

TURKIC SULTANATES AND FEMALE SOVEREIGN IN ISLAMDOM

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Abstract

The status of women in the Islamdom is a source of frequent criticism. Some Western critics charge that Islam has misogynist tendencies that are often teaches and promoted the inferiority of women in Muslim societies. As a result the debate over female leadership in Islam is a become splinter of the debate on Islam's views of women in general. The role of Women in Islam, as a political leader is considered a taboo, even sometimes get fierce opposition from a group of people, who interpret the word of God in a veil of monopolistic desires. However, there were numerous women in Islamic history that is capable of being head of state. In the various Arab speaking notes, women have been known as the head of state. In the Sultanate of Delhi, there was Razia Sultan, in Egypt there was Shajarat ad Durr, during Ottoman period, there was Mibrimah Sultan and coincidentally, all of them were Turkic origin. The study examines the reason why those women can become leaders within Islamdom. The conclusion, secularism of Islamdom which orchestrated by Turkic Mercenaries, when the institution of Abbasid Caliphate and Sultanate was separated, makes the women are eligible to become sultanah, which consistent with women's independent nature in Turkic society.

[Status perempuan di dunia Islam merupakan masalah yang kerap kali diperdebatkan. Beberapa kritikus Barat menuduh bahwa Islam memiliki kecenderungan misoginis yang sering mengajarkan rendahnya posisi perempuan dalam masyarakat Muslim. Akibatnya perdebatan kepemimpinan perempuan

dalam Islam selalu mengarah menjadi perdebatan pada pandangan Islam tentang perempuan pada umumnya. Peran perempuan dalam Islam, sebagai pemimpin politik dianggap tabu, bahkan kadang-kadang mendapatkan perlakuan sengit dari sekelompok orang, yang menafsirkan firman Allah sesuai keinginannya sendiri. Namun, ada banyak perempuan dalam sejarah Islam yang mampu menjadi kepala negara. Dalam berbagai catatan berbahasa Arab, perempuan telah dikenal sebagai pemimpin negara. Di Kesultanan Delhi ada Razia Sultan, di Mesir ada Syajarat al Durr, di Turki Usmani ada Mibrimah Sultan dan kebetulan semua dari orang Turki. Artikel ini mengkaji alasan mengapa para perempuan dapat menjadi pemimpin di dunia Islam. Kesimpulannya, sekularisme di dunia Islam yang dilakukan oleh para tentara bayaran Turki mengakibatkan terjadinya separasi antara institusi Kekhalifahan Abbasiyah dan kesultanan yang memungkinkan perempuan untuk menjadi seorang sultanah serta konsisten dengan sifat perempuan yang mandiri dalam masyarakat Turki.]

Keywords: *Abbasid Caliphate, Women, Turkic, Islamdom.*

Introduction

All this time, political leadership of women in Islam is still a controversial issue, it also causing the pros and cons. Normatively the majority of scholars, both Sunni and Shia, in general refuse women's political leadership. For Sunni clerics, the main requirement to be a Caliph or head of state in addition to being wise, he or she should have the capability and moral integrity, of Quraish descent, and should be male. Similarly, the scholars Shi'a must require men and descendants of *Ahlul Bait* (Offspring of the Prophet's daughter Fatima and Ali ibn Abi Talib) to occupy Imam's office or the Head of State.¹ On the one hand, there is a presumption that the activity which is best thing to do by women, is to stay home, take care of her husband and children, cooking, cleaning,

¹ Tallal Alie Turfe, *Know and Follow the Straight Path: Finding Common Ground between Sunnis and Shi'as* (Bloomington: Universe Press, 2015), p.115.

washing and other activities are included in the domestic realm.²

Conservative argument among Islamic Scholars, argues that in political practice, Islam does not recognize political equality between men and women. Scholars who support the idea like this, for example, Imam al-Ghazali stating that a women can not be placed as an *imam* (head of state). He said how could a woman exercising as a sovereign while she does not have the right to decide major cases as a judge in the justice court and were not able to give legal testimony in the court. There are also suggestions that there is a part to specific policy areas that can be entered women and there are certain areas that should never be touched by women. According to the group, they prioritizing women's role as wives and mothers. In addition, women are too often viewed as more emotional less than men, who much more rational in their calculations.³ Besides that, Al-Zamakhsari in *Tafsir al-Kasyasyaf* revealed the superiority of men over women is because they has a firmness, determination, physical strength, and women was generally perceived as weak.⁴

The Qur'an itself has passage that are generally cited to support the belief that women are inferior than man and not eligible for political office. Verse 34 of Surah an-Nisa says: "Man are in authority (*Qanwamun*) over Women, because Allah has preffered (*Faddala*) one of them to excel the others and because they support them for their means".⁵ Meanwhile, the only hadith relating to female political leadership is Sahih Bukhari 5:59:709, in which Prophet Muhammad PBUH is recorded as saying that people with a female ruler will never be succesfull.⁶

² Suad Joseph & Afsāna Nagmābādī (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures: Family, Body, Sexuality and Health* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 2003), p. 125.

³ Syafiq Hasyim, *Hal-Hal Yang Tak Terpikurkan Tentang Isu-Isu Keperempuanan dalam Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2002), p. 189-195.

⁴ Hamim Ilyas, *Perempuan Tertindas? Kajian Hadis Misoginis* (Yogyakarta: TP, 2003), p. 270.

⁵ Gerhard Bowering & Patricia Crone (ed.), *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 597.

⁶ Anne-Sofie Roald, *Woman in Islam: The Western Experience* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 187.

