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## **Who are Japanese Muslims?**

**-The Japanese Muslim Population in Japan Today -**

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# Who are Japanese Muslims?

-The Muslim Population in Japan Today

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## Summary

As of 2017, more than 100 Islamic mosques have been established throughout Japan, and the population of Muslims in Japan exceeds 100,000. Based on the latest data, the author again estimated the Muslim population in Japan to capture the Muslim population as "Japanese nationals" or "Japanese with foreign connections." The reason for this is that the activities of Muslims in Japan have become more active and the activities of "Japanese Muslims" have become more prominent, and there is a possibility of the formation of "Islam in Japan" in the future, so the author thought it important to confirm the weight of "Japanese Muslims" in the Muslim population in Japan.

This paper reviews the history of the Muslim population in Japan and estimates the foreign Muslim population as of the end of 2016. It then examines in detail the size of the "Japanese Muslims" and their actual image among the Muslim population in Japan, using the "Statistics of Foreign Residents" and the "Official Gazette".

## Introduction.

As of August 2017, more than 100 Islamic mosques have been established throughout Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa Prefecture, and the population of Muslims in Japan has reached over 100,000. In recent years, the number of foreign Muslims living in Japan as "long-term residents" (i.e., "resident foreign Muslims") has been increasing, in addition to an increase in the number of foreign Muslims living in Japan on a medium-term basis, such as technical intern trainees.

The author has previously conducted Muslim population estimates for the world and for Japan, and has now decided to conduct a new study based on the most recent data available. The major difference between the Muslim population estimates in this paper and previous estimates is that the Muslim population, which consists of "Japanese nationals" or "Japanese with foreign connections" <sup>1</sup>, is more closely examined in this paper. This is due to the fact that Islam is taking root in Japanese society, the activities of individual Muslims and Muslim collectives and groups, which can be called Muslim

communities or Muslim networks, are becoming more active, and the activities of "Japanese Muslims" are also becoming more prominent. On the other hand, Islam, which has spread throughout the world, has historically formed "Islam in each country and region" on the basis of the lifestyle and culture of each region, and there is a possibility that such a "Japanese Islam" will be formed in Japanese society in the future. Based on this history of development, the role of Japanese Muslims is expected to grow in the future, and it is therefore significant to confirm the proportion of Japanese Muslims in the Japanese Muslim population.

In this paper, in principle, "Japanese Muslims" refer to Muslims whose nationality is Japanese, but it is by no means easy to present a specific image of Japanese Muslims. The term "Japanese Muslim" in a nutshell, however, is not an easy one to define, and it becomes more or less clear when one tries to sort out and describe who exactly might be included in the definition. Japanese Muslims can be broadly classified into those who voluntarily joined Islam or converted to Islam (hereafter, "joined") and those who joined Islam through marriage with a foreign Muslim, as far as the adult population is concerned. In addition, there were Japanese who had already embraced Islam from the prewar period, and in some cases, their descendants became "Born Muslims" and became Japanese Muslims. There may also be descendants of adults who joined Islam in the early postwar period, for example, around the 1960s, who have become Japanese Muslims as "Born Muslims".

On the other hand, there are underage children and young Japanese Muslims. Most of them are "Born Muslims," children of Japanese Muslim couples or children of Japanese Muslim and foreign Muslim couples who have become Japanese citizens.<sup>2</sup> The latter are "Japanese Muslims with foreign connections" and are the "second generation of Muslim immigrants"<sup>3</sup> as well as the "second generation of Japanese Muslims," although many of the second generation have already reached adulthood. These Japanese Muslim children are Muslims "born and raised in Japan".<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the Japanese Muslims mentioned above, foreign Muslims who have naturalized in Japan are also included in the population estimates as Japanese Muslims. As described below, naturalized foreign Muslims include both the first and second generation of Muslim immigrants, from the elderly to infants. They are "Japanese Muslims with foreign connections," regardless of their age group.

