Spring of 2011 spread to Yemen, and Saleh resigned. Due to the turmoil and weakening of the government at this time, the Houthis expanded its powers and became the bearers of the subsequent coup d' état and the current civil war. The current civil war has received the support of the UAE for the establishment and expansion of armed organisations involved in the Southern Movement, such as the Security Belt (Hizam) and Southern Transitional Council (STC). The STC, for the sake of separation and independence, opposed Hadi's government, won over it, and became the bearers of civil war.

Gulf Broadcasters: Their History, Development, and Political Roles

Yushi CHIBA

Since the 1990s, the Middle East saw a rapid increase in satellite channels, and it transformed the existing media scene in this region. Although the Arabian Gulf countries were late in installing broadcasting facilities compared to other Middle Eastern countries, huge amounts of money derived from energy resources enabled them to invest in the broadcasting sector after the 1970s. When satellite became available, broadcasters funded by Gulf investors came to dominate the regional media market. Particularly, broadcasters such as MBC, ART, and Al-Jazeera, which have been popular among Arab audiences right from their inception, have close ties to their home governments. Therefore, regardless of their genres and ownership, they play an important role in facilitating the soft power policy of their home governments. To understand the contemporary Middle Eastern media scene, it is necessary to look into the role that Gulf broadcasters play in the industry as well as their relationships with governments. However, as previous studies emphasise, it is not enough to situate these broadcasters in their respective national contexts. Rather, it is necessary to analyse them from a transnational perspective, because the media in the Middle East were formed out of political and economic dynamics over borders.

This study has three aims. First, it reveals the shared background of the broadcasting industries in the Arabian Gulf countries—despite the fact that the period of installing those facilities differed among countries. Particularly, in addition to their economic growth after the 1970s, this study also points out that the political tension between the republics and the monarchies in the 1950s and the 1960s played an important role in apprising Gulf policy makers of the necessity to develop media sectors. Second, this study reveals the role that Gulf broadcasters play in the contemporary Arab broadcasting industries as well as their relationships with their home governments. By tracing the history of the Gulf-funded satellite broadcasters and revealing their market shares, it was found that they became more important than state broadcasters in facilitating the soft power policy of their home governments. Third, on considering the role of Gulf broadcasters in contemporary Middle Eastern politics, this study reveals that they play roles as both the guardians of their home governments and facilitators of political and social reforms. Through analysis, this study clarifies the way in which Gulf broadcasters have been deeply involved in Middle Eastern politics and societies.

Oil and the Middle East: A History of Japan's Energy Policy

Shuji HOSAKA

Japan has used petroleum for thousands of years; notably, the use of asphalt in Japan began in the late Jomon period, which was about 5,000 years ago. According to the historical book, *Nihon Shoki*, the Koshi region (present-day Niigata) sent petroleum and asphalt to the court of Emperor Tenji in 668. This is the earliest appearance of petroleum in Japanese documents.

In the 17th century, several Kusozu (oil) wells were found in Echigo province (Niigata Prefecture). Consequently, some village leaders started the procurement of oil in that area; at that time, petroleum was mostly used for lighting. Specifically, Kusozu means ‘bad smelling water’ in Japanese, so because of its bad smell, the market was limited to only the Echigo Province.

In the late 19th century, Japan opened its doors to the world, thus abandoning its seclusion policy. Japan initiated a programme to enhance its economic and military strength which then required a vast quantity of oil. As a result, Japan facilitated oil development in Niigata, Akita, etc. However, the oil reserves in Japan were not enough—even for maintaining its economic and military power—subsequently making it highly dependent on oil imports from the United States.

Japan then followed the path of militarism and entered into a war with China, so it became difficult to import oil from the Western powers. Japan tried to diversify its oil import sources by shifting its attention to the Middle East in general and the Persian Gulf region in particular. The first Middle Eastern oil imported by Japan was from Iran in 1921. In 1934, Japan also bought oil from Bahrain. This is Japan's second oil import from the Middle East after Iran and the first oil export from the Arab states of the Persian Gulf. In the early 1930s, Japanese leaders were struggling to establish a new energy policy and were investigating the possibility of securing oil imports and obtaining oil concessions from foreign countries within the framework of the new Navy-led oil policy. In 1933, Japan attempted to purchase an oil concession in Iraq, but the negotiations failed.

Japan had no long-term vision for the Middle East or its oil at this stage; accordingly, it had no government offices in the Arabian Peninsula. Therefore, instead of establishing diplomatic agencies in the oil-rich region, Japan increased Middle East studies at home. This was done by setting up academic institutions and bringing in scholars and diplomats who specialised in the Middle East and Islam.

In 1939, Japan sent an official mission to Saudi Arabia. While this mission had the ostensible purpose of establishing diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia, it also had a hidden agenda: negotiations with King Abd al-'Aziz regarding oil concessions. Unfortunately, the negotiations ended in failure and Saudi Arabia declared war against Japan in 1945.

Even in the 1930s, Japan already had a comprehensive and multilayered policy towards the Middle East, as its interest there was not limited to petroleum. It spanned a vast spectrum of co-operation in military, trade, religious, and academic affairs as well. However, these comprehensive relations—led by the military—were severed due to the rampages of the Japanese military. Therefore, after World War II, Japan had to restructure its policy towards the Persian Gulf and start anew.