Abbas Mahmud al Aqqad make the verse and hadith as an affirmation that there is a fundamental difference between male and female, which he described as a natural disposition principle and the principle of social responsibility. Therefore, the right of leadership comes from natural ability which possessed by man. In addition, some classical Islamic jurists such as Ibn Hazm, Abu Ya'la al Farra and Al Mawardi insists that the state affairs should not be managed by a woman. The reason, the duties and responsibilities of a leader is very heavy, because the main function of the leader were to defend the religion, lead a congregation in *salat* (prayer) and to exercise independent legal reasoning (*ijtihad*).⁷

However, although Islamic Scholars always give on issues pertaining to the Islamic law, there is always an exception if we don't want to assume it as *Faux Pas*, when there were several women in Islamdom who installed as a Sultan. Most Notably, the illustrious thirteenth century Mamluk Queens, Razia Sultana of Delhi and Shajaratul-Durr of Egypt. Razia's ancestors were Turkic Mercenaries from Ibari Clan, a branch of Turkic Kypchak Tribe whose domain was situated in modern day Western Kazakhstan and lower run of the Volga river⁸, as well as Shajaratul-Durr, she was regarded by Muslim historians and chroniclers of the Mamluk time as being of Turkic origin⁹. The Mightiest Turkic Empire, Ottoman also showed the similiar pattern, when sovereign power were allocated among the female members of the imperial family during the period which called as 'The Woman Sultanate'.¹⁰

Based on the explanation above, it appears that despite the majority of Islamic scholars barred women from the office of the Head of State, some women sucesfully break through the barrier wall and become a

⁷ Abbas Mahmud al-Aqqad, *Filsafat Qur'ani: Filsafat, Spiritual dan Sosial dalam Isyarat Qur'an* (Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus 1986), p. 74-75.

⁸ Braja Bihari Kumara (ed.), *India and Central Asia: Classical to Contemporary Periods* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, 2007), p. 50.

⁹ Jamaluddin Ibn Taghribirdi, *Al-Nujūm az-zāhira fī mulūk Misr wa-l-Qāhira* (Kairo: al-Hayah al-Misriyah al-Ammah lil-Kitab, 1968), p. 102.

¹⁰ Verity Campbell, *Turkey* (Melbourne: Lonely Planet, 2007), p. 37.

sovereign in their respective country.

Genesis of Turkic People

Turkic or Turks are Pastoralist Tribes who controlled exclusively Eurasian Steppes Belt that extended from the Chinese frontier to the black sea. The wave of those nomadic horsemen have often charged out of Asia through the low passes of Altai Mountain into Dnieper River in Eastern Europe. For more than one millennium, the Turkic Nomads always confronted the largest agricultural society in the world, like China and Persia without being easily subdued by it.¹¹

The origin of the Turkic people is not yet settled. But, the Turkic which likely an Altaic provenance and still related with another nomadic tribes like the Pastoralist Mongolian Tribes who also inhabited the centre and southeastern part of Central Asian Steppes and Tungus who lived in the Eastern Part of Central Asia, isolated by Khingan Mountain and for a long period, engaging in hunting, fishing, and reindeer breeding in Manchurian Grassland.¹²

In 546, the scion of the famed Turkic Ashina Clan, hailed for their mastery in Blacksmithing, Ashina Tumen defeated the rebellion of Tiele Turkic Confederation against Mongolian Rouran Khaganate in Dzungaria (Present day Xinjiang, China). He asked to be allowed to marry a Rouran Princess from Yujiulu Clan in Return. But the request was refused by Yujiulu Anagui, the Khagan¹³ of Rouran Khaganate. So, in 552, Tumen rebelled and overthrew Yujiulu Clan, ending the Mongolian dominance over the Turkic people. Ashina Tumen proclaimed himself

¹¹ Robert Marshall, *Storm from the East: From Genghis Khan to Kubilai Khan* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1993), p. 19-23.

¹² Karl Heinrich Menges, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples: An Introduction to Turkic Studies* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 1995), p. 56-57.

¹³ Khan or Khagan (Great Khan) is an originally Altaic and subsequently Central Asian title for a sovereign or military ruler, widely used by medieval nomadic Turco-Mongol Tribes living to the north of China. Rouran Khaganate of Mongolian origin were the first nomadic empire who used the title Khan and Khagan for their Emperors and it was subsequently adopted by Göktürk Khaganate of Turkic origin.

as Bumin Khagan and established the Göktürk Khaganate (Celestial Turkic Empire), the first Turkic State in Eurasian Steppes, encompassing of Rouran domains in Mongolian Plain and Manchurian Grassland and extending them toward the western and southwestern part of Altai Mountain which inhabited mostly by Iranian speaking people.¹⁴

The vast Göktürk realm had splintered into Eastern Göktürk Khaganate and Western Göktürk Khaganate over the right of succession, both still ruled by the members of Ashina Clan.¹⁵ Eastern Göktürk Khaganate based in Mongolian Plain, Manchurian Grassland and Present day Xinjiang, meanwhile Western Göktürk Khaganate based in present day area of Kazakstan, Kyrgyztan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The enmities between both branches of Göktürk weakened them and they were unable to resist the Chinese Tang Dynasty. The Khagan of Eastern Göktürk Khaganate, Ashina Duobi also known as Illig Khagan was captured by General Li Jing from Tang Dynasty. Tang General, Su Dingfang also marches to Western Göktürk Khaganate and captured Ashina Helu also known as Ishbara Khagan after ambushes approximately 100.000 Göktürk cavalry at Irtysh River, Northwestern China.¹⁶

The breakup of Western Göktürk Khaganate led to a number of polities forming in its wake, such as Pecheneg who pledge to fend off Byzantine Empire and Oghuz, the Turkic Confederation from which the founders of the Selçuk Sultanates and Ottoman Empire sprang.¹⁷ The most powerful remnant of Western Göktürk Khaganate turned out to be Khazar Khanate, which emerged in seventh century and was still ruled

¹⁴ David Sneath, *The Headless State: Aristocratic Orders, Kinship Society, and Misrepresentations of Nomadic Inner Asia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 24-25.

