

IMEMGS

Research Papers : Muslims in Japan No.22

10th National Conference of
Masjid (Mosque) Representatives.
'Rethinking the Muslim Community in Japan'

(English Version)

Institute for Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies
Tokyo, Japan

November, 2023

1-16 Hibarigaoka, Nishitokyo-shi, Tokyo 202-0001

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order

This report is based on the 10th Annual Meeting held at Waseda University (Waseda Campus) on 3 February 2018.

These are the proceedings of the 'National Conference of Masjid (Mosque) Representatives' - Rethinking the Muslim Community in Japan'. This conference started in 2009 as the 'National Conference of Representatives of Mosques' and changed its name to the 'National Conference of Representatives of Masjids (Mosques)' in 2012, and has been held continuously. This year's conference, which was held by inviting Muslim masjid officials in Japan as well as Muslims of the younger generation, was attended by around 40 participants, including the organisers, and a frank exchange of opinions and discussions took place across generational boundaries.

In this conference, foreign Muslims and Japanese Muslims of the younger generation, including those involved in mosques of the so-called first generation of immigrants, as well as ordinary Japanese Muslims, gathered for discussions in the form of intergenerational dialogue. Specifically, the first part, entitled 'Towards the Future of Islam in Japan', was a discussion based on reports from the middle-aged and older generation of Muslims who are currently leading the Muslim community. In the second part, entitled 'Challenges for the Young Generation and the Muslim Community', middle-aged and older Muslims and young Muslims, the so-called parent and child generations, took part in the discussion and a lively debate ensued.

In organising the conference, we received a great deal of cooperation from many people, including the parents and young generation of Muslims living in Japan. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all these people and ask for their cooperation again in the future.

July 2019.

Hirofumi Okai
Hirofumi Tanada

Programme

10th.'National Masjid (Mosque) Representatives Conference - Rethinking the Muslim Community in Japan'.

Date and time: 3 Feb (Sat), 2018 13:00~17:00

At: Waseda University, Waseda Campus (5 min walk from Waseda Station on the Subway Tozai Line)

Bldg 26, 7th floor, Room 702 (also known as the Okuma Memorial Tower Building)

Map of Waseda campus: <https://www.waseda.jp/top/access/waseda-campus>

<https://www.waseda.jp/top/assets/uploads/2014/08/75fbe93c96f198b17f2f294320b48990.pdf>

Organised by the Institute for Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies, Waseda University.

Waseda University Organisation for Islamic Area Studies

Asian Muslim Research Institute, Waseda University.

Schedule:

13:00-13:10 Opening remarks Hirofumi Tanada, Director, Institute for Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies, Waseda University

13:10-14:45 Part 1: Towards the future of Islam in Japan

14:45-15:15 Break and prayer (Salat (ASR))

15:15-16:50 Part 2: Challenges for the youth generation and Muslim communities

16:50-17:00 Closing remarks

Hiroshi Kojima, Director, Institute of Asian and Muslim Studies, Waseda University

Keiko Sakurai, Director, Institute of Islamic Area Studies, Waseda University

Chair:

Hirofumi Tanada, Director, Institute for Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies

Hirofumi Okai, Research Assistant, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Prospective participants (masjid officials and others):

Mr Naoki Maeno, Mr Achille Siddiqui.

Mr Akira Nagai , Mr Haroon Qureshi

Ms.Junko Hayashi, Mr Hiroyuki Nakamura Mr.Makoto Kojo

Mr Khan Tahir, Mr Akira Hamanaka

Prayer room: building 26, 7th floor, **room** 701/703.

programme

The 10th Meeting of the Representatives of Masjids in Japan

"Muslim Communities and Second Generations in Japan".

Date : 3rd February (Sat.) 2018, 13:00-17:00

Venue: Waseda University, Waseda Campus, No. 702 Room, Bldg.#26

Campus Map <https://www.waseda.jp/top/en/access>

<https://www.waseda.jp/top/assets/uploads/2014/08/75fbe93c96f198b17f2f294320b48990.pdf>

Organisers:

Institute of Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies, Waseda University

Organization for Islamic Area Studies, Waseda University

Institute for Asian Muslim Studies, Waseda University

Time Schedule:

13:00-13:10 Opening Remarks

Hirofumi Tanada, WU Institute of Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies

13:10-14:45 Part 1: Future of Islam in Japan

14:45-15:15 Break/Salat

15:15-16:50 Part 2: Intergenerational Inheritance of Muslim Communities in Japan

16:50-17:00 Closing Remarks

Hiroshi Kojima, WU Institute for Asian Muslim Studies

Keiko Sakurai, WU Organisation for Islamic Area Studies

Chair: Hirofumi Tanada, WU Institute of Multi-ethnic and Multi-generational Societies

Hirofumi Okai, WU faculty of Human Sciences

Participants:

Mr Naoki Maeno

Mr Aquil Siddiqui.

Mr Akira Nagai

Mr Qureshi Haroon.

Mrs. Junko Hayashi

Mr Akira Hamanaka

Mr Hiroyuki Nakamura

Mr Makoto Kojo

Dr Khan Tahir and other members will participate.

ROOM for Salat : Room No. 701/703, Bldg. 26

Compiler

(Affiliations as of February 2018)

Hirofumi Okai, Research Associate, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Hirofumi Tanada, Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

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List of related research funded projects

This conference and this report are part of the results of research funded by

- Research on "National Institute for the Humanities (NIHU) Programme in Islamic Area Studies" (Waseda University Base). Representative: Keiko Sakurai
- FY 2015-2017 Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Basic Research (C), Issue No. 15K03886, 'Transformation of the life world of Muslims in Japan and sustainable development of the Muslim community' PI: Hirofumi Tanada.
- FY 2018-2020 Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Basic Research (C), Issue No. 18K01976 'Local social activities of the Muslim community in Japan and issues of multicultural conviviality policies of local governments' PI: Hirofumi Tanada

Main meeting attendees.

(in no particular order, titles omitted, affiliations as of February 2018)

Hirofumi Okai, Research Associate, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Kiyohiko Hasebe, Deputy Research Fellow, Institute of Islamic Area Studies, Waseda University

Qureshi Aimin, Master's Degree, Graduate School of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Keiko SAKURAI, Professor, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University

Hirofumi Tanada, Professor, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University

Mr Naoki Maeno

Mr Aquil Siddiqui.

Mr Akira Nagai.

Mr Haroon Qureshi.

Ms Junko Hayashi

Mr Hiroyuki Nakamura

Mr Makoto Kojo

Mr Khan Tahir.

Mr Akira Hamanaka.

Appendix:

In preparing the minutes, words were added or amended, superfluous words were deleted or explanations added, to the extent that they did not detract from what was said. Some parts have been deleted where it was difficult to hear what was said. Parts added by the editors as explanations or notes are clearly indicated in parentheses.

Minutes

Part 1: Towards the future of Islam in Japan

Tanada: Thank you very much for gathering here today in the midst of your busy schedule at the end of the year. This is the 10th Masjid Representatives Meeting, which started in 2009, and thanks to the cooperation of Muslims from all over the country, we have been able to celebrate the 10th meeting, and I would like to thank you again. Thank you very much.

Today is the tenth time we have used the often-used expression 'Reconsidering the Muslim Community in Japan', and we have chosen this title because we want to think about the Muslim community once again.

This time, as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, we have also started a new experiment: in the morning, we set up a subcommittee exclusively for young second-generation people, and from 9.30 in the morning until after 12.30, we had very heated discussions. The discussion was very heated, and lasted from 9.30 in the morning until after 12.30.

Many of the representatives here are of the equivalent age of the so-called first generation, but we would like to try to have a discussion with the younger generation later on, if time permits, and we look forward to working with you.

Now, since the time has passed, I would like to start immediately. First of all, I would like to introduce the participants, so I will just give you their names, and I would like you to speak briefly.

First, Naoki Maeno.

Maeno: As-salamu alaykum, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Best regards.

Tanada: Haroon Qureshi.

Haroon: Assalamu Alaykum Warrahmatullah. Best regards.

Tanada: Makoto Kojo.

Kojo: As-salamu alaykum. Best regards.

Tanada: Hiroyuki Nakamura.

Nakamura: Assalamu alaykum. Nakamura. Pleased to meet you.

Tanada: Then Nishizawa, a bit difficult. Nishizawa.

Nishizawa: Shahereyar. Pleased to meet you.

Tanada: Hamanaka.

Hamanaka: My name is Hamanaka. I come from Shikoku. I am in charge of the Niihama Masjid.

Tanada: Nagai.

Nagai : As-Salaam Alaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuhu. The Otsuka Masjid, as it is known to everyone, is a religious corporation, the Japan Islamic Cultural Centre. As a religious corporation, the directors form a board of directors to manage the organisation, and I am one of those directors. Since 2005, I have been working on the Friday Futbah of the Otsuka Masjid, which I was given a manuscript in English, and since I cannot speak Arabic, I have been working on the translation of the manuscript into Japanese. That is all.

Tanada: Aquil Siddiqui, also from the Japan Islamic Cultural Centre, Otsuka.

Aquil: As-Salaam Alaykum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuhu. Please give my best regards.

Tanada: Mr Tahir from Oita, Japan.

Tahir: As-salamu alaykum. My name is Khan Tahir from Beppu City, Oita. Pleased to meet you.

Tanada: Then there is Junko Hayashi.

Hayashi: My name is Hayashi and I am a lawyer. I look forward to working with you.

Tanada: Thank you very much. With the above as participants, I would like to talk about a number of things in the first first part, which is about the future of Islam in Japan. First of all, as usual, it is strange to say, but I would like to start with you, Mr Maeno. Please give us your best wishes.

Maeno: As-salamu alaykum, sorry. As usual, I would like to make an opening statement, so please be brief and give me about five minutes, since we have about an hour and a half of your precious time. I would like to offer an issue.

Ladies and gentlemen, Imam Ghazali, a giant of knowledge in Islamic history, you know him, you understand him. Who doesn't know him? He died in 1111 A.D. He was a native of Nīshāpur, Iran, and was a great writer in Damascus and elsewhere. The last book he left behind is called Minhaj al-'Irābidīn Jannati Rabbilālāmīn ('The Way of the Servants to the Heaven of the Lord of the Worlds'). In it, he specifically talks about what barriers come up for the Muslim individual, the only way to come closer to God, the only way for the Muslim individual to grow, and he lists seven of them. I'm going to introduce those seven, and the main topic we are going to talk about is for the future of Islam in Japan. [Simultaneous use of the board]

The topic is community, and a community is, after all, a place where individuals gather. I think that the community is made up of individuals, so from that perspective, I would like to overlay the barriers that Muslims face in the areas that Muslims should aim for, on the community as a whole, and I hope that this will be a starting point for discussion.

First of all, it is a barrier to knowledge and learning. Akabataru Ilm.

Then, past sins and ties. Aqaba talmaa aasiva.

Then there are trials and worries. These are things such as worrying about future sustenance, or various misfortunes and calamities that have struck the individual.

Sorry. This way. The fourth was an ordeal. The fourth is misfortune and trials. It is a barrier called misfortune or ordeal.

Then there is the malaise of becoming bored. The fifth ordeal is that of becoming jaded.

Then there is aqabatakkawardif. Diseases of the mind. People do it to look good, or to be famous, or for wealth, etc. That is the sixth one.

The last one is the barrier of gratitude, which is whether or not we are properly thankful to the one and only God and whether or not we have not forgotten our debt to him. I can't deal with all seven, so I would like to look at what are the issues and challenges that we can raise in this community, in light of the first three, when we

think about the future of the community.

First, the knowledge barrier. The first barrier of knowledge that you come across. Fortunately, Alhamdulillah, now for the first time in the history of Muslims in Japan, and I think for the first time in the history of Islam, a Japanese Imam from Japan has been giving the Friday sermon at the Japan Muslim Association's Japan Islamic Cultural Exchange Centre in Gotanda every month for over a year now, taking it in turns each week. This is something that has never happened anywhere before. In this sense, I am extremely happy and grateful for this growth and development.

However, if you look at the whole of Japan, if you look at all the masjids and places of prayer in Japan, is there really a sufficient number of home-grown scholars, scholars and educators who are from Japan, whose DNA is not important, who are native speakers of Japanese, and who are still overwhelmingly few. In this sense, the first issue that I would like to raise is whether it is necessary to raise the number of home-grown scholars and educators from Japan.

Secondly, on the point of past sins and ties, there used to be a story, which I have only heard about, that Muslims from abroad and Muslims from Japan had a quarrel at a certain centre because of differences of opinion over differences in methods, or over who was supposed to be the leader, or how it was supposed to be done. I have heard that there have been stories of fights between foreign Muslims and Japanese Muslims at certain centres over differences in ways of doing things, or over who should be in charge, or how they should be led, or over other such issues. In this way, as you all know, the true essence of Islam is to be able to unite and connect across borders, skin colour and culture, so that is not possible, but we are human beings, so we can still see such things. I think you can see that.

Fortunately, thanks to everyone involved at Waseda University, we have been able, with your help and cooperation, to continue to have this opportunity to bring together Muslims from all over Japan, regardless of origin, who are involved with the Masjid or its activities, for another ten years. I think this is one of the good points, growth and development that I mentioned earlier. In the various masjids, if you go to a masjid that is mainly Pakistani, where Urdu is the only language spoken, or a masjid that is all Bangladeshi, where Bengali is the only language spoken, there is still a lot of ethnic nationalist Islamic activity. The second issue is that there is still a deep-rooted ethnic nationalist Islamic movement.

Thirdly, I omitted to mention this, but one of the obstacles is selfishness. People have a conscience and a good heart, but there is also a bad part, and that bad part, self-centredness, inevitably comes to the fore and hinders our growth as a congregation.

This is also true in the case of communities.

Fortunately, in Japan, there are no conflicts or disputes due to differences in principles and arguments, such as those that we see and hear about in the USA, or in Europe and the USA, or in Muslim countries. I think there are still many reasons for this, but for example, in terms of raising the level of the intelligentsia, for example, the number of places to study abroad is very limited, and the number of places that support the activities of the Masjid is limited, so the colour of the Masjid is expressed, and this kind of bias can be seen here and there. I think that such bias can be seen here and there. So, the third issue is, how are we doing when we think purely about the future of Japan and the future of Islam? That's all for now, thank you very much for your time.

Tanada: Thank you very much. In the three issues from Ghazali's talk, you mentioned the points that you are concerned about, or are concerned about, in terms of the development of the Muslim community in Japan. I think what you have just said is that it is necessary for the future of Islam in Japan to think about the interaction between Muslims, including foreigners and Japanese, and how the relationship between the two should be developed. I would like to ask you to speak on this point. Yes, Mr. Kojo, please.