In this paper, after reviewing the history of the Muslim population in Japan, we will first review the changes in the Muslim population in Japan since around 1990, and then make a new estimate of the foreign Muslim population as of the end of 2016. Then, the size of the "Japanese Muslim" population in Japan, as described above, and its actual image, will be examined in detail using the information on "naturalization permits" published in the "Statistics of Foreign Residents" and the "Official Gazette". Please note that the primary interest of this report is to estimate the population of "Japanese Muslims" and not to analyze the diversity of "Japanese Muslims" in terms of nationality, identity, ethnicity, and so on.

## 2. A Brief History of the Muslim Population in Japan

The first full-fledged interaction between Japanese society and Islamic society began from the end of the Edo period to the beginning of the Meiji period (around 150 years ago), but the existence of the Muslim population group was not confirmed until the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, approximately 120 years ago. Although it is not possible to precisely capture the changes in the Muslim population in Japan up to the present, based on the numbers estimated by the author in his previous research, a brief summary of the changes to date is given below. By the beginning of the 20th century, Indian Muslim merchants began to reside in Kobe and other cities, and foreign Muslims who were interested in Japan began to arrive in Japan. The first major change in the size of the population was the emergence of the Tatar Muslim diaspora, which entered Japan after the Russian Revolution via Manchuria and Korea (Okubo 1924:100).<sup>5</sup> Their visits to Japan began in the 1920s and peaked in the late 1930s, they were dispersed to Tokyo, Nagoya, Kobe, Kumamoto, and Hokkaido, and their total number is estimated to be around 400 to 600. In addition, it is estimated that there were at least 200 Muslims living in Japan, including Indian Muslim merchants in Kobe, Japanese who joined the faith on their own, and Japanese who joined the faith as part of the Islamic Policy as national policy during the war (1931-1945). The prewar Muslim population in Japan as a whole was thought to have been less than 1,000 at most (Tanada 2015a:8-10).

Tatar Muslims, who had made up the majority of the Muslim population in Japan during the war, were granted Turkish citizenship in 1953, and many of them

emigrated to Turkey, the United States, and other countries. The Muslim population is estimated to be several hundred, including the Japanese Muslim members of the Japan Muslim Association (which became a religious corporation in 1968) and the Tatar Muslims who remained in Japan. Thereafter, due to the increase in the number of Japanese Muslim students at universities in the Arab world and the gradual increase in the number of foreign Muslims in postwar Japan, the total number of Muslims staying in Japan was about 3,500 by 1969. Fifteen years later, in 1984, the Muslim population in Japan was about 8,000, but after a period of massive influx of Muslim workers during the bubble economy from the late 1980s, the number of foreign Muslims and Muslim immigrants gradually increased, and as of the end of 2010, there were about 100,000 foreign Muslims and 10,000 Japanese Muslims. As of the end of 2010, there were approximately 100,000 foreign Muslims and 10,000 Japanese Muslims. As of the end of 2015, the estimated number of foreign Muslims exceeded 110,000, and depending on the size of the estimated number of Japanese Muslims who joined the faith through marriage, the total number was thought to be 140,000 to 150,000 (Tanada 2017:4-5).

### 3. Foreign Muslims residing in Japan

The number of foreign nationals residing in Japan can be determined from the number of foreign residents reported in the National Population Census and the number of foreign residents reported in the Basic Resident Registers of Population and Households. Although it is possible to estimate the foreign Muslim population using the census data, which includes nationality information, the author has used the "Statistics on Foreign Residents" to estimate the foreign Muslim population in Japan, and since this statistics is updated every six months, the same statistics are also used in this paper to ensure the continuity of the estimates.

In this estimation, the number of Muslims in each country was calculated by multiplying the number of foreigners residing in each country by the Muslim population ratio for each country, using the "Foreign Residents by Nationality/Region of Residence Status" in Table 1 of the "Statistics on Foreign Residents" published by the Ministry of Justice as of the end of 2016, where the Muslim population ratio is available.<sup>6</sup> Table 1 lists the major Islamic societies, including countries with an

estimated Muslim population of 50 or more.

