AL-MADĪNA AT THE TIME OF MUḤAMMAD'S COMING*

AKIRA GOTO**

The *hijra*, the starting point of the Islamic state, has been investigated in detail by modern scholars. Most of their works, however, lack vivid expressions on the dynamic development of Islam in the society of al-Madīna for a few years around the *hijra*. The movement in al-Madīna at that time was the second Islamic movement in the history. The first was the Meccan movement which hardly succeeded to attract the major citizens. On the contrary, the second movement could finally integrate the society of al-Madīna under the names of Allāh and His Prophet. Through the present paper, a few aspects of the beginning of the movement in al-Madīna under the peculiar conditions of the society will be discussed.

There exists a written contract known as 'the Constitution of al-Madīna', which the Prophet Muḥammad exchanged with the people of al-Madīna after the *hijra*. Among many other scholars who mention the Constitution, W. M. Watt,⁽¹⁾ R. B. Serjeant⁽²⁾ and the author of the present paper⁽³⁾ assume that each available text of the Constitution preserved in the works of Ibn Ishāq,⁽⁴⁾ Abū Ubayda,⁽⁵⁾ Ibn Zanjūyah⁽⁶⁾ and others, is a composite form of several documents of various dates. The first part of the Constitution, which might be composed at the very early stage of Muḥammad's career in al-Madīna, concerns the payment of the blood-money and the ransoms of the captives in addition to the general principles that the believers should observe. The stipulations regulate that each of eight groups of the people of al-Madīna is responsible for paying the blood-money as well as the *muhājirūn* from Quraysh is responsible for it, and each sub-group of each group is responsible for ransoming their captives. Before the *hijra*, the people of al-Madīna repeated civil wars, and in the meantime, claims and debts of each group or sub-group on blood-money and captives had become greater and greater. The mediation of these long-

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** Associate Professor, Yamagata University.

continued civil wars should mean the liquidation of the blood-money. The first part of the Constitution should be a declaration of the mediation under the leadership of the believers.

The eight groups mentioned in the Constitution have been regarded by modern scholars as solid social organization. In many cases, the term 'clan' is given to each of the groups. However, a detailed investigation will deny such a view. The following is a genealogical table of the participants of the battle of Badr from Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf, one of the eight groups.

'Amr b. 'Awf b. Mālik b. al-Aws was the common ancestor under whose name this group was called. His name appears at the center and the upper part of the table. In the table, the names in quadrilateral are the common ancestors under whose names Ibn Sa'd arranges the participants of the battle,⁽⁷⁾ and al-Samhūdī describes his report on al-Madīna.⁽⁸⁾ Other personal names are omitted but indicated by the sign ○. The sign ● indicates the person who participated in the battle by himself.

Banū Zayd, offsprings of Zays, appearing in the right side of the table, might have composed the main body of this whole group. Most of them lived in the eastern part of Qubā', southern corner of al-Madīa. Al-Samhūdī describes⁽⁹⁾ that to Banū Zayd belonged fourteen *uṭums* (stronghold) called al-

Ṣiyāṣī. Ibn Sa'd, however, arranges the participants under the names of sub-divisions of Banū Zayd, these are Banū Umayya, Banū Ḍubayya, and Banū 'Ubayd. Al-Samhūdī also mentions that other than fourteen *uṭums* Banū Umayya kept two *uṭums* which they had taken by force from Banū Jaḥjabā, a relative group appearing near the center of the above table. A leading person of Banū Ḍubayya, named Abū Sufyān b. al-Ḥarth, had an *uṭum* and Banū 'Ubayd also kept an *uṭum* which they had taken from others. In addition to three sub-divisions, Banū Zayd included another group, named Banū al-Ajlān who were *ḥulafā'* (confederates) from Banū Balī' whose members had mostly migrated long before from south to north through al-Madīna. In spite of lack of reference in the above table, from Banū al-Ajlān six persons participated in the battle of Badr. Banū al-Ajlān was independent from each of three sub-divisions and attached to Banū Zayd itself. They might have settled at Qubā' before Banū Zayd settled there.

Banū Jaḥjabā, the above mentioned group, once had lived in eastern part of Qubā' along with Banū Zayd. In the time of two generations before the contemporaries of Muḥammad, there was a conflict between Uḥayḥa b. al-Julāḥ of Banū Jaḥjabā and Rifā'a b. Zanbar of Banū Zayd. As the conclusion of this war, Banū Jaḥjabā moved to the western part of Qubā' leaving their *uṭum* to Banū Zayd. In the western part they built new *uṭums* and co-lived with Banū Unayf, native people of this area and *ḥulafā'* of Banū Jaḥjabā. And on Banū Unayf depended many Jews.

