

# Fruits for the Week

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## Interview article of Prof. Anis Ahmad (cont'd from last week)

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### Correct non-Islamic corrupt customs Reform and build Islamic democracy

President Bush pushes democratization in Iraq. Yet, Anis Ahmad pointed out that it is nothing but to Americanize Iraq. Opposing Bush's democratization does not mean refusing democracy or reform. Anis Ahmad believes Islam can develop its own model of democracy. This is because "Islam emphasizes moderation, toleration, rationality and anti-extremism". These can be the foundations of a culture and a form of Islamic democracy stressing toleration, religious freedom & free election can be built on these foundations. It respects the religious beliefs of other communities and emphasizes harmonious coexistence of different religious communities.

### De-colonization Legal reform helps women

Anis Ahmad said many Islamic scholars express their views on reform in education, law and economy. However, the focus should be de-colonization, returning to Islam; the focus should not be undertaking western-oriented reforms. For instance, a major aspect of education reforms is to make education more in line with the ethical & moral teachings of Islam. In law, some scholars are of the view that women's status should be enhanced. In the economic domain, scholars do not approve capitalist or socialist approaches and they want to have Islamic principles of justice and equity as basis of a new economic order.

He pointed out that some undesirable local customs have been unconsciously adopted by Muslims, leading to misconceptions about Islam. Take the example of honour killing, which is killing sanctioned for the honour of an individual or a family, has no basis in Islamic culture or law. For the past 50 years, Islamic scholars and

intellectuals have called for a critical review of as well as correcting these corrupt social customs which are misunderstood as part of the Islamic culture.

### Pakistani University President Anis Ahmad studied in the US

Anis Ahmad is the President\* of Riphah International University in Pakistan. He is also Vice-Chairman, Institute of Policy Studies, Pakistan, as well as Editor-in-Chief, 'West and Islam', a quarterly journal in Pakistan. He gained his PhD of Comparative Religion in the United States, and taught at American universities. He was President, Association of Muslim Social Scientists, USA. When he was visiting Hong Kong during the last few days, he delivered a number of lectures on Islam in different universities.

(end)

\*Correction: Prof. Anis Ahmad is the Vice-Chancellor of Riphah International University, not President.

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Prof. Anis Ahmad will come to Hong Kong again in June. This time he is invited by the Centre for Applied Ethics of Hong Kong Baptist University to speak in "An International Symposium on Environmental Ethics: An Inter-religious Dialogue" to be held on 9-10 June 2005. Prof. Anis Ahmad will be the sole speaker representing Islam in the symposium. After the symposium, he, together with his wife, will spend the weekend giving talks to the Muslim community. For the programme of their talks, please refer to the related circular.