{Table 1. }

Note: For the tables, no English translations have been made. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we ask that you refer to the tables listed in the original Japanese paper. <https://www.imemgs.com/muslim-research/504/>

According to previous estimates of the Muslim population of foreigners staying in Japan, the number was 91744 at the end of 2010 and 88937 at the end of 2012 (Tanada 2015a:15, 2015b:15), but the current estimate of the Muslim population of foreigners staying in Japan at the end of 2016 is 123778, an increase of over 30,000 people. The above is the total number of Muslims with regular status of residence in Japan. The above estimates are based on the population of foreigners with regular status of residence, but Muslims also exist among foreigners whose nationality has been declared as "illegal residents" due to overstaying or other reasons. Similarly, the Muslim population ratios for seven countries, including Malaysia and Singapore, were used to estimate the Muslim population ratios. According to this, the number of undocumented Muslims is 3936 <sup>7</sup>, and together with the undocumented ones mentioned above, the number of foreign Muslims staying in Japan can be estimated to be 127714 as of the end of 2016. Therefore, it is estimated that about 130,000 foreign Muslims are staying in Japan, and a remarkable increase can be observed over the past few years.

As of the end of 2016, the major nationality distribution of foreign Muslims was 33,000 Indonesians, 13,000 Pakistanis, 11,000 Bangladeshis, around 5,000 Malaysians and Turks, 4,000 Iranians, and 6,000 from other Arab countries. It is important to note that foreign Muslims come from more than 100 countries, and that they come from a wide variety of countries. However, the major countries of origin of foreign Muslims have not changed much since 1969, almost 50 years ago, and are mainly from Southeast Asia and South Asia.<sup>8</sup>

#### 4. Estimation of Japanese Muslims based on Statistics of foreign residents in Japan

This chapter discusses the "Japanese Muslims" who can be estimated from the "Statistics on foreign residents" in Japan. The number of Japanese Muslims who are considered to be spouses of foreign Muslims was estimated to be about 9,000 at the end of 2010, but this number has decreased to about 6,000 as of the end of 2016, according to the same statistics.<sup>9</sup> The author believes that this is due to the fact that a certain number of foreign Muslims have changed their status of residence from "Spouse or Child of Japanese National" to "Permanent Resident," and that this does not mean that the number of Japanese Muslims as spouses has decreased. Therefore, in the estimation of this paper, the foreign Muslims with the new status of "permanent resident" are also considered, and the population of Japanese Muslims as spouses is estimated extensively. The number of households and children are also estimated based on the number of Muslims who have the status of "spouse or child of Japanese national" and "permanent resident" (estimated values), using information on families and households obtained from the analysis of naturalization permission holders as described below. It should be noted that the estimates in this paper were made with the aim of obtaining a rough estimate of the size of the "Japanese Muslim" population in Japan, which has not been reported very often in the past.

{Table 2.}

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##### **(1) Estimation using "Spouse or Child of Japanese National"**

First, please refer to Table 2. First, for each of the six major countries, we estimated the number of Muslims aged 25 or older by checking the number of those with the status of "permanent resident" and "spouse or child of Japanese national". The latter status includes spouses and children of Japanese nationals, but those who are 25 years old or older are considered to be "spouses of Japanese nationals" in the estimation. The estimates of the total number of foreign Muslims in Japan are then calculated for

Muslims aged 25 and over who have the status of "permanent resident" and "spouse or child of Japanese national" (the estimates here are based on the percentage of foreign Muslims from six countries in the total number of foreign Muslims). Based on the figures presented, the general situation is as follows: As of the end of 2016, there were approximately 120,000 foreign Muslims living in Japan (not including undocumented immigrants). Of these, about 20,000 are permanent residents (about 14,000 are men), and about 4,000 are Muslim men and women (about 3,000 are men) who have a Japanese spouse and are 25 years of age or older.

The number of foreign Muslims of both sexes aged 25 and over who qualify as "spouses of Japanese nationals" is estimated to be 3,809 as shown in Table 2 (the following estimates are presented in units of thousands). The number of Japanese as spouses was estimated to be about 4,000. They are male and female "Japanese Muslims" who are considered to be in a marital relationship with a foreign Muslim and constitute a household.<sup>10</sup> The total number of these "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple" is estimated to be 4,000.