¹⁵ Barbara West, *Encyclopedia of the Peoples of Asia and Oceania* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010), p. 829.

¹⁶ Jonathan Karam Skaff, *Sui-Tang China and Its Turko-Mongol Neighbors: Culture, Power, and Connections, 580-800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 249.

¹⁷ Selcuk Aksin Somel, *The A to Z of the Ottoman Empire* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2010), p. 217.

by House of Ashina. Khazar Khanate came into play and important part in the Triangular Rivalities between Byzantine Empire, Kievan Rus (the nucleus of modern Russian state) and especially the newly emerging Islamic caliphate.¹⁸

Turkic Encounter with Caliphate

During the 7th and 8th century, Khazar Khanate fought a series of war against the Rashidun Caliphate which was attempting simultaneously to expand its influence into Transoxiana and Caucasus. The First War was broke out in the early 650 and ended with the defeat of the Umayyad force led by Abdurrahman Ibn Rabiah outside the Khazar capital of Balanjar after a battle in which both sides used siege engines on the other troops.¹⁹

The Second Arab-Khazar War happened during the period of Umayyad Caliphate. Umayyad Caliphate continue efforts to get through into the north Caucasus. Throughout the latter half of the 7th century and the beginning of the 8th century AD, the Umayyad and Khazar forces clashed across the Caucasus region. Khazars under the leaders of Barjik Beg got a decisive victory against Umayyad Army at the battle of Ardabil in present day Azerbaijan. One of the major casualties in this battle is General Abu Jarrah al-Hakami, and Barjik Beg continued his marches to Mosul, Iraq. But then the Umayyad army led by Maslama ibn Abdul Malik calling for retaliation for the Khazar's hostility in Ardabil, he finally managed to annihilate Khazar army and slain Barjik Beg.²⁰

Umayyad Army led by Marwan ibn Muhammad launched another major offensive in 737, crossed the Caucasus and reached the capital city of Samandar, the Khazar retreat and forced to move their capital

¹⁸ Peter Golden, *Khazar Studies: An Historico-Philological Inquiry into the Origins of the Khazars*, (Budapest: Akademia Kiado, 1980), p. 37-42.

¹⁹ Andrew Bell Fiaokoff (ed.), *The Role of Migration in the History of the Eurasian Steppe: Sedentary Civilization vs. 'Barbarian' and Nomad* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2016), p. 237.

²⁰ Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2006), p. 128.

northward to Atil in the valley of the Volga River, however Marwan still pushed on toward Atil, a spectacular deep penetration. After Khan of Khazar raised a white flag and sued for peace, he never attempted to challenge Islamic supremacy anymore.²¹

In 680, Ashina Kutlugh, the member of Ashina Clan returned from Northern China to Orkhon Valley in Mongolia where he raised a new army, established Second Göktürk Khaganate and proclaimed himself as Ilterish Khagan. In 691, Ilterish Khagan died and was succeeded by his younger brother, Ashina Mochuo who assumed the title 'Kapaghan Khagan'. Second Göktürk Khaganate intends to expand the territory to Samarkand, threatening the Umayyad territory. In 712-713, a series of clashes happened between the forces of the Umayyad and Göktürks hordes. Under the leadership of Qutaiba bin Muslim, Umayyad army defeated Göktürks army whose led by Kapaghan Khagan and his nephew, Ashina Mojilian.²² Göktürk Khaganate finally ceased to exist and their territory was absorbed by Uyghur Khaganate.²³

The Turgesh Tribe led by their Chieftain, Suluk Khan attained to the hegemony of Turkic Tribe who formerly belongs to Western Göktürk Khaganate and having established themselves as an independent power.²⁴ Throughout the 720's, the Umayyad forces repeatedly defeated by Turgesh forces. Only in 732, Turgesh forces can be defeated and driven out from Samarkand and Bukhara. At 737, Suluk Khan along with its allies launched an offensive to Jowzjan (Afghanistan), but was defeated in Battle of Kharistan by Umayyad Governor, Asad ibn Abdullah al-Qasri. Therefore, on his return to his own capital, Balasagun (in modern day

²¹ Khalid Yahya Blankinship, *The End of the Jihad State: The Reign of Hisham Ibn 'Abd al-Malik and the Collapse of the Umayyads* (New York: State University of New York, 1994), p. 173.

²² Ahmad Hasan Dani & Boris Anatolyevich Litvinsky, *History of Civilizations of Central Asia: The crossroads of civilizations, A.D. 250 to 750* (Paris: Unesco, 1996), p. 338.

²³ İbrahim Sarı, *Türk Tarihi* (Istanbul: Birinci Baskı, 2016), p. 116.