Kojo: Japanese is fine. First of all, in terms of knowledge, when I go to Jumu'ah on Fridays, of course there is English, Arabic and English in Fukuoka, and of course there are children, but there are also adults who do not understand English, so it is difficult to decide what language is best. I think it would be good if there was a place for Japanese.

The second issue, the second tie, is certainly, I wouldn't say ethnic colour, but there are different ways of thinking, so one of the issues that came up this time was whether to build a kitchen in the masjid or not. The Pakistani people thought it was a very good idea to serve food to everyone during Ramadan, but the Arabs said that a masjid is a place of prayer, not a place to cook food, and there was a period of stubborn conflict.

Also, the part about selfishness and worry, I don't know if it applies to that in particular, but I think that the Born Muslims in particular, and I don't know if I should say this in front of Born Muslims, but I think they are stubborn or they are emphasising an Islam that doesn't match the Japanese society. It's hard to see that. It is difficult for them to expand their horizons, and I think this is common with the ties that bind them, but in the end, the Muslims they know, their own interpretation of

Islam, is the correct one, so they are inevitably confrontational, and even when they step outside, they are stubborn about it, and emphasize it, I feel that this makes it difficult for them to blend in with their surroundings.

Maeno: Can we have a direct discussion, okay?

Tanada: Discuss and Mr Maeno probably answers first.

Maeno: If you could give us some specific examples, for example, what kind of Islam, for example, do so-called Born Muslims see as not matching Japan, or not matching Japan, which they want to emphasise?

Kojo: Yes. I think school education is the most common. I feel that it is the most common. I mean, when I am in the field, or rather, when I am consulted. For example, in physical education and music.

Maeno: That is, don't answer it altogether, don't attend.

Kojo: Yes, that's right. If you make some effort, you can do it this way, or even in swimming pool classes, Muhammad says that you should do your best in swimming, but. I don't mean that there are people who are cunning sometimes, or that they are Born Muslims, I mean that there are people who are cunning. There are people who are cunning and they don't want to do things and they are told that they are not allowed to do things in Islam. So sometimes it seems that the school teachers don't understand that, so they don't know what to do. May I?

Maeno: Thank you very much.

Tanada: Yes.

Nagai: Sorry, name tag.

Kojo: My name is Kojo.

Nagai: Always keep it that way.

Tanada: Now, Mr Kojo, a Japanese Muslim, will speak to you. Mr Haroon, who is a Born Muslim, please speak to us.

Haroon: I came to Japan in 1991. I was a former international student. At that time, the only masjid that existed was the Kobe Masjid. Of course, there were Islamic Centre, Japan Muslim Association, and places that did Jumu'ah in Ma'ahad, but in terms of masjids, there was only the Kobe Masjid.

At that time, I myself used to do Jumu'ah on the road in front of the Tokyo Jamii, under the bridge when it rained. It was not easy, but the Islamic groups at that time, of course, did a lot of work, but they lacked leadership. Especially the Japanese. Then there was a gap, and people from different regions, people from Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, etc., created a masjid.

In Japan, thankfully, it is very easy to build a masjid. If you collect millions or tens of millions of yen, it can be collected very quickly. It is very easy to set up a masjid. You don't need permission, police permission or permission from somewhere else.

On the other hand, in the neighbouring country of South Korea, they built a magnificent Islamic centre many years ago. When it was being built, 40,000 Korean Christians started a movement against it, and the masjid did not get permission. We had no choice but to go to court, and it took a Muslim organisation a year and a half to get the permit. There is a difference between the two countries. Japan is very, very grateful to Alhamdulillah in that sense.

I think there are roughly 100 or so masjids in different locations now. Musallah has a bit more. The number of masjids has increased at a very fast pace over the last 30 years, and the Muslim population has also increased. The number of Japanese converts is also increasing.

Then, even myself, for example, I am here as an ordinary student, so I don't have any Islamic knowledge, special knowledge or experience over there. We are all doing our best and doing our activities to the extent that we can. Certainly, there are some problems in various areas, such as Islam in Pakistan and Islam in Sri Lanka, because that's the only knowledge we have. However, most people live in Japan, learn a lot about the good things about Japan, and, as with their own businesses, I think that the overwhelming majority of people are doing things in a way that fits in with Japanese society.

So, a bit more Japanese leadership. What I am looking forward to the most now is the Japan Muslim Association. As Mr Maeno mentioned earlier, they have been putting a lot of effort into various activities in Gotanda since a year ago, so the Japan

Muslim Association alone is not entirely responsible, but if other organisations also work hard, I think they will probably be able to overcome the problems mentioned earlier and make it work. I think we can overcome these problems and make it work.

My concern is the education of the second generation. That's what I worry about the most. For example, even if there is a Jumu'ah hutbah, the children don't attend because they go to school. But on weekends, there are places that do their education, their Talbiyah, or not. There are very few. That is not a problem of the Japanese language.

It is very difficult to do it. When children, high school and university students, it is very, very difficult to deal with Islam because there is a lot of influence from Japanese society. My son is now in his second year of high school, and he is going through a period of rebellion, so I am very concerned about his education.

Tanada: Thank you very much. Earlier, Mr Kojo also mentioned education. Mr. Haroon also talked about education, so I think that there are cases where the way of thinking about education is different. On the other hand, there was also a comment from Mr Haroon that there are high expectations for Japanese leadership. Yes, then, Mr Nagai.

Nagai: Assalamu alaykum warrahmatullah. Earlier, you mentioned that there are many masjids where Urdu, Bengali and other languages are spoken, but each masjid was established by people from abroad. But, since this is Japan, everyone wants to hand over the masjid if a Japanese person will take care of it. However, the reason why the Japanese are not taking on the work is, in a word, faith. A masjid cannot be run unless there are three people with strong faith.

Another thing is that they, Japanese people don't have confidence even one Japanese person, when they say, 'Let's do it'. The reason is money. If there is a building, it will leak. Then it costs money to repair it. There is no place to collect money even if you call on Japanese believers. But now, if you look at the current situation, money is being collected. The reason for this is that people from different languages actually come to the masjid and use it, and because they use it, they give money because it is their masjid.

So for the Japanese to come to support the Islamic institutions in Japan, that's how much the Japanese, in the masjid, first of all, Islamic institutions are masjids, so it's a question of whether they come there or not. Then, whether they come or not, this is a question of niya. Niya is consciousness. It is the will. It is the will to go. If they don't have this feeling, they won't come. If they don't have it, they won't come. That's how I

see it. There must be something more important to them. That's how it looks to me.

I know I am too. So that is why I wonder what is really going to happen from now on, the Japan Muslim Association is a special thing. I don't want to mention it, but Mr Maeno mentioned earlier that the Hutbah by Japanese people has started, which is an epoch-making event, something that will change the history of the world, something that will change the history of Islam. I wonder if we are in a transitional period in which we will be able to see how this will continue and whether it will develop further. That is all.

Tanada: Thank you very much. Mr Nagai raised the issue of religious belief. Another issue that was raised was money, but from the Japanese side, from the Japanese Muslims' side, I have just heard Mr Nagai's question, but from the Japanese Muslims' side, what do you think about that? Nakamura-*san* or Kojo-*san*?

Nakamura: A word. Assalamu alaykum. I do not represent the Japanese Muslims, but I would like to speak from my personal point of view. I think that faith is first of all a personal matter. It is a personal problem. They want to be saved somehow. There, a group may emerge as a methodology, or like the prayer service.

However, if Islam, a complete religious form, is imposed on us from the very beginning without any connection to our faith or religious philosophy, and we are told that if we don't follow it, we don't have faith, we may be troubled and feel that we are done with it.

In practice, many people join the Fukuoka Masjid every year, but when we follow them, they don't come to the mosque. I think about it a lot. There are social problems that we are not dealing with. When there are major incidents, some people leave the masjid.

Therefore, I think that Japanese people actually feel a certain amount of pain and vexation when they have a certain formality imposed on them first and foremost. I would like them to loosen that up and make it a little easier to approach. I think this is a question of the degree of those who have the knowledge. I have knowledge, so I don't want to use this knowledge to lead people, but I want them to fall down to the level of those who don't have knowledge. I feel that if we go down the stairs and try to bail them out somehow, we can bring everyone together in a more gradual way. It's a bit easier though.

Tanada : Thank you very much. Mr Maeno.

Maeno: I am sorry. I would like to say to both of you that you have said it very well. I completely agree with what Mr Nagai said about the lack of awareness, and I think that many people are fed up with such a pushy approach, as Mr Nakamura said, and stop coming. I agree.

So, every now and then, especially when I speak to Born Muslims, I emphasize that you are all too kind, that you take genuine kindness, and that for new Japanese newcomers, there is a lot of patronising advice coming in. So I tell them to take it step by step. In short, it's like bringing a newborn baby all the feasts in the world because this is delicious.

(Unknown) : You are kind.

Nakamura: Kind.

Maeno: It's like that, isn't it? So, I agree with Mr Nagai, and although it has been more than 20 years since I joined the masjid, 24 years later, the number of new adherents is increasing every day, but the number of those who remain in the masjid and those who continue to come are not really changing, and the reason for this is that I think everyone is aware of this in their own way. I think everyone has a certain level of awareness in the beginning. But unfortunately, the reality is that they are crushed in various ways. For example, there is the reality that they came here with the intention of studying, and then they look around, only to find themselves in a foreign language that they don't understand, and they feel like they're in the wrong place. Because of their kindness, and because they are extremely helpful, they are bombarded with things that they are not supposed to do, and things that they are told they must do, and if they can't keep up with that, they stop coming the next time.

Tanada: Yes, Mr Kojo.

Kojo: Yes, that's right. I have heard that there are quite a few people, not only Born Muslims, but Japanese Muslims as well, who, when asked by non-Muslims what kind of religion Islam is, talk about the Six Beliefs and Five Elements. I tell them that it is a religion that challenges you to be a good person because there is the Last Judgement, and also that there is a God, Allah, who interferes if you try to go the wrong way. I just explain that if you try to go the right way, he will follow you. I explain to the

non-Muslim Japanese that first of all, that's all I need to explain. And then they can understand the six beliefs and five elements of Islam little by little. To be honest, it is a regrettable situation, and we are naturally reflecting on what the cause is.

The purpose of the Fukuoka Masjid was not to create a place of prayer for foreigners, but to spread Islam in Japan. As a person living in Fukuoka, I wonder what the cause is, but the masjid, which was built for the original purpose of spreading Islam in Japanese society, is not functioning very well. That is a bit of an issue. What do you think about that? I don't know about other masjids. What do you think, Mr Nakamura?

Nakamura: Mr Kojo, perhaps I may be a little out of line. In a manner of speaking, I am not worried at all about the future of Islam in Japan. You all may have various worries and anxieties about the current situation. Basically, I'm looking at it from a long span of time, which I've talked about many times, a span of about 500 years. So now, we are still in the ploughing stage. So, rain or wind, we have to do it first.

This is often referred to in the Buddhist tradition as the eastward expansion of Buddhism, which has come from the west to the east. It is said that Japan is the best land for Buddhism. I myself feel that Japan is the best (?) land for Islam.

To be honest, foreign Muslims are too selfish. To be honest, foreign Muslims are too selfish to the point of disgust. When I first joined the religion, I said, 'Ashhad an lah ilaha illallah'. When I asked if this meant that there was no I, they said that this verb always contains I, so there is always an I.

But from my own upbringing, it is said that our ego is the cause of our unhappiness. When I think about how to get rid of the ego, I think of Islam. It is to take total refuge in God. We follow what we are told to do without complaint or dissatisfaction. That is the commandment of the Self. But foreign Muslims inevitably come to the forefront of the self. Because of this, when I work with foreigners, I always get into trouble. The masjid was probably at the forefront of that. I think.

On the other hand, let me speak from a slightly different perspective. What the future of Islam depends on is the role of the revival of the Japanese people in Japan. People can have a problem as to why they come to the mosque. Students may be a bit different. These people are from different places, and in the end, many of them come to the masjid.

And many of them join the faith after being touched by the kindness of Born Muslims. However, that kindness can often go too far and become constricting. For myself, I think the future of Islam in Japan is great. What Japan is losing, or is on the verge of losing, is in the culture of Islam. It is in the religion. If we can bring this to the

fore, I think it will become a very comfortable place for Japanese people. Islam. In that sense, I think, very personally, there will be a great future. But whether it will increase or not is another thing.

Kojo: Sorry. It's me again. I think that the behaviour of the Japanese people, who consider themselves to be like Muslims, must have surprised you. I often hear people say that they were surprised, here and there.

I hear people talking about why the behaviour is so Islamic, in a country where there is no Qur'an, but Islam is a beautiful way of thinking in Islam and the Japanese originally, the old Japanese. The Japanese of today are a bit, unfortunately, different. What the old Japanese thought was beautiful and important in the Japanese tradition matches about 90% of what the old Japanese thought was beautiful and important in the Japanese tradition. What is the English word for this? Rebirth. If more and more people understand that what the Japanese value in Islam is the same as what the Japanese originally value, then I think that Islam in Japan will expand even further.

Tanada: Thank you very much. Mr Haroon.

Haroon: The problem is, I think it's not a question of Japanese or foreigners, there are about 100 masjids and most of them are connected to each other. They all have separate groups, but they are all connected to each other. I am friends with most of the representatives of the masjids.

In my experience, if there is no Japanese director in the organisation or masjid, or if the representative is not Japanese, people are waiting for him. Japanese Muslims, or people who were born in Japan, for example, Jameel's son, or Arian, who is Pakistani but went to school in Japan, are the same as Japanese people. If these people come forward, everyone welcomes them. So, don't say that this masjid is run by foreigners, I know Japanese anyway. If I go in the evening, even if it's just one hadith, in Arabic, someone read it, in Urdu, someone read it, in Japanese, someone translate it, and then I can tell the activities, if I do these things, Japanese society will easily accept me.

What I want to say is that it's not a question of Japanese or foreigners, it's the people who do it. If you are willing to step forward, go to a masjid close to the community and do it, I think there are all kinds of opportunities. I think this will increase in the future.

So now, young people are going abroad to study, going to Islamic countries and coming back, so if we make good use of them, it will be a very good opportunity, and in

the near future, within five or ten years, the activities of the masjid, and the sermons and speeches in Japanese, will change.

Tanada: Mrs Hayashi, please.

Hayashi: As-salamu alaykum. I became a Muslim 17 years ago and have been living in Japan for a long time. First, I became a Muslim in the USA and then came back to Japan, so I wanted to have Muslim friends in Japan. I went to the masjid to meet Muslims, and I also went to many Muslim gatherings. However, I felt uncomfortable in many ways, and I gradually drifted away from them, and in the end, I did not show up any Muslim gatherings for many years.