The number of children in each household is calculated as two children on average, since the average number of children in the households of naturalization permit holders (Muslims) is 1.82, as described below.<sup>11</sup> The total number of children is estimated to be 8,000. They are the children of households in which the father or mother is Japanese and has Japanese nationality. They are so-called "children with foreign connections" and are positioned as the "second generation of immigrants" and the "second generation of Japanese Muslims. "

The number of "Japanese Muslims" that can be estimated from the status of residence of "Spouse or Child of Japanese National" is, first, about 4,000 Japanese adults who are spouses of foreign Muslims. Second, there are 4,000 households newly formed by foreigners and Japanese, and the number of children born to these households is about 8,000.

## **(2) Estimates using "permanent residents"**

Next, as for foreign Muslims of both sexes aged 25 and over who have the status of "permanent resident," an estimate of 19,643 persons was calculated as shown in Table 2. Therefore, we estimate that there are approximately 20,000 Muslim permanent



residents (men and women over 25 years old) living in Japan. Although this is likely to be an overestimation, we assume that all of them are related to each other and constitute a household, and estimate the total number of households to be 20,000. The marital status of these permanent resident households is assumed to be the same as that of the households headed by naturalization permit holders (see below), and we assume that half of the households are composed of foreign couples and half are composed of foreign and Japanese couples. Then, the number of Japanese adults who are spouses of Muslim permanent residents is 10,000. Assuming that the average number of children in each household is two, as in (1) above, there are 20,000 foreign children in the former households and 20,000 Japanese children in the latter households (Kojima 2006:15).<sup>12</sup>

However, the number of Muslim men and women under the age of 25 with permanent resident status is estimated to be about 10,000 as shown in Table 2, and if we consider this number as the number of children in foreign couple households, the number of foreign couple households would be 5,000, half of the above estimate. Therefore, the number of "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple" is also estimated to be 5,000, resulting in 5,000 Japanese adults and 10,000 children born in these households from international marriages. The number of Japanese adults who are spouses of permanent residents is estimated to be 5,000, which is a more reasonable figure.

The number of Japanese Muslims estimated from the above two estimates is, first, 5,000 or 10,000 Japanese adults who are spouses of Muslim permanent residents, and second, 5,000 or 10,000 households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple, and 10,000 or 20,000 children born from these households. The number of children born from these families is 10,000 or 20,000. These children are the so-called "second generation of immigrants" who have "ties to foreign countries" and are positioned as the "second generation of Japanese Muslims."

Considering the above two estimates as the high and low estimates, and the median as the medium estimate, there are 7,500 Japanese Muslim adults who are spouses of permanent residents, 7,500 "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple", and 15,000 Japanese Muslim children born to these households. The number of Japanese Muslim children born to these households is 15,000. The total number of

"Japanese Muslims" is estimated to be as follows, when combined with the estimate using the "Japanese spouses, etc." mentioned above. The number of Japanese adults is 11,500 (12,000 in the following estimation of the total number), the number of "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple" is 11,500, and the number of "children with foreign connections" in these households is 23,000, which is the current estimate.

If we assume that the number of households headed by a foreign couple is also 7,500, which is the mid-range estimate, the total number of households in which a "permanent resident" foreign national is in a marital relationship is 15,000. The total number of households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple, as described in (1) above, is 19,000. This is the total number of "households in which a foreign Muslim is one or both members of the couple" (estimated value).<sup>13</sup>

## 5. Estimation of Japanese Muslims based on the number of naturalization permits

Another category of "Japanese Muslims" is that of foreign Muslims who have become naturalized citizens. Although their original nationality is foreign, they are "Japanese" who have chosen and acquired Japanese nationality, and will be referred to as "Japanese Muslims" in this paper. According to Article 5 of the Nationality Law, the conditions for naturalization are address, ability, conduct, and livelihood, etc. Some of the conditions for naturalization are relaxed for "foreigners who have a special relationship with Japan (those born in Japan, spouses of Japanese nationals, children of Japanese nationals, former Japanese nationals, and certain other persons).<sup>14</sup>

For details of those who have been approved for naturalization, the address, name, and date of birth of those who have been approved for naturalization can be ascertained for each date of the official notification by the Ministry of Justice, which is published in the "Official Gazette" issued by the National Printing Bureau, under the title "To allow naturalization into Japan". However, the number of foreign Muslims naturalized in Japan cannot be estimated from the information of their nationality, because the information of their original nationality is not published in the current "Official Gazette". Therefore, in this paper, we collect and analyze the information of those who have been naturalized as Muslims based on the information on their names.