²⁴ Alfred Felix Landon Beeston, *Arabic Literature to the End of the Umayyad Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 159.

northern Kyrgyzstan), Suluk Khan was assassinated by his rival, Kül-chor and Turgesh Tribe broke up into the contending faction.²⁵

When Abbasid Caliphate as the successor state of Umayyad Caliphate's grip on the Central Asian weakenend, Chinese Tang Dynasty attempted to reassert its control over western part of Central Asia. This move eventually led to the first and only major military encounter between Tang Dynasty and Abbasid Caliphate in Central Asia. The Chinese entered the upper Syr Darya valley but were heavily defeated by the Abbasid force lead by Ziyad bin Salih at the battle of Talas. This victory effectively attempts put an end to Chinese attempt to expand its rule in Central Asia and was soon followed by final submission of Turkic Tribes to Abbasid, in that area.²⁶

Women in Turkic Society

The status of women in Turkic societies, have often stressed as a fact that women enjoyed more authority, freedom and respect in the context of steppes societies rather than sedentary women in urban societies. This view refers usually to the relatively few classical Turkic text that have come down to us and deal mainly with queens, heroines and wise matriarch. The female character is one of the renowned classical text on Turkic Tribal Society, *The Book of Dede Korkut*, an epic reflecting the oral tradition of Turkic Oghuz Confederation, have frequently served to underline the point that tribal women were almost their men's equals. This set of epic tales does in fact praise female warriors and courageous mother and wives, clever daughter of Turkic chieftain and brides steadfast in their love.²⁷

²⁵ Gerald Hawthing, *The First Dynasty of Islam: The Umayyad Caliphate* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 88.

²⁶ Muhammad Olimat, *China and Central Asia in the Post-Soviet Era: A Bilateral Approach* (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2015), p. 11.

²⁷ Veronika Veit (ed.), *The Role of Woman in Altaic Society* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harassowitz Verlag, 2007), p. 109.

The Turkic Kyrgyz epic, *Manas*, also become a good example of classical Turkic text who portrayed women as heroic and militant as the men. In this epic, its Ak Sakal, the wife of Joloy, the notorious warrior from Turkic Nogai Tribe, who repeatedly save him from his enemies and in the early chapter, she is the heroine more than Joloy is the Hero.²⁸ In fact, it was woman in Turkic societies, working from the domestic sphere that produce all the value added product of the nomad herds like diary products, carpets and textiles. Since women were good and reliable workmates in the difficult nomadic routines, its guaranteed their prominent position within the family and clan. This vital economic function in Turkic societies was undoubtedly conducive to a high status for Turkic woman of the Central Asian Steppes.²⁹

The report of Ahmad ibn Fadlan, a tenth-century traveler, famous for his account of his voyage in the present day area of Central Asian Russia, also proves the independency of Turkic women. In Turkmen Tribes of Turkic Oghuz Branch near the frontier of Turco-Persian Khwarezm Empire, and Turkic Yakut Tribe in Siberian Forest, according to ibn Fadlan, after a girl growing up, they're not seeing themselves as extension of their father anymore and the daughter then has complete freedom in choosing her own future-husband.³⁰ The other famous traveler, Ibn Batuta also described: "the Turkic women in Golden Horde Khanate, regardless of their social strata were not restricted to leave the *Yurt* (Portable Tent in Turkic Tribe) without her husband and did not wear veils (*wa hiya badiyat al wajh*) to cover her head or facial appearance."³¹

Turkish scholar like Ziya Gökalp also claimed that, Turkic societies in Central Asia were both patrilineal and matrilineal, there was gender

²⁸ Nora Chadwick & Victor Zhirmunsky, *Oral Epics of Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 82.

²⁹ Leon Christa Hämmerle (ed.), *Gender Politics in Central Asia: Historical Perspectives and Current Living Conditions of Women* (Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), p. 21.

³⁰ Ramazan Şeşen, *Ibn Faẓlan Seyahatnamesi Tercümesi* (Istanbul: Bedir Yayınevi, 1975), p. 116.

³¹ Muhammad Ibn Batuta, *Rihlat Ibn Batuta* (Beirut: Talal Harb, 1987), p. 243

equality and there was no male centered state ideology in any Turkic tribes or clans.³² We can see the example in terms of gender relations, when Göktürk Khaganate as a First Turkic Empire in Central Asian Steppes, respecting feminine values and recognizing matriline. But at the same time, they also adopted patrilineal succession tradition and therefore masculine values became dominant among them.³³ Although in Göktürk Khaganate, all known the Khagan seat holders have been male, their patrilineal descent come from the unbreakable lineage of matrilineal ancestor which is said to have been a supernatural being in the form of she-wolf named Asena. Only the descendant of Asena which had a right to rule over the Göktürks.³⁴

The historical information about women's condition in their Turkic *urheimat*, make everything is illuminated, because the ruler in Islamdom who has a Turkic Ancestry, were born in the environment which so favourable toward female. It might seem quite natural when in the future, their descendant put a woman in the throne of Sultanate, broke the longstanding old custom in sedentary civilization, especially in Arabophonic or Iranophonic areas where only males could inherit the throne.

Turkic Warlords in Abbasid

During the Abbasid Rule, especially when Al-Mu'tasim become a caliph, he began to recruit and utilized Turkic mercenaries in their armies.³⁵ These nomadic warriors become a major force to be reckoned with in Abbasid Politics. The rise of Turkic mercenaries as major power brokers within the Abbasid command make the capital city of Baghdad

³² Ziya Gökalp, *Türk Uygurluk Tarihi* (İstanbul: İnkilâp Kitabevi, 1991), p. 237.

³³ İsenbike Togan, *Flexibility & Limitation in Steppe Formations: The Kerait Khanate and Chinggis Khan* (Leiden : EJ Brill, 1998), p. 9-10.

³⁴ Peter Golden, "Ethnogenesis in the tribal zone: the shaping of the Turks", dalam *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*, Vol. 16, 2009, p. 95-96.