In my case, I did not have any problems, I didn't think I had any problems. I didn't go to Jumu'ah either, but I watched lectures on YouTube and things like that, and I continued to do things at my own pace.

I think it's a waste of time and money. There are a certain number of Muslims in Japan, but I don't really understand why they are making efforts on their own in Japan. When I thought about the cause of this, I found that there are an overwhelming number of people who do not distinguish between foreign culture and Islam. When you go to a masjid, especially if you are a new Muslim, you are very conscious that you have to do things properly. If you are told that this is the way it is in Islam, they will follow it. But there is something different about it. I wonder if this is really Islam.

So, after all, I have to do my own research and I have to find out what the culture is there, and in the end, I end up being cramped there. I'm sorry, I lost my head for a moment, but another reason I stopped going to the masjid is that I see so much un-Islamic behaviour from Muslims. In my daily life in Japan, I don't feel any discomfort, but in the masjid, there are un-Islamic behaviours that would not be possible in Japan. In such a situation, I feel like why should I associate with these people? It's like I'd rather be with non-Muslims and be able to be myself in an Islamic way.

Maeno: Like the frontline of the Masjid of Tangled Masjid mentioned earlier. I can't get enough of it.

Hayashi: Yes. That's exactly right. Especially this time, I think I was the only woman in this meeting.

Tanada: Yes, that's right. Over here.

Hayashi: You probably don't know much about the women's floor, but I think the women's floor is probably completely different from the men's floor. I don't know much about the men's floor either. There are foreign Muslims. Muslimah.

They are doing their own thing, and then there are the Japanese wives, and the wives, of course it depends on the person, but there are an overwhelming number of people who just take what they hear from their husbands, and then there is a lot of culture from that country, and they don't really understand each other, but they keep talking about, 'No, this is different, this is the way it is, this is the way it should be'. Then, when they don't understand each other very well, they start talking about how they don't understand each other and how they should do things, and then, to top it all off, they put their own Japaneseness on the shelf and start talking about how other Japanese people, who are not Muslims, are Kaafirs, and so on. They really don't understand what they mean. What I want to say is that this kind of environment is the reason why Japanese Muslims leave even if they come.

Tanada: Thank you very much. There was talk of various important issues, non-Muslim behaviour, Kaafirs, foreign culture versus Islam, and so on. Mr Nishizawa, what do you have to say after what you have just be told?

Nishizawa: I have the opportunity to visit many mosques, but the culture is so ingrained in them that if you want to take it out, you can't. This is a problem that will take time. This is a problem that will take time to solve, and I think it will be solved as the next generation of people arrive and gradually understand each other.

There are problems with the neighbours in the mosque, and language problems, too, and when I talk to them about it, they say, 'Oh, so that's what it's like.' I knew it, they are very scared over there. Why are they doing this? The next generation, of course, those who are studying Islam in Japan and those who have converted to Islam, can explain these things to them, so I think it will gradually be resolved.

What is important is that we communicate with each other, and we can't help who is to blame or who is to blame for this or that, so when they came to Japan, there was no mosque. They did what they could, they worked hard and built a mosque, and did various other things in their own way. If we want to build a mosque now, for example, at our own age, it would be very difficult. Most people of my father's generation were CEOs and had money and could donate to the mosque, but I work as a regular worker,

so it is difficult for me to donate to the mosque if they ask me to donate.

What they have done is undoubtedly a great achievement, and we need young Japanese Muslims who speak Japanese as their mother tongue to support each other, for example, in supporting Muslims who have converted. They are not only young, but also native Japanese speakers, and they need Japanese Muslims to support them. So I try to get in between them and tell them that I am doing it with this kind of feeling and that I am not doing it on purpose. Contact is also very important, and we have great connections with each other in countries such as Pakistan and Bangladesh. When someone dies, we are immediately contacted and we announce at the mosque that someone's mother has died.

But Japanese Muslims, if someone dies, they don't contact me about that. They are told that the person is already in hospital or in a critical condition, but they don't receive any information at all. So if you ask how far a foreigner can go, they can't go that far. I think it is necessary for Japanese Muslims to strengthen communication and connections. After joining a mosque, what kind of action should they take afterwards? I think that if Japanese Muslims join the mosque afterwards, things will gradually get better and better.

Tanada : Yes. Then, Mr Achille.

Achille: Assalamu Alaikum. Now, you know, I was in Japan for too long, and I heard a lot of stories about how it wasn't good for me. There was a lot of negative talk. When we came here, it was 1963. At that time, Mr Haroon told us that when he arrived in 1990, there was only one mosque. And the one that was there was destroyed. At that time, how did they do it, how did they all turn it into a mosque? The question of what kind of feelings were behind the creation of the mosque has gradually faded away over time.

You come into a new mosque, this is already a matter of course, it's already done. That's the way it should be, that's the way it should be, everyone has their orders of course, but what you have to think about is that, in those days, we had to work hard to protect Islam. It is still there, though.

At that time, people might not understand the flow of who was coming to the mosque and what they were doing now. What Shahelyar Nishizawa is saying is that he has seen the situation properly, and he is saying that, but it is a little bit from this period, I would like to say, but the history, the history of Islam in Japan is very short. So, if it takes some time, gradually things will be fixed.

Now, if you take the example of the United States of America, or the United Kingdom, that's where the history is about 100 years closer. There are people from the same Pakistan, the same India, the same Bangladesh, living there, and that's how Islam has grown up to now. Japan was, at best, the first one to come, in 1905. That person was alone, he left alone, he came as a tourist, and he left after a few days. It wasn't until he wanted to build a mosque or spread Islam to other people.

So, from about 1930-35, there was a Russian Revolution, and that's why the Turks came. At that time, first the Kobe Mosque was established, then there was a mosque in Nagoya, and then the Tokyo Mosque was established. The Nagoya mosque was burnt down by fire in 1941 or 1942 (1945 to be precise). That was the period.

Then, most of all, the relationship lasted, the Japanese, it was the oil crisis of 1973/74. During that period, I knew that they should learn Arabic, and they thought that if they learn Arabic, the economy would improve. A lot of people, Japanese, went to the Middle East. That's how they did it, they said the economy would improve. Thanks to that, people from mosques came.

Then the numbers of Muslims actually increased in 1985 and 1986. At that time, there were a lot of workers in the Middle East. They were all young and came to Japan looking for work. This was around 1990. So many mosques were built at that time.

At those times, we ended up talking about building mosques for 10 to 20 years. At that time, we didn't yet talk about education or what we were going to do with the children. That was probably only after 1990 that it started.

Now, then, I wonder what to do with my children, how to educate them, how to leave them Islam. Well, let's send my children to Pakistan. Let's send my children to Bangladesh. Let's send my child to Dubai.

Even then, after all, that action was done without really thinking about the future. After about three to five years, the children, they said that living away from their parents would not be good for them. If it is difficult to live, on the contrary, they would have problems in Japan. They came back.

At that time, the children in kindergarten had already gone to primary school. At that time, these people finally started talking about building elementary schools and kindergartens. Before that, they went to the mosque to study Arabic and Islam. These things have gradually improved over time.

It's really a very (inaudible) time in Japan now. So all the Muslims here have understood it very well. That, of course, there is a friction between the Japanese and the Muslims from abroad in the mosques. That there are cultural differences. There is that kind of thing.

But that is a problem that will be solved with time, and what we have to think about now, here, is how we can get along with each other and how we can make Islam better.

If I can't go to the mosque anymore. That the relationship is not good. So I won't go anymore from now on. This is a negative thing. This would of course be a problem. So those who manage the mosque have a great responsibility.

I remember well that when the Otsuka Mosque was built, there was no Imam. Who would be the Imam? Then, every three months, we had to import from Pakistan. I was wondering if there were any Japanese people who could do something about it. Everyone approached the Japan Muslim Association and said if you are already all Aalim, please come forward a little more. It's not easy to come out. Everyone is busy. They can't do it because they are working in the company. That kind of thing continued. That's why we used to invite Imams from abroad to Taraweef during Ramadan.

But that was a long time ago. Nowadays, alhamdulillah. In various mosques, there are or will be imams who were born and raised in Japan. Soon there will be. Probably, in another five years, there will be no need to import imams, and in ten years, there will be no need for more aalim. Because there is no such thing now, in Japan. You have to accept that because there is none. It is a fact that there is no such thing. That is, there are only a few people who know the names of Imam Ghazali and others. It's just how wide the ilm of those people is. So, again, you have to wait more. Wait a little longer and bring up the Muslim people who are working hard. Then in the near future, InshaAllah.

Tanada: Thank you very much. I was thinking of asking Hamanaka-*san* to help me with various things.

Hamanaka: I was sitting here without saying anything, so I'm in a slightly different place from everyone else, but I'd like to introduce the situation in Shikoku, where I am. I will talk a little bit about the masjid in Japan.

Niihama seems to work very hard to run the masjid, but for example, for the Jumu'ah prayer, there are about six or seven people who come. It's like one third Japanese, one third Pakistani and the rest Malaysian and Indonesian.

I'm the Imam, so of course I do all the communication in Japanese, and sometimes I do the Khutbas in Japanese, and sometimes I read and do the routine in Arabic only. We have a limited amount of time, so we do it in about five minutes.

With such a small number, if one person is absent, there are things that can't be done, so make sure everyone attends. If one person is absent, the next week we say

something like, 'Why didn't you come last week? Then, everyone thinks that they have to come, so they come. We do it that way in the masjid.

However, there was one Eid service when Friday was a holiday, and 100 people came. I wondered how many people were in the vicinity. Most of them were Indonesian trainees, though. Trainees can't come to Jumuah. So we don't have that many, but we have almost no Indonesians in Jumu'ah. On Sundays, when the holiday is Eid, that's how many can come. Also, on Sundays, I always think about it, but I want Japanese people to gather somehow.

Also, the thing I'm thinking about the most is the effective use of the masjid. If we leave it empty, it would be a waste, so if there are people who can use it on Sundays, we ask them to use it as much as they want, so we can hold study groups for Indonesian trainees, gatherings for Malaysians, and so on. A lot of Japanese people also come, and we hold events like international exchanges. We are doing it with the idea that you can use it for whatever you want.

As I said before, how can we bring Japanese people to the masjid, and if you look at Japanese Muslims, for example, in Ehime Prefecture, the majority are internationally married. I don't know what level they are at, but they take the initiative to come to the masjid, and when I tell them that we are going to pray or have a study session on Sunday, of course they don't come. When I ask them if they would like to bring their wives to the study session and watch a bit more, they always leave, saying they have some business to attend to.

It happened to be a kind of study group for Japanese people, where the husbands were Japanese or, conversely, the wives were Japanese, and we gathered them all together and talked about Islam in Japanese, but it didn't last very long. Recently, however, we decided not to talk about Islam to them, but to get together just for a meal, not for a study session, and I thought it was a good idea. I thought it was quite good, but we have Indonesians studying the Qur'an for an hour now, so it doesn't matter if people from other ethnic groups come. Most of them are Indonesians, though.

Sometimes I'm the teacher, sometimes Indonesians are the imams, and then we get together, and after about an hour we finish and have dinner together. Recently, Japanese Muslims have started coming to these meetings. During the Qur'an study sessions, they just sit in the back and listen, but when it comes to the dinner, we have fun talking with them, and they keep coming. I don't know what will happen in the future, but recently this trend has started, and Japanese Muslims have started coming too. I'm chatting with them.

I think that if you aim to use the masjid for anything, just invite people to come and

hold events, then before you know it, people will be connected, not to increase their knowledge of Islam or their faith, but just to connect with each other. Even the Jumu'ah prayer, people are desperate to come because they feel they have to go to the Jumu'ah service, and they don't want to miss it if they don't make it. The number of people coming to Jumu'ah is gradually increasing.

At first, there were 10 people at the Qur'an study group, but last week, about 30 people came, and they seem to enjoy coming every week. When we start doing that, it's hard work for the organisers, so we divide up the roles and everyone is asked to bring something, or bring this or that, and that's how we manage to keep going.

Also, in the case of Niihama Masjid, I am by far the only one who talks about everything, so other foreigners cannot interfere. When I have a problem, I ask how opinions are divided on this, because opinions are divided among Indonesians, and when the law says this is wrong or this is good, if they ask me what I think, I say that is wrong or that is OK, and then the decision is made. In such a situation, there is no one to fight me, so I feel safe.

Maeno : Are there any Arab or Pakistani nationals?

Hamanaka: Yes, there.

Maeno : Even Pakistani can't resist Mr Hamanaka?

Hamanaka : Yes. They can't go.

Maeno: The number.

Tanada: I heard from Mr. Achille and Mr Hamanaka that there are many people of the generation who have built up the community or the masjid, and it is certain that there are achievements of this kind here, so we are going to pass them on from here onwards, So it is certain that we are entering an era in which we are going to carry on that tradition.

In this context, I think it is good that we have the opportunity to discuss issues such as the problems between foreigners and Japanese, or foreign cultures and Islam, and many other issues, and I hope that we will be able to talk more about these issues here, so I would like to hear from Dr. Tahir.

Tahir: Sorry, my Japanese is a bit, not so good, so I'll try a bit harder.

I would like to talk about two things. First of all, I would like to talk about what the Beppu mosque has done that is a little different from other mosques. We have a programme called "Islam in Temple", and we first went to Nakatsu City, which is near from Beppu city, and held various Islamic meetings for the people there.

After that, about two months ago, Beppu Masjid had a food festival. That food festival, we do that every year, but at that time, the introduction of Islam was not by a Muslim, but a priest from the Buddhism temple. He introduced Islam. That's probably the first time I've (inaudible) maybe, maybe ever.

We made all the different, for example, food from different Muslim countries for the food festival and gave it to the guests who came, but the lectures, this Buddhist Monk gave that lecture. He gave a very good lecture. First of all, his words were also in Japanese, and then, historically very good, he spoke. And I think that maybe in the future we will tell it, twice in a year, once we will go to the temple and introduce Islam to the Japanese over there, and then Buddhist Monk, the priest, will go to our programme and speak for Islam.

Also, we provide free food in Ramadan, of course, like other masjids, Japan. Food is probably a very good thing to get along, I think. I think it's better for communication, not for Islamic scholars to give lectures, but to eat together, to talk, and that's probably the best way. Some Japanese people also come. So we thought it would be better to continue not only in that kind of Ramadan, but also later on, so for about two or three years before, every month, on the first and third Friday night, there is free food at the mosque. That's already, anyone can go and eat, and then there are no lectures or anything. We don't invite them for lecture. It's just food. Still, some people, I think, will come. That's the thing, if you don't have something like that, although we do all sorts of programmes like that.