{Table 3.}

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First, an overview of the changes in the total number of persons granted permission for naturalization is presented in Table 3. According to "Trends in the number of applicants for naturalization permission, persons granted permission for naturalization, and persons denied permission for naturalization" by the Civil Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Justice <sup>15</sup>, the total number of persons granted permission for naturalization up to 2016, including those before April 27, 1952, was 540,400. The total number of persons granted naturalization permits up to 1989 was approximately 200,000, including those granted before 1952. The total number of naturalization permits granted to foreign nationals in the 1990s was 120,000, 150,000 in the 2000s, and 70,000 in the 2010s (until 2016), showing a slight decrease or leveling off trend. The information of their original nationality is not available for the number of naturalization permits granted before April 27, 1952 (333). Of the remaining 546,767, 365,530 (67.7%) are from Korea, 138,580 (25.7%) from China, and 35,957 (6.6%) from other nationalities.

A look at the number of "Other" nationalities, excluding Korea and China, to which most of the foreign Muslim naturalization permits seem to be classified, reveals a rapid increase: from 4969 in the 1990s, to 11368 in the 2000s, and in the 2010s (until the end of 2016), the number has already reached 10321.

### **(1) Total number of foreign Muslims naturalized in Japan**

In this paper, we used the "Internet version of the Official Gazette" ("Official Gazette Information Retrieval Service") to identify persons with naturalization permission who are considered to be Muslims, based on their names.<sup>16</sup> The names were searched and collected by proper names, such as "Muhammad," which is the name of a typical Muslim prophet.<sup>17</sup> However, since the pronunciation of the Prophet's name differs from region to region, there are many differences in the way the names of those who

have been granted naturalization in Japanese are given. For example, "Muhammad", "Muhamad", "Muhamed", "Mohamed", "Mohanmad", "Mohammed" and "Mahomet" etc. were identified. Other representative names such as "Hussein," "Hassan," and "Ahmad" are equally diverse, and we carefully searched for as many representative names as possible. Note that Muslim names in Chinese characters were excluded.

However, since the primary purpose of this paper is not to ascertain the number of Muslims who have been granted naturalization, it does not take the method of checking all the notices concerning naturalization (the number of notices since 1947 is more than 30,000). Therefore, there is still a possibility that there are Muslim naturalization applicants who cannot be captured by the limited search for Muslims by proper names (i.e., "search by Muslim name") that the author has adopted (i.e., there may be omissions due to visual confirmation).<sup>18</sup> Therefore, for the first six months of 2017, when the "search by Muslim name" was terminated, we checked all issues of the "Official Gazette" in which notices of naturalization permits were published, and found that about 8% of them had not been captured. As discussed below, the estimate of the total number of naturalization permits reflects this error.

{Table 4.}

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Now, we have captured the number of foreign Muslims with naturalization permits by the "Search by Muslim Name" method described above, and found that from 1958 to June 2017, the number of foreigners with naturalization permits was 2,112. The number of foreigners who were granted naturalization permits from 1958 to June 2017 was 2112. Looking at the number of people by era in Table 4, it can be seen that the number of people in the period 1958-1989 was 34, in the 1990s it was 113, in the 2000s it was 673, and in the 2010s (through June 2017) it was 1,292, indicating a considerable increase in the number of people. In the 2010s, an average of about 170 people were granted naturalization each year. Considering the possibility of omissions

as described above, we can estimate the number of Muslims granted naturalization in the 1990s to be 120, in the 2000s to be 730, and in the 2010s to be 1400. Therefore, in this paper, the total number of Muslims with naturalization permits (estimated value) is assumed to be in the range of 2,200 to 2,300.