Banū Mu'āwiya, whose common ancestor was a brother of Zayd, left Qubā' at some time and went to the eastern corner of al-Madīna. The reason of their migration might be their defeat in war against Banū Zayd. Banū Lawdhān, appearing in the left side of the table, also moved from Qubā' and built their *uṭums* in another place.

In place of relative groups leaving Qubā', there existed new-comers who were not related to Banū Zayd in male-line. Banū Ghanm who had once been defeated by their relative group, Banū Wāqif, left their native place and settled in the area of Banū Zayd. Genealogists insist that Imru' al-Qays, Ganm's grandfather, was a brother of 'Amr b. 'Awf, but their view is very disputable. Banū 'Udhāra of Jusham, defeated by their relative group, once had moved to Qubā' and settled there, but they moved again to another place before Muḥammad's arrival in al-Madīna because of the falling out with Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf.

As for the other groups of Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf such as Banū Ḥanash, Banū Th'alaba, Banū Ḥubayyib, we have few informations about their histories before Islam.

As already mentioned, for a few decades, people of al-Madīna repeated civil wars. Through the civil wars, however, there was no military or political leader of Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf.⁽¹⁰⁾ Some members followed Ḥudayr b. Simāk sometimes, but he did not belong to their group in male-line but to Banū 'Abd al-Ashhal of al-Nabīṭ. In any sub-group, we also find no fixed chief through the civil wars and the times of Muḥammad. So, we can conclude that Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf and their sub-groups were the chiefless organizations.

Through the above investigations we can hardly say that Banū 'Amr b. 'Awf was a solid organization. Out of the framework of the group, daily social lives and political activities were carried on. If we take any other group mentioned in the Constitution, the same may be said. The sub-divisions of these eight groups might again be tentative and mobile organizations in which there was always possibility of civil wars and disjointing. The fact that the society of al-Madīna was chiefless, non-rigid and mobile may suggest that the movement for Islam in this society might have based on individuals, not on any level of social groups.

The movement of Islam in al-Madīna started a few years before the *hijra* by the conversion of two persons (according to Ibn Sa'd)⁽¹¹⁾ or six persons (to Ibn Ishāq).⁽¹²⁾ After the first pledge of 'Aqaba which took place in 621 and in which twelve believers of al-Madīna participated, the movement developed in waves. In the next year 75 believers took part in the second pledge at 'Aqada. At this time, Muḥammad elected twelve leaders among the believers of al-Madīna. After a year and a half of *hijra*, the battle of Badr began and 238 believers of al-Madīna participated in it. The participants of each case mentioned above may indicate roughly the total numbers of believers in each stage. The following list shows the numbers of participants of the first and the second pledges of 'Aqaba and the battle of Badr in each social groups.

The column of the names of groups is based on the third volume of *Ṭabaqāt* by Ibn Sa'd. In the column the names of eight groups, mentioned in the Constitution, head the list, and after each of them the names of sub-divisions are listed, and sometimes, even after them the names of sub-divisions of sub-divisions are listed. (ḥ) means a group of *ḥulafā'* (confederate). Other *ḥulafā'* and *mawālī*

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Names of groups	first 'Aqaba	second 'Aqaba	leaders	battle
al-Nabīṭ				
'Abd al-Ashhal	1	3	① ③'	15
Ḥāritha		3		3
Zafar				5
'Amr b. 'Awf				
Zayd				
Umayya	1	2	③	9
Ḍubayya				4
'Ubayd				1
al-Ajlān (ḥ)		1		6
Mu'āwiya				3
Ḥanash				1
Jaḥjabā				1
Unayf (ḥ)				1
Tha'laba		1		8
Lawdhān				
Ḥubayyib				
Ghanm		1	②	5
Aws Manāt (Aws Allāh)				
Khaṭna				
Wāqif				
al-Ja'ādira				
Wa'il				
Umayya				
'Aṭīya				
al-Najjār				
Mālik				
Ghanm	3	6	⑫	22
'Amr		1		2
Maghāla				3
Mabdhūl		2		3
'Adiy				12
Māzin		2		6
Dinār				6
al-Ḥārith				
Ka'b		5	④	9
Jusham & Zayd		1	⑤	4
Jidār		1		3
al-Abjar				1
? (ḥ)				2
'Awf				