³⁵ Hasan Al-Basya, *Tarikh al-Daulah al-Abbasiyah* (Kairo: Darul Nadhlah al Arabiyah, 1975), p. 48.

become a Turkic predominantly city.³⁶

Al-Mu'tasim choses Turkic Mercenaries for pragmatic reason: they were skilfull and hardy cavalrymen able to withstand enormous privation, they also didn't have any commitment or loyalties to other Muslim communities or another faction which could interfere with their obedience to caliph. Beside that, Al-Mu'tasim himself is Half-Turkic from his maternal side³⁷ Turkic Mercenaries were able in the slave market of Transoxiana.³⁸ Most had been captured during the raids which were parts and parcels of life in the Central Asian Steppes but which seemed to have intensified during this era as a result of a skyrocketing population in these high treeless land.³⁹

While the Turkic Mercenaries were undoubtedly military effective, this creation of a majority Turkic army of non-Muslim origin had all kinds including the transfer of capital from Baghdad to Samarra where the court and the Turkic Mercenaries could reside together with caliph. Soon after Al-Mu'tasim began recruiting Turkic mercenaries, it become obvious that the arrival of large numbers of rowdy cavalry man in Baghdad was a recipe for disaster. The Persian Regular Army whom they replaced resented toward them and the common people in Baghdad quickly reacted against their often drunken forays through the city, used to ride their steeds through the street, knocking down men and women, and trampling children unfoot.

In the new capital, Samarra, since Al-Mutawakkil become a caliph, marked a substantial increase in the power of Turkic Mercenaries. Turkic Mercenaries are often involved in the seizure of power through orchestrated a conspiracy with the ambitious prince who want to become

³⁶ Jamaludin Surur, *Tarikh al-Hadbarah al-Islamiyyah* (Kairo: Darul Fiqr al Arabi, 1976), p. 22-23.

³⁷ Hasan Ibrahim Hasan, *al-Tarikh al-Islami al-'Am* (Mesir: Maktabah Nahdhah, t.t.), p. 414.

³⁸ Jalaludin As-Suyuthi, *Tarikh Kbulafa* (Jakarta: Pustaka Al-Kautsar, 2010), p. 336.

³⁹ Hasan Ibrahim Hasan & Ali Ibrahim Hasan, *al-Nidham al-Islamiyyah* (Mesir: Maktabah Nahdhah al-Mishriyyah), p. 182.

caliph. Turkic mercenaries, appointed, deposed, and murdered caliph in the rapid succession as they pleased. For the Turkic Mercenaries, the desire to obtain more power was their main motivation and they were devoid of any sort of ideas, principles, values or ideals alongside the corollary that human life counted for nothing.⁴⁰

Caliph Al-Mutawakkil was murdered because of conspiracy between Turkic Mercenaries with Al-Muntasir. This occurs because Al-Muntasir disappointment since Al-Mutawakkil instead of choosing Al-Muntasir, he decide to appoint al-Mu'tazz as heir presumptive, whereas according to the Law of Succession, Al-Muntasir were the one who deserves to be the successor.⁴¹

On the success of the conspiracy, Al-Muntasir (247-248 H./862 - 863 AD) ascended the throne of the caliph, succeeded his father, Caliph al-Mutawakkil. But he did not long enjoy the dignity of which he had so iniquitously possessed himself, his death by poisoning was a result of intrigue and conspiracy which orchestrated by Turkic Mercenaries with the help from his personal physician, Ibn Thoifur. Likewise, Al-Musta'in replaces the Al-Muntasir as a caliph. After *ascended the throne*, Al-Musta'in watched as his reign slowly sank into obscurity. In addition, he is generally portrayed as an incapable and frivolous ruler. Therefore, it is very easy for Turkic mercenaries to revoke his mandate as a ruler, Al-Musta'in was deposed from his throne and forced to flee abroad, and later assassinated by Turkic agents.⁴²

Caliph Al-Mu'taz (252-255 H./866 - 868 AD), son of Al-Mutawakkil replace his brother, al-Musta'in. This succession of leadership was not able to restore the authority and dignity of the Abbasid Caliphate. The

⁴⁰ Andrew Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 253.

⁴¹ Muhammad Al-Khudari, *Mudakkirah fi Tariikh al-Umam al-Islamiyah* (Beirut: Darul Qalam, 1986), p. 469-470.

⁴² Will Slatyer, *Ebbs and Flows of Ancient Imperial Power, 3000 BC - 900 AD: A Short History of Ancient Religion, War, Prosperity, and Debt* (Singapore: Trafford Press, 2012), p. 416.

Caliph's power was still limited, in favor of a sizable Turkic Mercenaries who added their own constant manipulations and bickering and authority eroded from the government's center. Then fate of Caliph al-Mu'taz was peculiarly hard, emplaced by the Turkic mercenaries, failed to pay his army and was murdered by a clique of Turkic Mercenaries. The homicide of al-Mu'taz can be regarded as a draconian one. A group of Turkic Mercenaries led by Bayakbak and Musa ibn Bugha came into his private room and they beat him badly, stabs him in the ribs with they spear, he was then stripped of all his luxurious garments and valuables, and finally, the mutineers ordered that Al-Mu'taz's limbs were to be stretched out and tied to stakes lying flat on desert sand, so he passed away after feel the intensity of the sun and summer heat.⁴³

After the bloody uprising in Samarra, the caliph was more like a revered embodiment of divine harmony than the head of an actual governing administration. Since Revolt in Samarra, it has always been easy for ambitious Turkic warlords to hold actual power. The resulting internal fragmentation eroded the initial Abbasid Dynasty structure and caused fundamental and lasting changes. Because of the inertia and constant internal conflicts, the Abbasid Caliph were unable to stabilize caliphate's external borders of the early Abbasid rulers and resulted from a huge wave of separatist movement in North Africa, Syria and Iraq. Another factor contributing to disunity was overextension of Abbasid territories, stretch thousands of miles from east to west and home to millions of people of different ethnicities and languages was exceptionally difficult to govern.⁴⁴

Secularization of Islamdom

As a result of havoc in Samarra, the once powerful Abbasid

⁴³ Hugh Kennedy, *The Armies of the Caliphs: Military and Society in the Early Islamic State* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 139.