And what about the future of Islam? When you talk about the future, you should look a little bit at how it used to be done in the past. But I think you can still get some information about how it will be in the future.

I came to Japan in 2001. I was in Fukuoka at that time, and there were no mosques in Kyushu at all. The nearest mosque was probably the Kobe Mosque at that time. Nowadays, mosques are everywhere now, in Kyushu and nearby Hiroshima.

And then, for example, in Fukuoka, Beppu, and then Kumamoto, we established these mosques, it was not only people from Kumamoto, we gathered all the people from outside Kyushu, and we worked hard for that. Those various mosques. So now, of course, Kyushu is full of mosques, but they are all separate communities, but they all

have a vision and they are all doing it properly, I think.

So my opinion is that, for example, nowadays, in Japan, there are at least 100 mosques, and there are 150 or 200 more, various Muslim organisations now, and there is no proper coordination or anything like that. Every organisation, maybe (####@01:19:43)reinventing the wheel, doing a lot of the same things, really, elsewhere, it's, it's easy, it's possible.

Like that, if a joint vision is created, I also did a bit of research on that, too. Why it wasn't done before, I mean. Various reasons, for example, one, because we didn't communicate properly, we didn't have confidences in other organisations. Really, whether to do it or not.

The other thing is, first of all, small organisations, if, for example, the Japan Islamic Trust, which has been a big organisation for quite a while. Other nearby organisations, we are small. If together we become a big community, maybe this big Organisation will control it. That's the kind of problem that we had. So, for example, I think that one national organization is probably difficult to be created. That, maybe, in the current case, I don't think it can be done.

But if you have a regionally differentiated, geographically close place, if you have eight to ten organisations that are coming together a little bit, and you create your own, say, five-year vision for that place, and then the leadership of that organisation, that's the main issue. Who is going to be the leader of it, or the leadership, rotate. Every year it will change to a different province or city or something, and maybe the fir, the big organisation will be controlled by a smaller organisation. I think that will probably go away as well. But if we create 8 to 10 small regional organisations like this, and work a little bit, and then in the future, after five years from now, from those regional organisations in 10 years, each one of us will be able to choose, maybe, a national organisation... I think that this is a good idea.

So, I think that if we do it only in one place, instead of doing the same job in parallel, in 100 different places, we can probably increase the result many times over, with the same effort, no?

Tanada: Thank you very much. Although there is no national umbrella organisation at this stage, Dr Tahir said that it would be good to create eight to ten local organisations in each region, and to do this now, and then in the future they could be combined into one organisation. There has been a lot of talk about such an overall mosque network, or collective organisation, for some time.

Yes, Mr Kojo.

Kojo: Yes. I'm very, I'm very agreed about Tahir Bhai's story. But I am very, very agreed. Because of my work, my work as an administrative scrivener, first of all, I get a lot of consultations about creating various groups and helping religious organisations. In Fukuoka, there are now groups in Hakozaki and Higashi ward, but now that Kyushu University has moved to Nishi ward, when I am consulted about setting up a group in Nishi ward or in Kitakyushu city, I advise them that it would be very easy if they set up a group at the Masjid branch of Hakozaki masjid, and they replied that independent is good. I think the reason is because there is no communication. I think it's because of the lack of communication that they are worried. I think they are very worried that by not being independent, they will be controlled in various ways, as Tahir bhai said. I'm trying my best to clear that up, and I'm trying to do more. I'm trying my best to communicate with Nurudeen (?) and other people, and I'm trying my best to build relationships, but so far it's not going very well, but I'll try my best, Inshallah.

Tanada: At the moment, last year, there was a person from Kagoshima masjid and talked about a masjid in Kagoshima becoming a branch of masjid in Fukuoka, but that hasn't happened in the end now?

Harroun: No. It is already a branch.

Tanada: Has it become? Yes, I have.

Tahir: So, that problem, if the leadership changes every year, I think we would all feel safer.

Kojo: That's right. For example, when we start talking about the three or four branches that we are talking about now in Fukuoka, which we haven't done yet, I really think that it would be a great improvement if, first of all, training could be carried out in Fukuoka, or in Kyushu, and if training could be carried out in Kyushu and if it could be made more beautiful.

Tanada: Thank you very much. Maeno.

Maeno: It's great to have something like Masha'Allah, Joinzvision. I think it is

wonderful. For me personally, the ideal form of Muslims or Muslim communities in Japan in the future is to see an increase in the number of Muslims who are active in various fields and whose mother tongue is Japanese. In addition, the number of scholars and educators whose mother tongue is Japanese should also increase. In the midst of all this, I would like to conclude with a positive talk from Mr. Aquil, and it is getting warmer and warmer, and it is time to end, but I am afraid I am going to make it a hot discussion day once again, but it is a talk that is not flowing anymore, so I think it would be good for the future generations. So I will do it.

I would like to appeal for independence, which is also essential for the management of the community, as I mentioned earlier, as well as independence as a scholarship, as an Imam and leader of Islam, as a really essential story. I would like to appeal for it.

I think I have told you in previous meetings that, unfortunately, many of the places of prayer that are now, I am sorry to say, predominantly Indian subcontinentally run, and the imams who are employed there, are treated the same as imams employed in their home countries. Almost. So, I am sorry to be harsh in my language, but unfortunately, they are third-class businessmen.

If the Japanese, in Japan, as you all know very well, the labour costs are the highest, but the Japanese, really, so Mr Haroon earlier, really, I know very well that the problem is not Japanese or foreigners. In many places, people say that they are waiting for the Japanese to take the leadership, but my question is, is that really true? Everyone says so, but is it really so? I would like to introduce one example for the sake of future generations.

There was a time when I had a chance, an opportunity, to be received as an Imam in a big masjid in a certain region. I flew to the country and met with the top management of the country that was sponsoring me, and they liked me, so they said they would leave it to me. In the end, it all came down to the fact that the way I was going about it was not good enough.

I told the steering committee of the masjid, which I trusted, about the situation. Then, of course, at the steering committee meeting, they kind of lied to me and said things that I had never said, and it all went down the drain.

If anything, maybe it's because my past is too black, but my experience is that I worked in a masjid and was fired at the behest of the representative. So when you are single, it is fine. It doesn't matter if you are single, if you are adventurous at any time. But now that I have a family and have to support a family of six, I can't be fired at the will of the representative. I said, 'Please make sure you are a member of the steering committee that runs the masjid, please make sure you are a member of the steering

committee that runs the masjid. If I go the next day, you're fired, because then I can't live with that. But, of course, after I told him what had happened, he told me that he was the only one who could be on the advisory committee and that he didn't want anyone else. *Rahaulah walakkit illabillah*.

How did that happen? That is, there is already an Imam there. There was an Imam, and they ended up saying, "we welcome Japanese Imams", but they wanted that person to stay. They wanted to keep that person.

That's why I talked about this. They have done it. They wants Ahmad Maeno to come for the Japanese da'wah, for the Japanese mission. But as a prayer leader as other Imams, as various leaders in the masjid, they want me to work together with the Imams that are there now, in short. But Ahmad Maeno had a sponsor, so for them, if it worked out, it was a great story..

But unfortunately, the two of us had too many different policies, so I'm sorry, but I couldn't do that. I thought it was not good to use different faces in the same masjid, so I decided that I couldn't do that, and that's how it ended up. So, what I want to say is that if you really want Japanese people to take a leadership role in the masjid, you have to treat them well. Can they be treated well enough to support their families? Also, independence, independence, so, as you may have heard in previous meetings, securing waqf, independent financial resources, I think is an essential issue. So, I would be happy if such a regional governing community, such a regional grouping as I mentioned earlier, with such a vision, could be added to our consideration as we move forward together. Thank you very much.

Tanada: Thank you very much. We have limited time now, and we will have time for prayer, so I'll be a little bit brief. If you could please, Mr Nishizawa, if you have any comments on what Mr Maeno has just told us, I would like to ask you a few talk.

Nishizawa: I think that these imams who come from abroad are really, not on the same level, but on various levels, and I think there is a bit of a problem with those who call them, with those who call them. They call them individually. There are cases where there is no mutual connection, not through an institution, but through a madrasa or something like that, and there are cases where there is just a friend of someone, or a brother of a sibling who is an aalim, so they call him, and then after they call him, it becomes a problem.

When you call an Imam, you call him through an institution, through some madrasa, through some university, so he thinks he is a representative of the university or

madrassa, and he will not do anything unnecessary like that.

Also, I have read the report of the previous meeting or something like that, and Ibrahim Okubo spoke about it, but they are quick to make efforts for these young people. It takes a bit of time for the Japanese to bring up one converted Japanese. You have to study Islam and then, after that, various things, of course, you have to do that at the same time, but if you are a young Muslim, you have a base to a certain extent. They have faith and a certain amount of knowledge, so by guiding them and making them leaders, I think they will be able to understand the feelings of the Japanese people and the feelings of foreigners, and they will be able to be in between the two.

We, the Tabligh Movement, started in 2011, and we went to Jama'at with only Japanese people, but at that time we had only six members. Now we have about 50-60 members. Most of them are Japanese and half-Japanese, and most of them are high school students, university students and working people. Most of them are a bit older than the child age group.

In this context, they are doing things in a Japanese way so as not to be affected by the gaps in foreign countries. For example, they serve Japanese food and all the conversations are in Japanese. You can't experience that anywhere. People who come here feel that their friends are there, so they are very popular, and everyone wants to go. The problem now is that we have to think about how to take these children to a higher level.

Tanada: Thank you very much. Speaking of soft issues, there are both soft and hard issues, and the soft issues are people. In terms of the soft issues, there are soft issues such as the problems among foreigners, Japanese and Japanese Muslims, and problems among foreign Muslims, and the succession of the second generation, as Mr Nishizawa mentioned, which I think will be a major issue in the future.

In the second part, which is titled 'Challenges for the Youth Generation and Muslim Communities', I would like to ask the following questions to those present at the beginning of the next section. I would like to say in advance, for example, what kind of care has been given to the second generation so far, either in their respective masjids or in a personal way? And one thing I would like to ask is, what exactly are your concerns about the second generation?

Or, as a second, what are some of the things that we need to do in the future? That is the second one. And, conversely, what are the things that we have to refrain from doing, the other side.

Again, what kind of care have you been giving to the second generation so far?

Secondly, what do we need to do? Secondly, what do you have to do, and thirdly, what would you like to refrain from doing?

I would like to ask you all to speak about these matters first at the beginning of the next part 2, so please do so during the break time.

So, prayer and then a break. We have tea in the back, and a lot of souvenirs, because they have given us a lot of souvenirs. We have a lot of snacks, so please, take a break. Then we will resume in about half an hour or so. Thank you very much.

(End of Part 1)

Part 2: Challenges for the youth generation and Muslim communities

Tanada: Now I would like to move on to the second part, the challenges for the youth generation and the Muslim community. From here, I would like to move the moderator to Okai-*kun*.

Okai: It is not good to be dumped suddenly.

Tanada: In this morning, as I mentioned earlier, from 9.30am we had a meeting of the Next Generation Subcommittee, where we had a three-hour discussion on the youth generation, Islam and Japan, with a focus on young people. Following on from that, or rather, including the participants from that session, we are now having participants here as observers, so I am sure that later on we will be able to have discussions with the participants of the afternoon session as well. First of all, I would like to ask each of you to make a statement in response to the questions for the next generation that we asked you earlier before the end of the session 1. Mr Maeno.

Maeno: Why don't we go around the other way?

Tanada: Do you want to do it the other way round? Ms Hayashi is a bit different. I don't want to ask Ms Hayashi about the next generation. May I start with Mr Hamanaka?

Hamanaka: I heard that in the morning the second generation gave some very active opinions, but I didn't listen to them, so I don't really know what they said. I don't know, I didn't listen to them, but I think the people who are attending this meeting are pretty amazing. From the masjid side, there are so many problems about how much we should lead the next generation living in the community, and whether there is a way to convey Islam. First of all, masjids have only recently been established, so it is a question of whether the children who were born before that time can be taught as masjids, so it is really up to the parents. I don't really know how it was in the urban area, but in the countryside like Shikoku, we really had to leave it completely up to the parents.

I have four children, all of whom are grown up now, but I was very busy with the mosque and my own work, so I left them alone. My son, to my surprise, had not studied Islam at all, and when it came time for him to get married, he could not even read the

Qur'an, but he said, "Let me marry her. I'll marry her in Islam", and he married a Japanese woman. Naturally, as a Muslim, he went to Islam because his wife was also a Muslima. But I don't think I got it right, he doesn't know much about Islam. I think he had a feeling that he was a Muslim.

Haroon: Masha'Allah.

Hamanaka: Most of the children are like that, but my second son went abroad to study, and he learned about Islam to some extent, so I thought he might be a help for me. I can't say anything about it, but my second son has been telling my eldest son and the girls about Islam on my behalf. So I can only hope for that. I think that the masjid needs to come up with a better way of conveying Islam to the second generation of children in Shikoku, even though they are behind the time. That is the situation.

Okai: Thank you very much, Mr Hamanaka. Could you please continue, Mr Nagai of Otsuka masjid?

Nagai: As-salam alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuhu. My wife is Indonesian, and although my children didn't study Islam properly, they were brought up in a rather decent family, including all my relatives, rather than at home. So she knew the basics to a certain extent, and of course she was a mother who believed that Islam was to be observed. I believe that children are brought up by their mother. I think that the basic principle is to give them good food and tell them to listen to me. I think that is how they were brought up, with a Muslim heart, so that they would not be dragged away from Islam by their mother.

The time when I brought up my children was when they were in primary school, and they were brought back to Japan from overseas when they were all in primary school, but at that time, unlike today, most of the teachers and schools did not even know the letter 'i' of Islam. In those days, for example, people ate the same school lunch together, and that was considered to be a great education. This is not the case now. Especially because of the allergy problem, it is gradually being understood that it is not compulsory to eat all meals, and that there is an increase in the number of religious returnees and children from abroad. I think that this is what changed the mindset of the schools. This gradually spread, and now most schools in Japan are mainly concerned about Islam and school lunches. I think they understand that much.

When it comes to the issue of swimming costumes for swimming, there are many

differences in temperature, and parents also have different temperatures, so I think it is difficult to come up with something unified. When you look at the Asian Games and other such events, there are countries that insist on playing sports with full-body cover-ups, and other countries that do not. In this case, I wonder whether it is a good idea to say that diversity is wonderful or not. Anyway, I think there is no doubt that children are now in a transitional period and things are getting better and better. So even if you send children to a normal Japanese school, the main thing is school lunches, but I think we are now in an era where there are some measures, like you can bring your own lunch from home or something like that.