Balḥblā		2		8
al-Qawāqila	3	3	⑩	11
Ghaḍayna (ḥ)		1		6
Sā'ida		2	⑥ ⑦	9
Jusham				
Salima				
Ḥarām	1	6	⑧	13
'Ubayd		11	⑨	18
Sawād	1	10		8
Others		1		4
Zurayq				
'Āmir	2	4	⑪	16
Bayāḍa		3		5
Ḥabib				2

(freedman) who did not compose an independent group but depended on some certain groups, are included in the numbers of their master groups. The numbers of the participants of the first and the second pledges of 'Aqaba are based on Ibn Ishāq,⁽¹³⁾ but in the latter case it shows only 60 out of 75, the rest fifteen participants are anonymous. The numbering like ① in the column of leaders means each leader elected at 'Aqaba who will appear in the following under this numbering.

One glance on this list may be enough to show that the movement made its steady development covering not only the certain groups but the whole society. Only the groups belonging to 'Aws Manāt, in which there was no participant in the pledges and the battle, were exceptions. However, it must be noted that even the participants of the battle were less than ten percent of the total male adult inhabitants of al-Madīna, estimated about 3,000. As for the number, believers were in the minority at these stages. Then, who were loaded with honors for promoting the movement? Let us introduce twelve leaders who were elected by Muḥammad at the time of the second pledge of 'Aqaba.

(1) Usayd b. al-Ḥuḍayr: his father al-Ḥuḍayr was a commander-in-chief in the battle of Bu'āth, the last civil war before Islam. Inheriting his father's property, Usayd was a rich man. After this election, however, he was never appointed to a position of trust. He died in the time of 'Umar's califate.⁽¹⁴⁾

(2) Sa'd b. Khaythama: we have no information about his political-military activities except his death in the battle of Badr.⁽¹⁵⁾

(3) Rifā'a b. 'Abd al-Mundhir: nothing about his activities is left but his participation in the battle of Badr and his death in the battle of Uḥud. Ibn Sa'd accounts him one of twelve leaders, but Ibn Ishāq omits him.⁽¹⁶⁾

(3) Abū al-Haytham b. al-Tayyāhān: instead of the above Rifā'a, Ibn Ishāq considers him one of the leaders. He was a *ḥalīf* (confederate) of a man of Banū 'Abd al-Ashhal. He was appointed to a tax-collector in Khaybar after Muḥammad's conquest. He died in the time of 'Umar.⁽¹⁷⁾

(4) Sa'd b. Rabī': he was the one who gave one of his two wives to his sworn brother, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf when the latter made his *hijra*. But nothing other than this was recorded except his participation in the battle of Badr and his death at Uḥud.⁽¹⁸⁾

(5) 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa: once Muḥammad entrusted the affairs of al-Madīna to him when he made an expedition. He was also appointed to a commander of a party attacking a leader of Khaybar. He led the expedition to Mu'ta and died there.⁽¹⁹⁾

(6) Sa'd b. 'Ubāda: when Muḥammad died, *anṣārs* (native people of al-Madīna) tried to elect him to a new leader of al-Madīna. He was a rich man. Once Muḥammad entrusted the affairs of al-Madīna to him while he went on an expedition. Except this case, Muḥammad never appointed him to a position of trust. At the time of Muḥammad's death, he should be a senior, but might have not produced achievements in the political and military field. As a result he could not become a new leader, but Abū Bakr was elected Calif.⁽²⁰⁾

(7) al-Mundhir b. 'Amr: after his participations in the battle of Badr and of Uḥud, he led a missionary party of 40 men and died at Bi'r Ma'ūna.⁽²¹⁾

(8) al-Barā' b. Ma'rūr: an old man and died before Muḥammad's arrival in al-Madīna.⁽²²⁾

(9) 'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr: only his participation in the battle of Badr and his death in the battle of Uḥud are recorded.⁽²³⁾

(10) 'Ubāda b. Ṣāmit: about him nothing was recorded except his activities after the death of Muḥammad. He died in the time of Mu'āwiya.⁽²⁴⁾

(11) Rāfi' b. Mālik: his sons participated in the battle of Badr, but he himself did not do so. He died at Uḥud.⁽²⁵⁾

(12) As'ad b. Zurāra: an old man and died just after the arrival of Muḥammad in al-Madīna.⁽²⁶⁾

When we look through the careers of above-mentioned thirteen leaders, we find none of them except 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa of (5) brought results in

politics or military activities after their election to a leader. It should be taken into consideration that only six persons out of thirteen could survive after the battle of Uḥud. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that Muḥammad mostly entrusted important tasks to some *anṣār* other than these leaders. This fact may mean that they were only the seniors of the groups of believers who pledged at 'Aquba, but not the influential and potential leaders of the whole society. When Muḥammad was faced with political and military problems, he had to rely on more practical persons. Therefore, we may conclude that the movement of Islam in al-Madīna was promoted at first by not so influential persons of the society. In fact, none of thirteen leaders nor other believers whose careers were recorded, was a military leader who commanded a party through the civil wars before Islam.