Although the Official Gazette Information Retrieval Service does not provide information on the nationality of origin of recent naturalized citizens, Lee Soo-jin, who has published an article on Korean-Japanese, obtained data from the Civil Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Justice and published data on the nationality of origin since 2002 (Lee 2016:114). Referring to this data, Table 5 summarizes the number of Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals. In both countries, the percentage of Muslims in the total population is around 90%, and it is highly likely that nearly 90% of the numbers presented here are Muslims. In 2013, for example, it is estimated that 80 to 90% of the Muslims naturalized in Japan were originally from Pakistan and Bangladesh. The same trend can be observed in 2010 and 2012, suggesting that a significant portion of the Muslims who naturalized in Japan in the 2010s were from both countries.

Next, using the addresses of Muslims with naturalization permits, we check the distribution by region, as shown in Table 6. An earlier study of the distribution of residence as of the end of 2012 for the six major countries of foreign Muslim origin showed that three-quarters lived in and around the three largest metropolitan areas (Tanada 2015a:19-20). The total of those with naturalization permits, which includes all Muslims of foreign nationality, is 70% distributed in the seven prefectures of the Kanto region, including Yamanashi Prefecture, and when the Kansai and Chukyo regions are added, the total is over 80%. In any case, the distribution of the number of naturalization permits by place of residence seems to follow the same trend as that of foreign Muslims as a whole.

{Table 5.6. }

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## (2) Age structure and households of naturalized Muslims in Japan

The number of persons who have been granted naturalization permits that the author was able to ascertain through a "search by Muslim name" is 2112. Looking at the ages of all of them as of the end of 2017, two were born in the Meiji era and four in the Taisho era. The former two are currently over 105 years old and were not included in the following analysis. After adjusting the total number of naturalization permits to 2110, the age distribution ranges from 97 years old (one person), the oldest, to 1 year old (six persons), the youngest.

{Table 7.}

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By age group (Table 7.), the elderly (65 years and older) and those in their early 60s (up to 64 years old), including those born before 1952 (1952), accounted for about 3% each. Those in their 50s (21%), 40s (24%), 30s (19%), late 20s (3%) , and early 20s (4%) were next, followed by number of those in their 50s (433), 40s (497), 30s (408), late 20s (68), and early 20s (80), respectively. Those under 20 years of age, 486 or 23% of the total, were born in 1998 or later, and many of them, including those in their early 20s, are considered to be the so-called "second generation of immigrants" or later.

Although the situation as of the date of the notification on naturalization, it is possible to guess to some extent about the family households of those who have been granted naturalization. If two or more persons with the same address who were granted naturalization on the same date are considered to constitute a household, we can estimate the marital status (i.e., whether the spouse is Japanese or foreign) and the age and number of children at the time of granting naturalization, taking into account the age based on the date of birth. Since births and deaths after the naturalization permit cannot be ascertained, 168 households can be assumed to be "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple and their children" as of the date of the naturalization permit notification, and 167 households are "households consisting of a foreigner couple (and their children)"<sup>19</sup> . The number of persons

belonging to the latter category is 649, and the average number of household members is 3.89. The number of persons belonging to the former "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple and their children" is 462, but adding 168 Japanese spouses, who are not explicitly mentioned in the notice, the number becomes 630, and the average number of household members is 3.75. The total number of households with both household above is 335, with a total of 1,279 members (including the Japanese spouse), for an average household size of 3.82 persons.<sup>20</sup>

The total number of naturalization permit holders who constitute these two households is 1111 (= 649 + 462), which means that the another total number of naturalization permit holders listed in the "Official Gazette" is 999. However, not all of them may be single-person households, and those in a certain age group are likely to have a foreign or Japanese spouse. If we assume that naturalization permit holders aged 25 or older (73% of the total) constitute households with spouses, there are approximately 730 households. Although we have no information on their household status, if we assume that the situation is similar to the above-mentioned situation of households with two or more persons, i.e., half of the households are headed by a foreign couple and half by a Japanese spouse, approximately 365 persons are likely to have a Japanese spouse. Therefore, we estimate that there are 365 Japanese Muslims who are spouses of naturalized foreign Muslims in Japan.