The other thing is that they think that the children in Japanese schools will be polluted and their hearts will be polluted, so they need to build Islamic schools. So, they need schools that teach Islam as well as ordinary studies, and now they are gradually starting to be established. The question arises as to whether these schools are really paying for themselves or not, but if we think about the future, of course the number of students will gradually increase and it will pay off. An example of a successful school is a school of India. Most Indian people are businessmen, and they come to Japan to work, not as students. They come to Japan not as students, but to find work. If you take the Tozai Line, you can get to Otemachi in no time and the rent is cheap. In this way, there are some leaders who are building schools, and a person who used to work for NHK became a leader, but there are also people from India who are passionate about education who are building schools.

However, in the case of Muslims, the condition that everyone lives in one place is not always fulfilled, so it is difficult to create a place for education, and even if a place is created, parents have to bring their children, including those in kindergarten, when they are still young. It's a lot of work. Even so, I think that we will be able to make things work in this way from now on. One thing that worries me, however, is that the people from abroad, especially those who have come to work with us to build such things or to build masjids, are people of great faith, people who truly believe that Allah will somehow do it and are committed to that kind of thing. They are the ones who are really religious, who sincerely believe that Allah will somehow do it, and they are the ones who have built schools and masjids, and that's why we are in the situation we are in now. What worries me is that it is the first generation. They built the masjids and schools. They are still the first generation, and they are still alive and well. Those people built it because they were the ones who built it, and they built it because they were that dedicated. When those people become the next generation, I wonder if it will be possible for people with the same enthusiasm and passion to take over. So now,

people are overjoyed that so many masjids have been built all over Japan, but I wonder if the next generation, the next people, will be able to properly maintain and manage them. That is my concern, but it depends on their faith.

From what I've just heard, people from overseas, they are really nosy to the point of being nosy. Do you know something about what Mr Maeno said earlier, that they are kind and nice people? It means that they want to go to heaven with us. In short, the reason why they are nosy, why they say, "Let's do this" or "Let's do that when the service time comes", is so that they can go to heaven together. When a stranger dies, we ask him or her to go to heaven. Because we are praying to a stranger, we are asking Allah to help that person go to heaven, so it is natural for us to say, "Let's go to heaven together with this person next to us", isn't it? So I wonder how Japanese Muslims can come to understand this heart. I would like to make efforts from now on, but I am concerned about that.

Okai: Thank you, Mr Nagai. Various issues have been raised, but we are gradually making progress in encouraging the people around us. On the other hand, it was mentioned that the mosques that have been built have been handed down from the past, and in particular, the transmission of enthusiasm will become an issue in the future. In terms of inheritance, it is a question of whether Japanese Muslims or the next generation will understand the importance of respecting the first generation. Mr. Aquil, who is also from Otsuka, do you have any other comments about Otsuka?

Aquil: This is the concern that Mr Nagai just mentioned. In response to the question of how to continue in the future, one thing is that this is a really big problem. If you listen to the children, you know, the little children, when you listen to them, they say, that person eats this kind of food, that person is a Kaafir. That comes out in a very bad feeling, and I get very worried when I hear them saying things like, that person is a kaafir and he should go to hell. Because, Islam started with the love of the Prophet, right? That's why the kaafir died, the Prophet sat there. When the body of the dead person passed from there, the Prophet wept out there. This person said, I'm here and I'm trying my best, but I'm going to hell. It was like, my efforts, they were not enough. So all the Muslims here today, children and adults, are feeling the same way, the feelings of the Prophet, that is to say, kaafirs are those who don't believe in Allah. This person is a human being. He is a human being, a thing created by Allah.

Then you look at the character of ordinary Japanese people, I would say 90 per cent of them have kindness (?) towards Islam. I say that 90 per cent of them have kindness

towards Islam. Why are these people going to hell? So it's still the pain. I wonder how we can help them and how we can take them to heaven, as Mr Nagai said earlier. I wonder if our generation will be able to continue with that kind of spirit. So I wonder how non-Muslims can be taken to the heaven of Allah, including all the future schools, study groups, lectures and so on. With that pain, I thought if I work hard, what I have been doing, Insha Allah, I will be able to do it the same way. I'm a bit optimistic, but I always take things a bit lightly. There is absolutely nothing difficult about it Insha'Allah. The important thing is that it's a question of how do we convey this feeling to our children, to the second generation? Because we can't tell them what the Japanese haven't done with it. So that job is mine, Insha'Allah, if we do that, society will become more and more, and Japan will become a better place to live. And we can all go to heaven, Insha Allah.

Okai: Thank you very much, Aquil-*san*. You have been involved in educational issues for a long time now, and have made various achievements, such as building kindergartens and schools. When I spoke to Mr. Aquil at the mosque the other day, the *kaafir* issue has become a word that is used very easily. I remember that he was very concerned about the easy division between us and those who are not us. How to create a kind of mindset for children is one of the issues. Next, could you tell us about Beppu?

Tahir: We, I came to Japan quite a while ago, so first of all, there were no mosques, so we worked hard at that. After the mosque, for example in Pakistan, I didn't have any more religious studies or anything like that. I went to a normal university in a normal country, and I worked hard for my dream, and I didn't really have any religious studies or anything like that. But after I came here, my children, because we are Pakistani, for example, we hear *Aza'n* all the time around us, and I could understand many things about Islam that other people still don't understand. But my children were born in Japan, and I thought that if they went to a normal school in the future, for example, they wouldn't understand, so I tried my best to teach them about Islam at home. But when my children grew up, they became really rebellious, and I thought that they probably weren't really interested in it. But recently I've been talking to my children and maybe that's not it. A little bit, although I think the children manage to keep the religion.

In the future, after we know our problems, then we will know if this is the problem of other people in Islam. Now, for example, children are grown up. If it was Pakistan or something like that, the parents usually do it for that, like marriages of our children,

but the Japanese system is a bit different. You have to look for it yourself. But for example, our children were born in Japan, and even though they have various (inaudible) in Japan, they can't find a couple or something by themselves because of Islam, which they have, in this case. So we are trying to figure out what we can do for that. Now, for example, one Japanese girl became Muslim and she said to me, 'Sir, now my own family is under a lot of pressure, for me. If I continue as it is all the time, I can't do it by myself. Please help me.' So I looked for it, met other Muslims and got married, and now she has a child, Ibrahim and another child, and I'm still thinking about it like that. We have to create a system to manage that.

This is very responsive. It is not such an easy job. It is very responsive. So I used to talk to Brother Haroun and other people and ask them what kind of system we can use for that. For example, when I go to my relatives in Chicago, or to mosques over there, they have a box like that. You write down what you are doing, what kind of suhoor(?) you are doing, what kind of good things you are doing, and then two or three very responsible persons from the community check it and ask if there is anything they can do to help. We are now thinking about how to create such a system. I think that is probably very important for the second generation.

Harroun: Marriage.

Tahir: Yes.

Harroun: About the arranged marriage.

Tahir: For matchmaking.

Okai: Thank you very much, Dr Tahir. You are talking about marriage. I think that now is the time when the feelings of parents, or rather the content of such feelings, are really strongly expressed, and I wonder whether a system can be created or whether this will become a problem in the future. You just talked about marriage, but let's move on to other topics, for example, Mr Maeno, shall we move on to the next one?

Maeno: When asked what kind of care I have given to the next generation, first of all, as a first generation Muslim in my own family, I chose my spouse as a Muslim from Japan. The reason why I dare to say this is that I am speaking entirely at my own discretion and prejudice, but I was tired of being told that Islam is a mixture of

cultures and customs, and I wanted to study Islam properly, and I wanted to learn about Islam in earnest. In the first year, I thought that what I wanted to marry was a Born Muslim, just as I had always wanted to marry a Born Muslim. In other words, a Muslim from abroad. The first year, I had the feeling that I wanted to be a Muslim in a foreign country, an Arab country or a Muslim country, for the rest of my life.

But during that year I had a change of heart, and God changed my heart and told me to wait a minute. If you think like that, you are being self-centred, but Islam will never take root in Japan. The point is that Japanese people who were led to Islam and became Muslims thought that it was best and safest for them to live outside Japan to protect their own happiness, their future and the faith of the children in their families who would eventually be blessed, so they held out such hope at first. But then I thought back. I thought that if everyone did that, Islam would never take root in Japan, and that I should return to Japan and live in Japan in order to better spread Islam in Japan. So I decided that a Japanese Muslima would be the best partner for me, and so I joined my current wife. Sadly, one of the children says he would have preferred a half or a quarter. *Rahawalawalaqqwataylabillah*. They say it's not what you see.

From another perspective, what I did in my own way for the second generation was when I was a young man of 18 when I converted from Buddhism to Islam. I needed a role model for myself. As a Muslim from Japan, he has learnt Islam properly, and he is transmitting Islam. Who are the people who are doing Islamic missionary work, missionary work or educational work? Almost everyone is a university teacher, or self-employed, or an ordinary company employee, but I wondered if there were any such people. I couldn't find any such Muslim. I decided that if there were no such people, I should become one, so I'm working hard and falling down seven times.

The weekend school, which I started in January 2010 with the intention of initially teaching my own children, has been held 233 times to date and is continuing, albeit slowly. The school is held at the Hillah Masjid in Gyotoku, once a week, originally on Saturdays, but it has long since been moved to Sundays. Originally, as an activity of the Hillah Masjid in Gyotoku, there was another class called Evening School, which was held on weekdays, but when I saw the children who came to the Evening School, it was not surprising. During the weekdays, the children went to a normal school and then their parents brought them to the school, so they looked tired. So I felt myself in crisis. I was afraid that the children might not like the masjid. So I started it by myself because I didn't want my children to feel that way, but gradually I got the cooperation of other families, and the biggest condition for me to start it was that I wanted to make it a parent-child school. The evening school system is that parents bring their children

to the masjid. That much effort should be valued, but if you bring them there, that's the end of it. They leave their children to the Imam and the Qur'an teacher to educate the children in Islam and that's the end of it. I don't know what they do with their free time, but that's how it is. But I continue on the condition that the Islamic education of the children is the responsibility of the parents, everyone, so they must always be accompanied by either their father or mother. Is it only number 1 that I answer, now?

Tanada: No, all of them already.

Maeno: All of them already? Excuse me. The second concern is seeking the way of faith. As a second generation Muslim, I am seeking the way. As a Muslim born and brought up in a Muslim family, I hope that the minimum requirement of faith is that the souls of my three children be raised to a hundred, but as a Muslim, the desire to study Islam properly or to walk with more awareness as a Muslim is something that is given to me by the one and only God. So, even though we can nurture the budding of these feelings, there is nothing we can do about it, so we have no choice but to keep praying.

What I would like to refrain from in this context is coercion. We don't force it in our house. You see, my daughter like that. I don't know if it's because of cultural differences, but when I look outside, it's not a question of Islam, it's a question of parents and children, but as I see and hear about children who have been forced to do various things in the name of Islam and are growing up unhappy, I don't want to do it myself, as a sign of self-discipline. However, I don't agree with the common Japanese view that religion is a personal matter and that the children should be free to choose their own religion. I think that a Muslim is a Muslim and choosing Islam is the same as teaching them that one plus one is two, which is a matter of course, so I would like to show them this as my duty as a parent. Thank you very much.

Okai: Thank you very much, Maeno-*san*. So the activities for families slowly led to the weekend school, and it has spread. It's a school for parents and children, but what do you do when parents bring their children? What activities?

Maeno: The activities are brief. Practising Qur'anic solo recitation. It would be wonderful to produce many Qur'an memorisers like we do in MashaAllah and Otsuka Masjid, but we can't do that because we only have a very short time, so at least we have time to practise reading the Qur'an and also singing Muslim songs. I know this is

an area of disagreement among parents, but in the West and in Muslim countries, there is an Islamic song called Nasheed, or Naat in Urdu, which is very useful for the emotional education of the children. Even if you leave them alone, even if you forbid music, even if you forbid them not to attend music classes, if they live in Japan, they learn Japanese and Western music. They become familiar with it. I thought that if no one else was going to do it, I should do it myself, so I started to do it again, and I am now doing it again, albeit very modestly. It is also important to teach the rudiments of the Arabic language and the basic teachings of Islam in Japanese. We also do handicrafts that have something to do with Islam. We play *Sugoroku*, make *Karuta* cards, cards, and many other crafts. Sometimes we also do skits.

Okai: Thank you very much. We are doing these things like the Qur'an, songs, Arabic and crafts, and we are not going to force you to do them.

Maeno: Ra'ikhlaha Fiddeen. No compulsion in religion, as the Qur'an says.

Okai: Have there been any failures?

Maeno: Failure? No, no.

Okai: Nothing in particular? Now, Mr Otsuka, you have already answered both of our questions, but I would like to ask you again, Mr Haroon, if there are any activities that you have not yet mentioned. I would also like you to tell us about your actual activities, including what you do not want to pass on to the next generation, as you have written here.

Haroon: When I look back at the children of people who went to the USA or Europe in the 1980s, what is happening to them, generally speaking, the second generation has already pretty much left Islam. I have the same concern about the children of those who came to Japan in the 1980s and 1990s. In my experience, 90% of the children, especially those over the age of 20, I don't know if they are religious or not, but when I ask them, many of them say that their father is Muslim and their mother is Muslima. This is partly due to the fact that there were not many masjids at that time, and their parents were very busy with work. So there is very much hope, but I think it's because they didn't educate their own children that much, but I am worried about many second-generation children, especially those who are over 20 years old.

At Otsuka Masjid, we also do the study of Qur'an every day, except on Sundays, but we also do other things such as Saturday study sessions for children and mothers for Talbiyah education. To be honest, very few children come to these study groups. About 30 children come to Otsuka, but when you think about the total number of children, it's only a very small percentage. In particular, there are a number of mosques that are conducting such activities, such as Masha'Allah and the Gyotoku mosque, but they are few in number. Even if fathers say to many children, "Let's go to the masjid", they don't come. That is the current situation.

We were concerned about what would happen to the children if we didn't do something, so we thought about outside activities outside the Otsuka Masjid. For example, we made a football team. We formed a football team in Otsuka, and we don't do it very regularly, but it has been very effective. There are children who have not come to the masjid before who play outside once or twice, and the third time they are very enthusiastic about going to the masjid to pray with us.

And then what I understand about Islam is that you don't just pray and have your own faith and that's it. If you study the history of Islam, Islam has been very useful for society, or Islam has given a lot of things to society, for a long time. But unfortunately, in this day and age, that's where we are lacking. That is my hope, my dream. My image of Islam is that I want to do something useful for Japanese society.