⁴⁴ James Lindsay, *Daily Life in the Medieval Islamic World* (California: Greenwood Publishing House, 2005), p. 74.

Caliphate began to decline and with the breakdown of Abbasid, the separation of state and religious elite and institution become more marked. The caliphate, lost the meaning of its original political legitimation which dated to the revolutionary era against Umayyad through years of obscurity, could claim only a vague and shadowy credibility with the public when Abbasid Caliph become religious leader only. The control of Islamdom was divided among Abbasid military clique of Turkic origin. The successor state of Abbasid Caliphate were secular regime.⁴⁵

The secular nature of the numerous petty state who created by the governors of Turkic mercenaries origin after the deterioration of Abbasid Central Government was very natural because while Abbasid Caliph remained the chief representative of Islamic religious authority, the real military and political power of the states was in the hands of several Commander of Turkic Mercenaries who assumed the title of 'Sultan' (Holder of Power) and the division of temporal rule from religious authority was complete. The Sultan conducted the daily affairs of government and the caliph, although retained its responsibility for and supervision of the Islamic community religious activities, having very little say in state affairs and being secluded in his palace. Caliphate and sultanate were now and henceforth two separate organizations.⁴⁶

Actually, the title of sultan itself was given to prominent military commanders during the reign of Caliph Al-Wathiq. He bestowed upon his closest enforcer, Abu Jafar Ashinas, the last surviving member of Ashina Clan, the Imperial House of former Göktürk Khaganate, with the title of sultan. It's the first time in which caliphate politics and military authority was delegated to the military officer.⁴⁷ Therefore the title itself developed into a rare type of de facto hereditary head of semi-autonomous state

⁴⁵ Ira Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 187.

⁴⁶ Majid Khadduri & Herbert Liebesny (ed.), *Origin and Development of Islamic Law* (New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchang Ltd, 2010), p. 20.

⁴⁷ Matthew Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra* (New York: Suny Press, 2001), p. 79.

within the framework of caliphate when authority in each part of the caliphate itself was divided up among the Commander of Turkic Mercenaries who had been following in Abu Jafar Ashinas footsteps and styled themselves with the same title like him, sultan. Various territories ruled by a sultanate which have become widely known as sultanate, most notably the Ghaznawid Sultanate, Delhi Sultanate, Great Selçuk Sultanate, and Mamluk Sultanate of Egypt⁴⁸

We can compare, the institution of sultanate and its relation with caliphate similar with what happened in Japan before Meiji restoration. The Emperor of Japan was historically the spiritual leader and the most respected individual in Japan.⁴⁹ Just like Abbasid Caliph were descendants of the prophet's youngest paternal uncle, Abbas ibn Abdul Muthalib and seen by its supporters as the natural inheritor (rather than previous dynasty, Umayyad that their blood to the prophet was less close) of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH⁵⁰, with similliar essence the Emperor of Japan are direct descendant of Yamato clan who is deity incarnated, that unified Japan during Ancient times and it makes his position sacrosanct.⁵¹ Therefore, the emperor was controlled by Shogun military elite, a sucession of powerful families who exercised absolute secular power. The role of emperor was little more than a sacred symbol to legitimize the rule of the Shoguns.⁵²

Anyway, if we talk about woman's participation in political affairs during the classical era of Islamic history, compared to the post-Samarran Interlude political structure of dual leadership between caliph and

⁴⁸ Juan Eduardo Campo, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009), p. 126.

⁴⁹ Kyoko Inoue, *MacArthur's Japanese Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 42.

⁵⁰ Moshe Sharon, *Black Banners from the East: The Establishment of the Abbāsīd State: Incubation of a Revolt* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam, 1983), p. 86.

⁵¹ Michael Weiner, *Race, Ethnicity and Migration in Modern Japan* (London: Taylor and Francis, 2004), p. 57.

⁵² Janet Hunter, *The Emergence of Modern Japan: An Introductory History Since 1853* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 265.

the sultans, the previous system when the caliph still more power in controlling and asserting their rights, the chance for women to become a sovereign was eclipsed either by male domination in religious office or a longstanding tradition that allows no woman to fill the position.

We need to remember, soon after Prophet Muhammad PBUH passed away, Abu Bakar was chosen to become caliph (means: sucessor, representative, or deputy) by the elderly companions at *Saqifah Bani Sa'idah* not only because he was Prophet Muhammad's father in law and an early convert to Islam, but Prophet Muhammad PBUH itself asked Abu Bakar to take charge of leading congregational prayer as He lays on His deathbed.⁵³

Leading a congregation in prayer as one of the requirements and qualifications to become caliph because caliph has a function a chief who led collectivity, and precedents set by Prophet Muhamamd PBUH including delivering Friday sermon just before performing congregational prayer. Prophet Muhammad PBUH introduced himself as a *khatib* for the city of Madinah in 630 AD.⁵⁴ The Right Guided Caliph and the Umayyad Caliph all presented sermon, because their role as *khatib's* role was closely associated with symbolic position as the representative of prophet and his successor in a religio political sense. Sometimes, when caliph become a *khatib*, he addressed pragmatic questions of government and sometimes even included direct decrees which got even a ritual legitimacy since the mimbar and prayer niche was located in the most sanctified area of the mosque regarded by some as the spurce of special blessing.⁵⁵

Meanwhile, if among the caliph duties is to lead a congregational prayer and deliver sermon during Friday Prayer, the main problem is, woman is exempt from Friday Prayer during menstruation and as she

⁵³ Hamid Mavani, *Religious Authority and Political Thought in Twelver Shi'ism: From Ali to Post-Khomeini* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 2.