In spite of its rapid development through the years from 620 to 624, the movement started without strong leaders and even at the stage of the battle of Badr in 624 it attracted less than ten percent of population of the society. However, the movement was the main political current in the society at that time. One problem remained unsolved for a few decades. It was peace. Neither a strong leader nor a strong group had been able to bring peace into the society. The claim of the movement to stop the civil wars under the names of Allāh and His Prophet was supported by most people other than the believers.

In the records, we find four strong leaders in the civil wars who survived at the time of the start of the movement. Sa'd b. Mu'ādh, being one of them, was converted and supported the movement before the arrival of Muḥammad in 622.⁽²⁷⁾ 'Amr b. al-Jamūh, also being an influential leader and taking an indifferent attitude to the movement at first, became a supporter by persuasions of his sons and grandsons after the arrival of Muḥammad.⁽²⁸⁾ Abū Qays b. al-Aslat, a monk and another strong leader of the civil wars, offered his opposition to the movement. He might be a big obstacle to the progress of the movement. It might be due to him that there was no participant from Banū 'Aws Manāt in the pledges and the battle as shown in the above list. But he died ten months after the Muḥammad's arrival.⁽²⁹⁾ Ibn Ubayy, being the most influential man in al-Madīna, did not become a supporter nor an opponent to the movement. Thus, the believers could represent the whole society and concluded the treaty of peace, which should be the first part of the Constitution of al-Madīna. This part was concluded between Muḥammad and the believers but its stipulations concerning the payment of blood-money and the

ramsoning of captives bind the whole people of the society. This shows clearly that in fact the movement was the main political current of the society, though being minor in number and lacking strong leaders and that it would integrate the society soon under the names of Allāh and His Prophet.

Notes

- (1) W. M. Watt: *Muhammad at Medina*, Oxford, 1956.
- (2) R. B. Serjeant: "The Constitution of Medina," *Islamic Cultur*, Vol. 8, 1964.
- (3) A. Goto: "The Constitution of Medina," *Orient*, Vol. XVIII, 1982.
- (4) Ibn Hishām: *Kitāb Sira Rasūl Allāh*, (ed. F. Wüstenfeld), Göttingen, 1859–60, pp. 341–44.
- (5) Abū 'Ubayda al-Qāsim b. Sallām, *Kitāb al-Amwāl*, al-Qāhira, 1353H, pp. 202–7.
- (6) M. Hamidullah: *Majmū'a al-Wathā'iq al-Siyāsiya*, 3rd ed., Bayrūt, 1969, pp. 39–47.
- (7) Ibn Sa'd: *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, Bayrūt, 1957–58, Vol. III.
- (8) al-Samhūdī: *Kitāb al-Wafā' al-Wafā' bi-Akhhbār Dār al-Mustafā*, al-Qāhira 1326H, Vol. I.
- (9) al-Samhūdī: pp. 136–7.
- (10) Watt: pp. 155–8.
- (11) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, p. 593, pp. 608–12.
- (12) Ibn Hishām: p. 289.
- (13) Ibn Hishām: pp. 288–9, 305–13.
- (14) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 603–7.
- (15) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 481–2.
- (16) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, p. 456.
- (17) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 447–9.
- (18) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, p. 522.
- (19) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 525–30.
- (20) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 613–8.
- (21) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 555–7.
- (22) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 618–20.
- (23) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 561–4.
- (24) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, p. 546.
- (25) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, p. 621.
- (26) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 608–12.
- (27) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. III, pp. 420–36.
- (28) Ibn Hishām: pp. 303–4.
- (29) Ibn Sa'd: Vol. IV, pp. 383–5, al-Ṭabarī: *Tārīkh al-Rusūl wa al-Mulūk*, (ed., M. J. De Goeje), Leiden, 1881–2, Vol. I, p. 1270.