For example, what we're thinking about at the moment is trying to create the first Boy Scout in Otsuka. We have made contact with the Boy Scout Federation and are in the process of registering. I see that the number of Boy Scouts in Japan is decreasing. So when I told them that I wanted to start a Muslim Boy Scout group, the Japanese Federation was very happy and supported me, saying that it would be a very good thing if a Muslim group could be established where the number of children is decreasing. I think it would be very good if we could have a group of Muslims where there is a decrease in the number of children. I think that outside activities would be easier for them. These are the kind of activities.

We are also working on supporting the homeless, and we would like to focus on these areas in the future, and we would like children who do not come to the masjid to participate and be involved in our activities. My concern is that many children are not coming to the masjid, I repeat, many children are not coming to the masjid. It is a very big concern what is going to happen to these children. Recently, a system has been established for them to study the Qur'an from various masjids via Skype, but I think we have to do our best to provide them with lectures and education not only on the Qur'an, but also on the Japanese language. That is all.

Okai: Thank you very much, Mr Haroon. You said that it is important to make a social contribution and also how to approach the overall decline in the number of young people leaving mosques, but do you have any thoughts on the third issue, such as what you should refrain from doing? In the activities you have done so far, are there any things that you think have been a failure, or that you would like to avoid doing?

Haroon: I don't have that kind of regret, but I regret that the effort wasn't very good enough, to be honest. I think we all need to work harder together.

Okai: Thank you very much. Then *Kojo-san*.

Kojo: Rather than Fukuoka Masjid activities, I would like to talk about what I often hear in the field. Some of the stories are based on or common to those of Mr Hamanaka, Mr Nagai, Mr Aquil, Mr Haroon and Mr Maeno. I sometimes talk to Muslims whose fathers came to Japan and they were born in Japan. I often hear from them that they are envious of people like me who have converted to Islam, but they call it a choice, not a change. They are second generation, but they are still Born Muslims. They have lived in a situation where their parents have been Muslim since birth, and in some cases they have been shut out from anything other than Islam. I thought, I see. I think that's very interesting, because we have chosen the path of Islam, studied hard, and are trying our best to become good Muslims, even though we don't know what Islam is all about. So, what I want to say is that, as with Mr Hamanaka's story about his eldest son, and as with Mr Maeno's point about not putting too much pressure on people, InshaAllah, even if you don't put too much pressure on people or shut them out, Allah will probably find a way for you. I think Allah will find a way. That is one thing.

In Fukuoka, Mr Nakamura has been giving lectures on Halal education and the Islamic way of life at elementary and high schools, and some schools in the Higashi Ward area are quite familiar with Islam. There are many schools in the Higashi Ward area that know a lot about Islam, and in some cases, they don't require Muslim students to come on Friday afternoons anymore.

I think it is important to create an environment that follows the Muslims, not just within the Muslim community. I was talking with Mr Nakamura and Tahir Bhai earlier, and there was a meeting of the Kitakyushu International Association, and I attended the meeting not from the standpoint of a Muslim, but from my position as the Director of International Liaison at the Fukuoka Administrative Scrivener's

Association. The moment I went there, the first thing that happened was that a public health nurse came to me and said, "I'm in a difficult situation and I need to consult with you. She told me that the mother's child, who was two months old, was supposed to gain weight because she was two months old, but the child was not gaining any weight at all. The mother wasn't that worried, but the public health nurse found out and came to me for advice on what to do, and she said, "That's a big problem", so I called the leader of the Indonesian sisters in Fukuoka and had her communicate directly with the mother, and we solved the problem. I called the leader of the Indonesian sisters in Fukuoka and we resolved the problem.

That's how the Kitakyushu International Association don't know whom to ask. They might at least know that there is a masjid, but they don't have the connections. We don't know where to go when we have a unique Muslim-Muslima problem. If it happens within the Muslim community, I think it can be solved within the Muslim community, but if the problem is found outside the Muslim community, how to solve it, I think the connection with the outside world is very important. I think it's very important to have connections with the outside world. Like the international section. If the masjids have more connections with the outside world, I think it will be easier for various places to follow up the masjids, and I think it will be possible to create a system to follow up Muslims and Muslimas more and more. That is also true with regard to education. I think we can talk about taking Fridays off, and I think it will become easier and easier to talk about education and school. So I think that it's natural to work hard in the community, but I think it would be good to work harder on the connections with the outside world.

Okai: Thank you very much, Mr. Kojo. In Haroon-*san's* case, for example, the disaster relief and support for the homeless is one example, but it is important to take the approach that by connecting with the outside world and through social cooperation, we can make society a more comfortable place to live. I understand. Mr Nakamura, do you have any additional information on Fukuoka?

Nakamura: It is not Fukuoka-related, but I have some suggestions for the next generation.

Okai: By all means.

Nakamura: I have only one wish for the next generation. I want you to work hard for

the transformation of Islam in Japan, for the transformation of Japan. There is about 1400 years of Islamic history. Over hundreds of years, each local culture has developed on top of the Islamic core, and each local culture has its own way of expression, so Japan doesn't have that now. That is why the next generation is struggling. So I would like the next generation to create an Islam that fits their bodies from now on, something that fits their bodies, even though the core remains the same. What we have to do for that, one of the first things is not to impose our own experience on them. Their own history, their own experiences. They will come to understand these things over time. We don't dare to impose it on them now. Also, we have to show them that Islam is fun.

In fact, what made me want to become a Muslim was that I seemed to enjoy being with Born Muslims. I was suffering when I was having a bit of a hard time in my life and many other things. But when I was with them, I thought it would be fun, I thought I could live with them. So there are times when I didn't enter the group to suffer. Unfortunately, as Mr Kojo said earlier, Born Muslim children are not able to make choices. They are Born Muslims. I actually meet a lot of foreign students. As Mr Tahir said earlier, they were Born Muslims, so they were not conscious of Islam. However, when they came to Japan, they became aware that they are Muslims and started studying again. So now, the second generation of Born Muslims will probably realise at some point that they are Muslims. That's when I think it's time to start. So now, I don't think it's necessary to force them, or to say that it's my experience.

As for what else I worry about, actually as a parent I am naturally worried about my child. I hope that they can live and live safely if possible, but that's the same as any other parent. I don't worry so much about Islam. If the parents live well, the children will look at them in a strange way, so even if they are a little off, they will probably come back again. I have two children.

As for what we need to do from now on, and conversely what we need to refrain from doing, I sincerely believe that we need to transform Islam in Japan, as you said at the very beginning. What is needed for that is for them to study Japanese society. I want them to study about Japanese culture. I want them to study about Japanese relationships. I think this is very necessary. What I especially trained my children in is how to greet people and how to eat. If I had died at this time, I was going to die early, actually. I'm over 60 now, and I actually planned to die in my thirties or so, but I've doubled over. When I thought about what to do with my children when I died, I thought that as long as they knew how to greet and eat, they would manage to live. It was a naive idea. Both of those two things are rather connected to Japanese culture.

Knowing Japanese culture means that besides the way of life, the way of thinking is also very much influenced by it. The second generation, who suddenly realised that they were Muslim, were wondering how they could express Islam in Japan in a new way. I think it would be very strong if they knew about Japanese culture as a methodology. I would like you to work on that kind of thing.

The next step, on the contrary, is to refrain from what kind of things, and this was already mentioned by Ms Hayashi, is that adults who confuse culture and Islam should not teach or lead. I have several jobs and I am a tea ceremony teacher. There is an *Iemoto* system. This is the same system as the Japanese *yakuza*. They use a strong force to tighten up the lower ranks and suck money out of the lower ranks. In such cases, the top is sure to give guidance. At that time, the headmaster says. Educate the teachers. Educate the teacher, not the end. If you educate the teacher, the subordinates will follow. So, if the head of each group is firmly controlled by the top, they will follow him.

I said earlier not to impose our experience or force it, but if you want to study Islam, you should get rid of the people who are trying to force you to study Islam by muddling culture with Islam. Islam has a strong independence, so it is difficult to find a strong organisational unifier, to be honest, but if there is a trustworthy organisation, that organisation can, in fact, train missionaries, as in the case of Buddhism. If there is a trustworthy organisation, it can actually train people who specialise in missionary work. Then, the Japan Muslim Association, for example, would invite people from the education department of each masjid to come and give lectures on how to teach and how to teach in this way and how to teach in this way. And as Mr Tahir and Mr Kojo said earlier, if we don't let the parents know that such an organisation exists, they won't understand, so there is a risk that they will become Muslims who are dressed in clothes they can't afford, based on their own experience or that of their own friends alone. So I think it would be a good idea not to do that kind of thing.

But in general I am not pessimistic. Look at them. Whether it's Hamanaka-san, Maeno-san or Kojo-san, there are a lot of first generation, respectable people. They haven't been doing Islam since they were a child. I respect them all. I think that the second generation, who are watching the backs of these great people, will definitely be able to contribute to Japanese society as good human beings. That's all.

Okai: Thank you very much. The theme of today's talk is about the succession of the next generation, so the process of succession is like the process of fitting in, and he has some ideas about how Islam and Muslims can fit in in Japan, such as adopting the

yakuza system. I heard that there are ideas like that.

Maeno: I think the *Iemoto* system is a good idea.

Okai: Shall we make it an *Iemoto* system? Finally, Mr Shahereyar Nishizawa, since you are here as a representative of Sakaimachi masjid, although you are from the next generation, can you talk from the perspective of what the first generation of Sakaimachi people are thinking and doing?

Shahereyar: There are a tremendous number of Muslims in Sakaimachi, and there is a lot of Islamic atmosphere within the Muslim community. There is a kindergarten called Olive Academy and a teacher who is very thoughtful. He is Jaa'bil. He studied Japanese himself, and he is very particular about how to teach children in Japanese. Teaching in Japanese. He is currently building a kindergarten in Masha'Allah, with the help of the teachers, and he is studying how to run it and how to educate the children at the kindergarten by buying books that are sold in Japan. He is studying how to treat Japanese children and how to interact with them, and he is also studying Islam, and he is doing his best.

We have also had disaster drills recently, for example, and we are also doing everything we can to teach the children Japanese discipline. Also, I handed out these handouts to children who go to school, but in most Japanese mosques, children who go to school are taught only the Qur'an. Islam is not only about the Qur'an, but also about socialising with other people, about one's character, about business and many other things, and we need to teach these things to our children. I'm actually thinking about our children, what do we want our children to be like? Do we want them to be able to read the Qur'an alone, or do we want them to be at least at a level where they have their own faith, or do we want to bring them up as full-fledged Muslims? In this context, it is not enough to just read the Qur'an, you have to teach them that kind of thing too. We have a Japanese translation of the Qur'an in Gunma, and Dr Jarbir translates it.

Also, inevitably, I'm there now too, but there are still not enough Islamic materials. We need to add more and more Islamic teaching materials. It is also necessary to add more and more Islamic teaching materials. For example, when I used to watch TV, I used to hum the songs I used to listen to, and sometimes I would do it with my mouth. If it was Nasheed instead, there would be no problem. I'm very happy that MashaAllah is doing these things in Japanese, and the stories of the prophets and such are

translated on IslamHouse.com, so MashaAllah, it's easy for children to listen to these stories. There is also a madrasah where children attend from morning till night, about six times a week, and they don't go to school anymore, but work hard as Aa'lim (scholars). In Japan, there is still a lack of teaching materials and information dissemination, and there are places that are doing their best, but there are still some areas where there is a lack. This is one area where we are making efforts in Sakaimachi, for the children.

I also want you all to think about what you should do for those who have just left. Of course, if Allah shows him hidayah, guidance, he will come back, but if he doesn't want to change himself, Allah won't give it to him. When they are faced with something, when they feel that they are not good enough, that they are powerless, that's when they start asking for something. So I actively go to meet these people and talk to them about Islam, but only after I have become friends with them. They were really impressed that young people just like them were taking it seriously, and they thought it was amazing. They are also surprised. They were surprised to see how hard these people were working, even though they were in Japan. They were in the same situation as us, or they were half-Japanese, but they were doing their best, and we became really close.

In fact, one of the people who came in the morning meeting was someone who used to go to those clubs and stuff like that. He didn't know anything about Islam, but now, Masha'Allah, he is doing a great job. It's important to connect. No matter how much he drinks or what he does, we have to respect him because he has faith. It's quite possible that when he dies, he may have left Islam himself at all, or he may start taking Islam very seriously and become a high status Muslim. So we shouldn't look down on anyone at all, we should respect them and think of them as our siblings, and as I said before, let's go to heaven together. I think this will lead to this.

Okai: Thank you very much, Mr Shahelyar. Mr Jarbil, I am also going to talk to him in Sakaimachi, but he is taking an approach of doing both the hard and soft aspects of the project. Shahelyar, you yourself are involved in activities, or rather, you are trying to develop them through connections.

Shahereyar: Yes.

Okai: Understood. So far we have heard about the activities of the representatives of mosques and masjids. Today, many people of the second generation have come to talk

to us about the succession of the next generation. I would like to talk to the second generation. Now you know what the first generation is doing, don't you? I think that you have understood that, although there are problems and issues, the first generation has been thinking about various things and actually worked hard. The previous discussion was about the future of the Muslim community from the perspective of the first generation, but if we add the reality of the second generation to that, I think we can see the future of the Muslim community even more clearly. I would like to invite the second generation to join the discussion from this point onwards. If you have any comments, including about what you said in the morning, please let us know.

Hayashi: Sorry. I'm not sure if I'm allowed to be called a second-generation person. In the morning's talk, I mainly heard about the experiences of children born and raised in Japan, who are now in their 20s and 30s. To summarise, they were all told by their parents about rules and regulations, and that they were forced to do this or that, and that it was very hard for them and that they hated it. So everyone told me that they were Muslim, especially the half-Muslims, so it was a mix. They all said that they were different from their Japanese classmates, that they looked different, had a different culture, and were also different as Muslims, so being different itself had become a complex for them. I think everyone, especially in adolescence, wants to be accepted by their friends and wants to be with everyone else, but I think it was probably really hard for them in that way.

I thought it was particularly important, the children told me that their parents' generation, the first generation, all came from Muslim majority countries and they think a Muslim majority environment is normal. But now they are in the Muslim minority world in reality. The parents felt that they did not understand what it meant to be a Muslim in a Muslim minority world. Some of them said that they didn't have any allies, and even if they told their parents, of course they wouldn't understand, and they didn't have any allies because they didn't have many friends who were Muslim. They felt very isolated. They were already isolated from the outside world because they were Muslim or mixed, but on top of that, their parents told them not to do this or that because they were Muslim, so they hated their parents and Islam as a whole. I thought it was very important for the parents' generation to understand this.