⁵⁴ Shamim Akhter, *Faith & Philosophy of Islam* (New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2008), p. 19.

⁵⁵ Richard Antoun, *Muslim Preacher in the Modern World: A Jordanian Case Study in Comparative Perspective* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2014), p. 69.

can not therefore fulfil this duty once every month, she can not be the caliph.⁵⁶ In the case of congregational prayer, The various Islamic school of Jurisprudence like Shafi'i, Hambali and Hanafi only allow woman to lead as imams in single sex congregation and not mixed-sex. The principle that woman should be located at the back of the congregation and not in the front row also supported rule that woman can not lead a man in the prayer. It possibly related to the preference for concealment of women from the male gaze was a concern with woman sexual allure, as the Shafi'i authority, Al-Mawardi said: "a woman is *Awra* and her acting as *imam* would be seductive (*fi imamatiba iftitan biha*)". Muhammad al-Sharakhsi, Islamic scholar of Hanafi School also argues that since *salat* is an intimate dialogue with God (*munajat*), is not appropriate that it be sullied with any element of sexual desire which ordinarily accompanies adjacency to a woman. This verdict automatically made her not eligible to be an *imam* or in broader sense, a caliph.⁵⁷

The same phenomenon also happened not only in Muslim world but also in the Latin Christendom, where Holy Roman Emperor as the bulwark of the whole Christian lands, he was not only rules as a secular lord, but also exercises supreme authority in ecclesiastic matters, personifying the union of throne and altar. As a result, a woman can not bear a title of Holy Roman Empress but only in her capacity as a wife, and thus *ipso facto* an emperors consort. Even though no explicit article in Imperial Law prohibited woman's coronation as a Holy Roman Emperor, a woman could hardly ever entertain any such hope.⁵⁸

However, when the period of military expansion of Abbasid political power reached its peak, it also marked the influx of foreign ideas from peripheral areas like Persia, China, India and in this case, Central

⁵⁶ Guttorm Floistad (ed.), *Philosophy of Justice* (New York: Springer Publishing, 2014), p. 151.

⁵⁷ Marion Holmes Katz, *Prayer in Islamic Thought and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 185.

⁵⁸ Barbara Stollberg Riling, *The Emperor's Old Clothes: Constitutional History and the Symbolic Language of the Holy Roman Empire* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2015), p. 161.

Asian Steppes to Islamdom. The Muslim world faces the numerous challenges on various forefornts especially, the challenge of describing its coalesce with new culture who injected into Muslim *weltanschauung* while empowering its own core structure in the face of brand new ideas. So, the flexibility that human endeavours generates and affords and the difference with Islamic Jurisprudence that it yields the ability of Islam to answer and deal with such challenges.

By the end of ninth century, after Samarran interlude and various sultanate tried to represented a reorganization of Muslims institution and become the legitimate political power, it was the sultans, not caliph anymore, who protected Islamdom from its foes, appointed the Governors and state apparatus and also implemented the effective legal system. Following their own nomadic custom and lifestyle, the woman from Turkic Tribes enjoyed more freedom rather than their sisters in more advanced civilization like China and Persia, they also played an important political role, often acting as custodian of sovereign when their child still in minor and cannot directly rule as Khan or Khagan after their fathers passed away. This unique feature where female members of the Sultanate take an active part in political affairs which influenced by Turkic culture will be followed not only in Turkic Sultanates like Delhi, Mamluk and Ottoman but also in non Turkic Sultanate at the future like Aceh and Yogyakarta.

Since caliph had been stripped off from its secular authority and the Sultans exercising secular power in his name, they are not obliged to perform some religious duties like being an *imam* in communal prayer and delivering a sermon before friday prayer, these function having been transfered to *imam* and *khatib* whose hired by the sultan itself. So, automatically a woman was not prohibited anymore from elected as a head of state, in this case, a sultan (or in the feminine form: sultanah). With the Islamic civilization reached its zenith and developed into cosmopolitan, the introduction of Turkic element from Central Asian Steppes into

Islam was inevitable, and the later infusion of new way of thinking from Hellenic, Persian and Far Eastern elements, makes the classic situation where the women's world was detached from Islamic political history and women's voice bore no authority therein, was slowly but surely combated.

The Emergence of Sultanah

In this way, since the institution of sultanate spread all over the Islamdom and started their own rule, there are a large number of woman who eligible to to be a sultan. *First*, Razia Sultan of Delhi. Daughter of Sultan Iltutmish from Turkic Kypchak Tribe⁵⁹, she was the first female ruler of South Asia. She was a great administrator in government affairs and also an excellent fighter. Whenever Iltutmish had to leave Delhi, he used to leave Razia in charge of the Sultanate affairs. As the rest issues of Iltutmish were incompetent to govern, she was nominated as new sultan. Through her reign was short but eventful and witnessed the beginning of intensive penetration of Turkic culture from Central Asia into Subcontinent India.⁶⁰

Second, Shajarat al Durr of Cairo. She was the Turkic wife of Sultan Salih al Ayyubi, the penultimate ruler of Egyptian Ayyubid Sultanate. When his husband died fighting King Louis IX of France in the Seventh Crusade, a succession crisis arose. By the time the war ended, Crown Prince Turansyah had arrived in Egypt from Syria, but he showed little gratitude and insulted the Turkic Army and he also proved incapable of leading the troops. Turansyah was soon assassinated by Baybar Bunduqdar and the Turkic army under his command, and then they hailed Shajarat al Durr, to whom they were devoted as a Sultanah of Egypt. Moreover, The Turkic army asked Shajarat al Durr to take one of them, as a husband and co-ruler. She agreed and married Turkic General, Izzudin Aybak.