This is connected to what I said earlier, but I think it's wrong to mix up Islam and culture and tell people to do this or that. I think it is important to teach Islamic rules and dos and don'ts. Of course, if there is coercion, it is not good, but I think it is important to teach that. I think it is also important to teach the culture of the country

where the child's father or mother is from, and I think it is very important for the child to develop an identity. I think it is necessary to teach that separately. Children are brought up in such families, but since they are in Japan, they are exposed to Japanese culture and grow up in Japan, so one day they will have to find out for themselves what they have to do in their own lives. At that time, I think there is a big difference between knowing that up to this point it is Islam and not knowing that it is Islam. So I think that is important.

And it's not just the second generation, but it's something I sometimes talk about with converted Muslims and others, but they don't have a natural way of being, you know. When I deal with Muslims. I have been a Muslim for 17 or 18 years now, so it's been a long time, and I think that Maeno-san and everyone else is already natural. I think that new Muslims, or second-generation Muslims who are just starting out as Muslims, have their own natural face, like their Muslim faces, which is really their natural face. I think we have to think about what we can do to make it possible for everyone to be in their natural state.

As an example, my husband is an American, and I usually think of myself as living a normal life. One day, my husband's American Muslim friend and I went shopping with my Japanese Muslim friend and a girl who had just converted to Islam. She didn't really do anything. We just went shopping, really. We went to Costco. But after we got home, she said, "I felt really good. I felt like I could be so natural. It was the first time I felt that it was okay to be with Muslims in such an easy-going way. I think that's something like that. I think that is why the new Muslim converts are expected to do their best. I think they expect that, so new Muslim converts have to work hard at it, and I think it can be hard for them to leave, so I think that is a factor.

And then, sorry, it's a long story. This goes back to what I said earlier about the children's generation feeling like a minority. I think we Muslims should be more aware of the fact that we are a minority group in Japan. Of course, there are many problems that are unique to Muslims, but I don't think it's because we are Muslims that other people don't understand us. There are foreigners and other minorities, I can't think of any right now, but there are many people who support these minorities, and there are many support groups, and what they all want to do is to create a society where it's easy for minorities to live, To put it bluntly, those who are involved in support groups are doing so with this in mind. I think that Muslims should be a part of that, or rather, should participate in it. I think Muslims should join them, or rather, we should be part of them. I think we should make a movement to make Japan a society where it is easy for all minorities, including us, to live.

So, for example, LGBT and same-sex marriage are very popular now. Of course, it is natural that same-sex marriage is not allowed in Islam, and that's not our problem, but I personally agree with same-sex marriage, and that's what I think. But, in my personal opinion, I am personally in favour of same-sex marriage, and as a thought. I think there is a difference between making a society where diversity is accepted and making a society where same-sex marriage is recognised. I think that if Muslims don't make efforts in the direction of creating a society where diversity is recognised, it will not become easier to live in Japan in the future. Is this a bit of a mix-up? I don't want you to agree with same-sex marriage at all. In terms of my personal faith, of course I don't agree with it. But whether or not non-Muslims will be able to get married in Japanese society is a bit different. In that sense, I have the impression that there are a lot of Muslims who dislike LGBT people. Minorities fight each other a lot. I think we need to work together to create a society that says it's okay for minorities to exist. I'm sorry, this is a long story.

And one last thing, and this changes from what I just said, but the overwhelming majority of people in Japan are non-Muslims, I think it's less than 0.001 per cent, in terms of the Muslim population in Japan. We are such a minority, but for some reason, I think there are many Muslims who look down on the majority, the non-Muslims. They have the attitude that they know, they believe in Islam and they are special. I get the feeling that if you have that attitude, you won't be able to get on well with everyone. We are Muslims because Allah's Hidayah happened to be given to us, so there is no hierarchy at all, so why look down on them? I also think that it would be better if we understood that we are a minority and that we are in a weaker position, and if we were aware of that. Sorry, this is a long story.

Okai: Thank you very much, Ms Hayashi.

Hayashi: Sorry.

Okai: Thank you very much for making recommendations based on the content of the morning session. You mentioned the word 'minorities', but even minorities can tackle social issues, not just one minority group, but by joining hands with others and working together, we can tackle bigger issues and increase the public interest. Also, there was talk of looking down on them, but I think this is a problem for the next generation, and I think it can be linked to what Mr. Aquil mentioned earlier.

When I was listening to you, the phrase "don't judge" came up very often in what you

said earlier in the morning. The other thing is to wait and see. These two words came up a lot in the next generation discussion. I think that the next generation is already living in diversity. That's why I felt that it is common for the next generation to stop and put aside their value judgments about people who are different from them, or who are doing something different from them, or who are outside of them. When I held the microphone earlier, I said that we should add the reality of the next generation to the efforts of the first generation and their past perspectives. I would like to start a session with the floor, especially the second generation, if there is anything they would like to ask or convey to the first generation, as this is a good opportunity to do so. We would like to open the session to the floor, so if you have any opinions or questions, please raise your hands.

Qureshi: I am sorry. My name is Amin Qureshi from the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Waseda University, and I am here today to give my opinion as a second generation Muslim. In addition to what Ms Hayashi has just said, I would like to ask what the second-generation Muslims think and what they expect from their parents, some of whom already have children of the third generation, I listened to what the representatives of the masjids had to say, taking into account what they thought of the second generation and what they expected from their parents' generation. My frank impression is that the opinions and thoughts of the second generation match the thoughts of the parent generation in some cases, but in other cases there is a considerable discrepancy.

Of course, it is impossible to say everything here as the meeting lasted for about three hours, but I would like to emphasise that I would like you to be aware of the fact that they consider Islam to be a burden. The word "judge" was one of the keywords used earlier, but formalism is also a word that everyone has mentioned many times. For example, even if you know how to read the Qur'an, or how to pray, or all those formal things, no matter how much you become a Hafiz and how much you know how to pray, if you hate Islam and live as a non-Muslim at the age of 20 or so, then that is completely meaningless. I would describe the same thing as the beauty of Islam, and some of the second generation used the word "coolness of Islam". Some of the second generation used the term Islamic coolness, and everyone uses it in various ways. In short, what I am trying to say is that the Islam that is given to us is not very attractive, and another thing is that it is not something that we are convinced of. If you have any questions or doubts, if you put them to your parents' generation, you don't get any answers at all. The second generation, who grow up as minorities, do not have the

environment or answers to fully answer the questions they have, such as "because that's the way it is" or "what is Allah like?" Even if they do have answers, I think one of the biggest problems is that they are not being delivered.

Also, I'm sorry, I don't know if anyone else has heard the words Islam is about fun, happiness and love, which were mentioned in the morning session, but I don't see any connection with those things at all. I think it is also a very serious problem that many children are rather attracted to the non-Muslim lifestyle. I am going to repeat this again and again, but by not communicating the essential aspects, such as the formal aspects and impositions, they feel that Islam is a burden and see it as something they cannot agree with. That's why they are gradually moving away from it.

Also, one person was talking a lot about his parents' generation, but during the conversation he said, "I'm sorry, I have to say something here. I would like to say that we will of course talk about what happened to our parents' generation, what they did to us, and how we feel about it, but we are not trying to demonise them. But that does not mean that we are trying to demonise the parental generation. Of course it is natural that the parental generation wants to give their love and the best to their children, and that they want to give their children the best because Islam is good, but I don't think they were evil. But that there were limitations. Niya was good, I guess you could call it a motive. Intention, motivation, I guess, was good. But unfortunately it didn't reach them. There was a big gap between what the parents' generation saw in Islam and what the children, the second generation, the next generation wanted in Islam. This includes the culture mentioned earlier, lack of knowledge and lack of understanding of the hardships that come with living as a minority Muslim.

The other thing is that, although the people who gathered here in the morning were passionate about the transformation of Islam and their activities in their own way, we would like them to understand that our opinions are very biased, as are the opinions of some of the other second-generation people. I would like you to understand that our opinions are very biased. I would like you to understand that the second generation who can sit here in front of the Muslims are also biased to a certain extent. Of course, it's impossible to say what percentage is on which side, but if you just think about how many young people come to the mosque, you can understand how many of the second generation do not want to sit in front of Muslims at these meetings in the first place, and how many of them dislike Muslims. I would like you to understand.

I honestly think that there are many people from the parent generation who deny the current situation. Rather than being negative, they feel that if they talk about what the next generation has experienced and what they wish their parents'

generation had done, it will lead to bashing from the parents' generation, in short, spreading a negative image of Islam. They try to hide the fact that such a fact does not exist. Or they suppress it on social networking sites or in other ways. In fact, in that situation. I thought from what was said in the morning that it is important to understand the voice of the second generation, without denying the current situation, because the basic premise is to recognise that there is a problem in order to solve it. Of course it is important to know what the parents think and what they want to do, but I feel that it is also important to fully understand what the next generation thinks in response to that. Sorry, this may sound cheeky, but it is my opinion based on what I heard in the morning, based on my own experience and after talking to other Young Muslims.

Okai: Mr Amin, thank you very much. I hope that this conference will be a place where the first generation and the second generation can connect, where pipes can be formed, and where water can flow from the first generation to the second generation and from the second generation to the first generation. I would like to hear more from the second generation, although there may be some answers to this question. If you have any other opinions, or if you have anything you would like to tell us, we would be very interested to hear them.

Iwata: My name is Iwata Ryuichi, I am currently a second year high school student and I became a Muslim when I was 12 years old, but let's not talk about that. As a member of the second generation, I would like to say something, and this is just my personal opinion, but I really appreciate the efforts of the first generation in doing everything they can for the second generation, but for example, there are various lessons and weekly classes held at mosques. To be honest, those lessons are a bit boring. I am a high school student, but when I see primary schools students and younger children, they hardly take the lessons seriously. That's why I think it's boring.

Moreover, I don't think they, the little children, are very proud of their minority status, that they are Muslim. For example, at school, to a certain extent, they are not discriminated against, but they are different, so they are often asked, like by their classmates. They ask questions like, "Why can't you eat normal meat?" or questions like that. If a child cannot answer such questions, they feel isolated. I'm sorry, but I don't think I've got it all together, but I think that the classes that are held in mosques nowadays are very rigid in terms of teaching what is written in the Qur'an and what the Prophet's teachings are. I think there is a need for more education about life and

how children can integrate into Japanese society as Muslims.

Okai: Thank you very much. I understand that you have these opinions, but are there any others?

Anmar: Assalamu Alaikum. My name is Anmar, I was born in Pakistan and grew up in Chiba Prefecture. Pleased to meet you. I have lived in Gyotoku all my life and both my parents are Pakistani, so at first I used to be taken to Urdu programmes, but as the years went by, my Urdu skills started to decline and Japanese started to win, so I couldn't keep up, programme-wise. That's when Sheikh Ahmad Maeno came along. He created various programmes and made a Japanese language curriculum there. So I think that teachers who know Japanese culture and are native speakers of Japanese are now quite necessary for the second generation.

Okai: Thank you very much. Does anyone still have an opinion? How about Arian-san?

Higuchi: Just a question, you've done a lot of work on the first and second generation, but what kind of division are you talking about? There has been such a division for a long time, and I am sorry for the suddenness of it. I'm sorry to be so abrupt, but I was wondering what period you divide the first and second generation into.

Maeno: Myself, it's in my blood.

Okai: I will answer the question.

Higuchi: In the case of the Japan Muslim Association, for example, we were the first generation from the wartime to the post-war period, from around the 1960s to the 1970s. After that, the second generation, which would be us now, would be those who studied abroad and came back, the second generation, the third generation, and the fourth generation around Mr Maeno. So the second generation would be even younger than that.

Okai: That is what I mean.

Higuchi: Yes, that's right. Understood.

Okai This time...

Higuchi: I have 55 years of experience, but listening to your stories, the problems we have been thinking about, worrying about and running into are the same as the problems we have been facing, and the environment has changed. When we first joined, we had no idea that the topic of Islam would become such a big issue in Waseda University. So, although the environment has changed, the problems of minorities in non-Muslim countries have more in common than I thought. Thank you very much.

Okai: Thank you, Higuchi-*sensei*. Regarding the division of the generations, there is no particular rule. However, we have divided the children born after the mosque was built into two groups: those above and below that level.

Nagai: When you say born, do you mean Born Muslim?

Okai: No, anyone is fine.

Aquil: I mean that I joined Islam.

Nagai: Anyone.

Okai: You can come in. But the time you are active is different. Maeno-*san* might say, 'I am young', but this time he is in the first generation.

Maeno: Uncle.

Higuchi: Would the 1970s be the first generation? When mosques started to be built?

Okai: We are thinking roughly from the 1990s.

Higuchi: 1970 means 20 years.

Okai: In history, of course, that...

Maeno: By blood, of course, I mean Young in terms of living in Japan, as a difference.

Higuchi: I see, I understand.

Okai: Yes, that is how we are bound this time. Dr Tahir has some business to attend to, so he will be returning to Oita after this. In light of that, the second generation, Arian-*kun*.

Ahmed Arian: As-Salamu Alaikum, Hello. My parents are from Pakistan and I grew up mostly in Japan, but as I mentioned earlier, I memorised the entire Qur'an in Otsuka and am now a Haafiz. I myself was blessed with a very good environment, and I am now part of the second generation that is able to participate in conferences like this. I have had many conflicts in my life, and when I listen to the stories of my friends and other people around me and their problems, I can only speak for them.

First of all, to name a few, I feel that almost all of them have been taken away by Mr Amin. I think the parents' generation is trying in various ways to impart knowledge to us, holding various meetings, study groups and so on, but it has inevitably become an imposition of rules. I often use this analogy, but when you are in a Muslim country like Pakistan, where the majority of people don't sing or drink alcohol, you don't feel that much discomfort because the people around you don't drink, eat or do anything else. But in a majority country, you can't sing, you can't eat, you can't drink. But when the majority, in this case, are not drinking alcohol or eating pigs, and you are told by your parents that you are not allowed to do so, then the question naturally arises as to why, if you are a normal person. When you ask questions to the parents' generation, they usually tell you that this is wrong. Some people say it in an angry way, and others say it in various ways. I was born speaking Urdu, the language that my parents' generation normally speaks, and Japanese as I speak it now.

What I saw was that the parents' generation also did not have the answers to these questions. I don't mean this as an insult, but the children's generation has lived in Japan for a long time and I have Japanese language skills that I can pass on to my children, so they don't have the Japanese language skills that their parents have. So, the current situation is that they are not taught not only the rules, but also the good things that can come from following those rules. I was blessed with an environment where I could hear about the problems of my friends' parents, but I was not in a good position to do so.