⁵⁹ Kypchak Tribe is a Turkic Tribe who become an ancestor of modern Kazakhstan Peoples.

⁶⁰ Soma Mukherjee, *Royal Mughal Ladies and Their Contributions* (New Delhi: Gyan Books, 2001), p. 9.

This marriage between Shajarat al Durr and Izzudin Aybak marks the beginning of Mamluk Sultanate rule in Egypt. Her reign is unique in the annals of Muslim history, because her name struck on coins, another prerogative of Kingship.⁶¹

Third, we can find the example in Ottoman Empire. Although may have been the most prominence Islamic Turkic Empire, but for a time woman commanded the great influence in the machinations of the empire and some women within imperial family assumed and wielded considerable political clout, the most notable of whom was Mihrimah Sultan⁶², the daughter of Süleiman the Magnificent from his Polish concubine, Alexandra Lisowska.⁶³ Raison d'être behind the new matriachate architecture within Ottoman Empire is because the title of 'sultan' carried by both male and female members of Ottoman dynasty.⁶⁴ Since Anatolian Turkish language as an official language in Ottoman Empire, does not have grammatical gender, human nouns and pronouns usually do not indicate whether the person referred to the title 'sultan' is female or male.⁶⁵

So, meanwhile the ruler of Ottoman Empire using quintuple title system, emperor-caliph-padishah-khan-sultan, symbolized Ottoman quintuple heritage: Constantinople-Islamic Religion, Persian Culture, Turkic Ancestry, Secular Overlordship⁶⁶; the female members of Imperial

⁶¹ Afaf Lutfi Sayyid Marsot, *A Short History of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 24-25.

⁶² Christine Isom Verhaaren & Kent Schull, *Living in the Ottoman Realm: Empire and Identity, 13th to 20th Centuries* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), p. 384.

⁶³ Douglas Arthur Howard, *The History of Turkey* (California: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), p. 193.

⁶⁴ Leslie Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 18.

⁶⁵ Ramazan Göçtü & Muzaffer Kir, 'Gender studies in English, Turkish and Georgian languages in terms of grammatical, semantic and pragmatic Levels'. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 158, 2014, p. 282- 287.

⁶⁶ Peter Fibiger Bang & Dariusz Kolodziejczyk, *Universal Empire: A Comparative Approach to Imperial Culture and Representation in Eurasian History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 181-189.

family also used the title of sultan, and automatically made them didn't have to ascended the throne to legally involved themselves in court politics or influence events inside the empire, even they are not allowed to be elected as a caliph according to Islamic Law of Jurisprudence.

That's why, no wonder Aceh Sultanate as the vassal state of Ottoman Empire⁶⁷ following the same pattern like its suzerain. Throughout the pre-colonial history of Aceh, woman had high social status in both public and private spaces. The first woman to lead Aceh was Sultanah Tajul Alam Syah, Daughter of Sultan Iskandar Muda. After her, there are three female leaders ruled Aceh: Sri Sultanah Nurul Alam Nakiyat, Sultanah Inayah Syah and Sultanah Kalamat Syah.⁶⁸

Similar experience also happened during modern time, when Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X of Yogyakarta and his Queen Consort, Gusti Hemas failed to produce a male heir, so Hamengkubuwono named his eldest daughter GKR Mangkubumi (previously known as GKR Pembayun) as his heir apparent. To ensure that his possessions could be inherited by a daughter, Hamengkubuwono led to a promulgation of *Sabda Raja*, a proclamation to removed the Islamic designation *Sayidin Khalifatullah Panatagama* (Cleric and Representative of God who Safeguards the Religion), which had never been held by a woman.⁶⁹ Because, like the previous example in Middle East, Subcontinent India, Asia Minor, and Aceh; Islamic Law precluded caliphate inheritance by women, and it makes women are only eligible to be a sultanah.

Conclusion

In Sum, Razia Sultan, Shajarat al-Dur, Mihrimah and the other sultanah in entire Islamdom showed that women's abilities in politics

⁶⁷ Vladimir Braginsky, *The Turkic-Turkish Theme in Traditional Malay Literature: Imagining the Other to Empower the Self* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2015), p. 46.

⁶⁸ Dina Afrianty, *Women and Sharia Law in Northern Indonesia: Local Women's NGOs and the Reform of Islamic Law in Aceh* (London: Routledge, 2015), p. 93.

⁶⁹ Ulya Fuhaidah, "Resistensi Penobatan Putri Mahkota untuk Kesultanan Yogyakarta," in *Esensia*, Vol 16, No. 2, 2015, p. 1-8.

are no weaker than men's. However, its only possible to realized because the creation of secular institute in the form of sultanate, make for the first time ever the longstanding tradition of male dominated in political affairs during caliphate era has fallen. The creation of sultanate institute itself was the magnanimous legacy of Turkic Mercenaries who come to Abbasid Caliphate and still preserved their traditional customs in Central Asian Steppes and continued to accord an elevated status to women in their society. Like the old times when Turkic women in Eurasian plain never isolated in domestic sphere, the Turkic woman in Islamdom were also able to be a head of state, and later its followed by other woman in Islamdom who become a sultanah via the sultanate institute.

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