I use the word 'transformation', but I mean the transformation or fusion of Islamic and Japanese culture. As I said earlier, I am from Pakistan, but I grew up almost entirely in Japan, and I want to continue to work in Japan and to work with Japanese

people who are going to live in Japan. There was a time when I insisted that I was Pakistani, but now I think it's fine to be Pakistani Japanese. I don't want to be recognised as Japanese and I don't want to give up my other identities, but if I want to live in Japan, I want to put Japan first. I think that if you talk to the parents' generation, not the Japanese, but the generation from overseas, they will tell you to respect your own culture. I don't think this problem will be solved immediately, but it is my opinion that if you want to live in Japan, you should be able to say that you are of Japanese descent.

And finally, as you can see, there are a lot of second-generation people here now, and as you can probably see, as a motivated second generation, I think it's time to rely on those second-generation people who know about Japan and are motivated from an Islamic point of view. Or rather, support. I want them to listen to their parents' problems, whether they are Islamic problems or economic problems, and I want them to be prepared for the fact that the situation is going to change. They may not be able to do what they want, but I want them to realise that this is important for Japan. I can't really say, because Allah will lead, but it's not for me to judge, but I want them to respond flexibly to the current situation.

Kojo: It's tough.

Ahmed Arian: As I said before, they should teach them the beauty of why they do what they do and why they have to follow these rules. As I said earlier, they have to teach them the beauty of why they do what they do and why they have to follow these rules, and I heard that some parents leave their children alone when they go astray. I think the parents here are probably concerned parents who don't do that, but they don't want to leave their children alone, they want them to be strict to a certain extent, but it is really difficult to find a good balance between that and being strict. I understand that it is really difficult to find a good balance between the two, but I would like you to take the attitude that you, as a parent, are not just a teacher forcing yourself on the children as if you were their student, but that you, as a parent, are also a student and pursue this together with them. I'm sorry, I was even cheekier than that, but thank you very much.

Okai: Thank you very much for your stimulating feedback. I would like to inform you that the meeting time has actually already ended in terms of the programme. However, our intention is to continue this conversation for a little while longer. If you would

permit, please stay with us for a little while longer. We would be grateful if you would allow us to continue. What you have just said is that things are really already changing, and the first generation as well as the second generation have to change. I felt that the community is also changing on top of that. There are still young people here, for example, Shahara-*san* and Tsunooka-*san*, if you have anything you would like to say. Or Mr Matin, how about you? Name.

Matin : I am Matin Jubayel from Bangladesh. I also define first and second generation, here. My understanding was that the first generation is the generation that was born abroad, raised in a Muslim family and migrated here, and the people born and raised as minorities here are called the second generation.

In my case, there are probably a lot of second-generation people here, but this is the first time I've attended a conference like this, and I was introduced here today by a friend. I am also a student at the Waseda university, and I came to this conference because it was held here.

What makes my position different from others is that when I listen to other people's stories, they are all devout followers of Islam, and their parents actively taught them Islam, and they had many conflicting experiences and hardships in dealing with it, but now they have chosen the path of Islam and are moving on. I think there are probably many people who have chosen to follow the path of Islam. In my case, my parents are both Muslims, and of course they are religious, but my mother does most of the basic Islamic things, while my father does not do so much. Of course they are religious, and they do fast during Ramadan and go to the mosque on Eid, but they don't do much in the way of daily prayers. Recently, I feel that things have changed a little bit, and I think my father has started to pray a little more regularly.

My father was very busy, and he was also a very hard worker, so he wasn't at home very much, so my mother taught me many things, and she was the one who influenced me the most. So my mother was more religious than me, so she taught me the basics. However, when I look at the Muslim community in Bangladesh, nowadays there are many people from all walks of life and the Bangladeshi population in Japan is large, but when I went to Bangladeshi gatherings, I was usually the oldest second-generation person there, or something like that. Since I was in primary school, I gradually prayed five times and learnt how to read the Qur'an, so I had a basic understanding of the Qur'an, so I felt secure that my faith was strong, or I thought I had an advantage. But when I came here, I realised that even though we are of the same generation, there are people who have learnt more and know more, and there are so many things I don't

know at all. Especially recently, since I became a university student, I've been feeling this more and more, and I feel strongly that I need to study more.

But I think for a lot of kids who are in a similar position to me, who have probably been brought up in a strict and religiously active family, religious participation is easy for them. Compared to that, there are a lot of second-generation children who don't come from families like that, and for them, although they are interested in Islam, and they know about the various activities at the mosque, it's hard for them to join such a community from the outside. To be honest, I don't feel welcome yet, or maybe I haven't studied enough, or maybe I need to do some more research on my own, but I want to study, and my life up until now...

Okai: Sorry, we have not enough time.

Matin: Sorry, I'm sorry.

Okai: If you could summarise.

Matin: In summary, now that I am a university student, I am busy with my studies, and to be honest, it is difficult for me to fully enter a religion and spend all my time on it. So I would be grateful if you could create an environment where I can study little by little, gradually, and gradually deepen my understanding.

Okai: Thank you very much. The story about Arian was about his parents, but this time he wanted to talk about what he wants the first generation to do for the masjid. I think, if there is anything else you would like to share with us, please let us know. What do you think? Are you okay with it? Are you sure? Then, Tsunooka-*san*, please go ahead.

Tsunooka: Nice to meet you. My name is Hina Tsunooka. My father is Pakistani and my mother is Japanese, and my husband is Japanese and lives next door to me, and I have a son who is two years old. I wanted to tell you again what I feel now when I am raising my child. As has been commented on earlier, the parents' motives are right but they are not reaching them, or the activities taking place in the mosque are not reaching the children's minds or seem attractive to them. I would like the adults to think a little more carefully about the reasons for this.

Because, speaking from my own experience, when I was an adolescent, I just couldn't

work hard enough to make a living in Japan. Even though my parents forced me to do so, even though I knew it was the right thing to do, I just didn't have the energy to fight my own ego. I just didn't have the energy to do what I needed to do while protecting my Muslim identity in the group. When I think about what was the driving force that was missing, I realise that in order to do well in anything, you need a motivation to do well and you need a reason to do well. For Muslims, it is their love for Allah, their love for Allah, their love for their religion, their love for the Prophet Sallallaahu 'alaihi wa sallam and their desire to imitate his way of doing things that is the driving force. I think this is what was missing from my life.

I think it is very important to be taught what it means to love Allah and to love religion before that. I think that childhood is the time when children learn this through their relationships with their parents and the adults around them. Therefore, I would like Muslim society as a whole to establish the custom of bringing up children. I would like the custom of giving and receiving love to be established, and I think that only when these basic needs of the child are met, will the child be ready to accept religious knowledge. So the basic needs of the children are first of all to be fulfilled by giving them love, and also, as was mentioned earlier, to be given appropriate rights, positions and roles, as they said they want us to trust them more and entrust them to us. By treating children with respect in this way, their various needs will be fulfilled and they will be ready to accept religious knowledge more and more, and then they will have the strength to go ahead and do their best, as a minority, no matter what situation they are in. I think that is what I am talking about now, and that is what I would like to tell you in a nutshell. That's all.

Okai: Thank you very much, Tsunooka-*san*. That was a very thought-provoking talk. There is a word co-creation, which means to create together, and I felt that word for a moment during this session. As with faith, a community cannot be created by a single person or a single generation. I think that co-creation is also a way to connect with other minorities when creating something new. I would have liked to have time for an answer at the end, but we are running out of time. I was hoping that one of you could give an answer on behalf of the second generation, but if there is anything you would like to say, please do so.

Aquil: Bismillah-Hillahmaanillahim. I don't know if this is a response or not, but I felt that, in the end, there is something you are all looking for. What is it? One thing is that the current generation of parents, the first generation, they think they understand

religion completely after all. So they want to pass it on to their children, and they want them to be happy and successful with it. But what you forget is that Islam took at least 23 years to reach the Prophet, little by little. That's now 1,400 years later, and parents, and then teachers, today, when it comes to Islam, they want to teach their children soon. It's difficult to do that. It can't be done. So this takes time. And then the second generation people are still in the process of understanding it now. They are doing a lot of research, and then all kinds of ideas will come. We need to learn how to convey these ideas with what kind of feeling. Therefore, in schools, mosques and homes, there is a need to plan how to teach, what kind of teachers preach what kind of things, and various courses of study, such as hours-long courses or weeks-long courses, and to plan them properly, for example, for five, ten or twenty years. I thought that we need to study and teach a little more.

Okai: Thank you very much. I would like to ask you more questions, but we are already running out of time. There is still time for more questions, so I would like to ask you to speak individually. As we have to close this meeting, may I start with a closing address from Mr Kojima?

Kojima: Should I go over there? In a manner of speaking, I am a co-organiser of this meeting, although I don't really do much, I might just pay for it. My name is Kojima from the Asian Muslim Institute. I am a population researcher, so when people say that the future depends on immigration policy, there is a possibility that a large number of Muslim immigrants will enter the country depending on the policy. If that is the case, it does not mean that the current first and second generation will continue to grow old, as you say, but that they may gradually be replaced by newcomers. For example, there may be a large number of Indonesians coming from Indonesia to work as carers, and there may also be people attending carer schools under the guise of foreign students. Recently, the number of Vietnamese and Nepalese students has been increasing rapidly, but there are many people who are actually working at the same nursing homes under the same management, under the guise of being foreign students. We don't know what will happen with the study-abroad policy, and at least 600,000 Rohingya refugees have left the country, mainly to Bangladesh, so we have an agreement that they will return within two years. So there is a possibility that Japan will take on the responsibility, and the composition of the Muslim population in Japan could change considerably depending on that. I think we have to think about that in the future.

We will also be holding a workshop on Halal on 26 February, which you can see at the entrance. Many teachers talked about the importance of eating today, and I think you will find many of these at the entrance and also here. Also, I have written a survey of international students in English, but I have received a number of responses from Kyushu University and Ehime University, who said that they would be happy to answer more questions if there was any interest. So, that's about all I have to say. Thank you very much for coming all the way here today.

Okai: Thank you very much, Dr Kojima. I would like to continue with a greeting from Dr Keiko Sakurai from the Organisation of Islamic Area Studies.

Sakurai: Thank you all for your long time. I am Sakurai from the Organisation for Islamic Area Studies. I have learnt a great deal from your heated discussions today. One of the points that strongly impressed me in your discussions today is that the issues faced by the first generation and the second generation are quite different. As can be seen from the fact that the first generation built nearly 90 or 100 masjids in a short period of time, I think that building a masjid was one of the major paths to solving the problems that the first generation faced in order to survive in Japan, which were of course religious in nature. I think that the creation of a masjid was one of the major ways to solve this problem. I strongly felt that the Islamic life centred on the masjid was a support for them as they gathered in the masjid, encouraged each other, exchanged information, learned Japanese, and formed a family in the masjid. I strongly felt that the masjid-centred Islamic life has been a source of support for all of you.

On the other hand, second-generation people who were born in Japan and now speak Japanese as their mother tongue are all second-generation people. Of course, there are those who have returned to their parents' homeland, but there are also many who have grown up in Japan, having returned only three times when they were children and not knowing any relatives in their hometown. I don't know how many of them are here, but I am in the Faculty of International Studies, so there are many mixed Muslim students who don't come here today, but who are hardly recognisable as Muslims on the surface.

The challenge that second-generation people are facing is that they have a very complex choice of identity, which is very important for young people in the process of self-development, no matter what their environment is, but they have more choices than in their parents' time. And you are a minority and you have a lot of choices. They have the option to go very much on the Muslim side, or even to forget about it as much

as possible. There are choices that you wouldn't have if you lived in Pakistan or in a Muslim majority country, so it's very rich to have choices, but at the same time it's very painful. You have to make choices. And then when you're facing those challenges, and in an environment where you're a minority, is Masjid-centred Islam supportive for them, maybe it's not.

They are all scattered all over the country, and perhaps it is easier for the younger generation to connect with each other virtually, on the internet or in other places. So we are facing different challenges. And I think it is not the first generation but the second generation themselves who can solve these problems. Of course, the first generation may need to be supported, but just as the first generation solved the problems of the first generation by themselves, I think the second generation has to find a way to solve the problems of the second generation by themselves, and I am just asking here. So I think everyone is more worried about it, but that's the impression I got.

What Ms Hayashi said at the end was very thought-provoking, and I believe that the number of people with diverse cultural backgrounds, not just Muslims, should increase in the future. We should create a society where these people feel that having diverse cultural backgrounds is not a negative thing, but a rich and advantageous thing. I feel sorry for Japanese people because they can only speak Japanese and have only one culture, but we have so many pockets and that is an advantage to live in the age of globalisation. We envy them, in fact I envy them a lot, but Japan itself has to create an environment where more people can envy them. How can the Japanese themselves create that? Minority people should realise that they have these problems, and we can change as we realise and think together about what we should do.

So for us, minorities are an asset. They have a lot of hints and opportunities for us to change in the future. In that sense, I think that the second generation, who have a lot of complex culture, are the treasure for us. That is why we have to avoid creating an environment in which the treasured people suffer. That is something I want to bear in mind when I listen to what you have to say today. Today's discussion was really heated, and I think everyone spoke from the bottom of their hearts. I am grateful for that. I strongly felt that we must use this as food for thought and move forward for a better society. Thank you very much for today.

Okai: Thank you very much, Dr Sakurai. Now, lastly, from Mr Tanada.

Tanada: I am sorry for taking up so much of your time with three greetings. As

Professor Sakurai mentioned earlier, it is very important for Japan to deal with Muslims, and I recently conducted a survey of local authorities where mosques are located, and there are quite a few local authorities that know that there are mosques. Of course, there were municipalities that did not know of any mosques at all. However, when I asked the local authorities that knew about the mosque whether they had any intention to exchange with it, nearly 70% of them said they had no plans to do so, which shows that the Japanese side is facing various problems. This is an issue for the future.

For the time being, we sent letters to all the masjids in the country for this meeting. There were some places that responded, for example Niigata, Shimane and Okachimachi, where you were here today, but most of the masjids didn't respond. Also, the mail itself was returned. I think the address is correct, but my guess is that the masjid does not have a signboard in Japanese. If you see such a sign in Japanese, please tell the person in charge of the masjid, "Put up a sign in Japanese". If you do so, I am sure they will get in touch with you. I will end my talk with a few words like this. Next year will be the 11th meeting, and I am still working at the university, so I will probably do it next year, so I would like to thank you again.

Thank you very much for your time today. I look forward to working with you again. Thank you very much. We will take photos afterwards, so if you would like to join the main participants, or anyone else who would like to be in the photos, please come to the front. (End)