### **(3) Japanese Muslims estimated from those who have naturalization permission to become Muslims**

The overall picture obtained from the above estimates of Muslims who have been naturalized is as follows. The total number of naturalized foreign Muslims estimated from the "Muslim Name Search" is between 2,200 and 2,300, all of whom are "Japanese Muslims". All of them are "Japanese Muslims" and some of them are accompanied by Japanese spouses. The first is a Japanese Muslim as a spouse who belongs to a "household consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple and their children". The number was 168. Second, among those with marital relations estimated from the number of single naturalization permits, about 365 are estimated to have a Japanese spouse (Muslim). The first and second estimates above together indicate that about 500 are Japanese Muslims who are married to a Muslim of naturalization

permit holder, and together with the total number of naturalized persons mentioned above, 2,700-2,800 are estimated to be "Japanese Muslims". This is an estimate of the number of "Japanese Muslims" (as of the end of June 2017), based on the number of Muslims who have naturalized. In calculating the total number of "Japanese Muslims" as described below, the above estimate is set at 3,000.

## 6. Japanese Muslims who joined the faith

The first Japanese to become a Muslim is said to be Shotaro Noda, who became a Muslim in 1891 (Misawa et.al., 2007). Other early converts include Torajiro Yamada, who was active in Turkey, Bunpachiro Ariga, who is said to have joined the faith in Bombay, and Mitsutaro Yamaoka, who made the first Japanese pilgrimage to Mecca in 1909 (Komura 1988:47-52). Later, there were some Japanese who joined the faith on their own and others who converted as part of the Islamic policy as national policy during the wartime period from 1931 to 1945, but the total number of all "Japanese Muslims" was probably less than 100. The Japan Muslim Association, established by Japanese Muslims in 1953 after the end of the war, had 47 members at the time of its founding (Japan Muslim Association 2004:3).

The number of Japanese who joined the faith after the war increased, albeit gradually, with the "missionary" activities of the Tablighi Jama'at (the International Islamic Reform and Revival Movement and its missionary organization), which came from Pakistan in 1956, and the dispatch of students to universities in the Arab world by the Japan Muslim Association, which began in 1957. The number of foreign students to the Arab world increased, albeit gradually. By the beginning of 2000, the number of foreign students to the Arab world was about 70, who became Muslims and studied abroad. As information on the postwar Japanese Muslim population, a 1969 article in the Journal of the Japan Muslim Association states that "the number of Japanese Muslims is about 2,000" (Higuchi 2010:119). In order to confirm the current situation, I asked a board member of the Japan Muslim Association, who told me that as of July 2017, there are approximately 250 member households of the Japan Muslim Association, which means that the number of Japanese Muslims, including their families, is approximately 500.<sup>21</sup> In order to confirm information on the number of members before that time, the number of notices sent out for the general meetings of



the association, which are listed in each issue of the Journal of the Japan Muslim Association, shows 108 in 1991 and 110 in 1993, which may be the number of members (households) at that time. The "Report on the Regular General Meeting" of June 1999 reported that the number of regular members was 151. Some of the association's officers have said that they have the impression that the number of Japanese members has been increasing in recent years, but they do not know for sure. The following is a report on the number of new members in recent years from the association's magazine: 16 from April 2013 to March 2014, and 9 from April 2015 to April 2016, which is about 10 new members per year.

Based on the above information obtained from the Japan Muslim Association(JMA), we can attempt to estimate the Muslim population. Based on the current number of member households (250) and assuming an average of two children per household, it is possible to estimate a Muslim population of up to 1,000 people, including families. In addition, it is possible that there are new members as reported in the JMA magazine, and that there are Muslims who have previously joined but have not joined the JMA, but it is impossible to know the number of these. Here, we will simply multiply the 500 members of the Japan Muslim Association and the estimated 1,000 by two, and consider 1,000 to 2,000 as the number of Japanese Muslims who have joined the association and their families (In the following estimation of the total number, the number is set at 2,000). Although it cannot be denied that some Japanese Muslims who are married to foreign Muslims, as estimated in the previous sections, are members of the Japan Muslim Association, in principle they are excluded from this estimation.

## 7. Conclusion

This paper has shown that the Muslims living in Japan are composed of foreign Muslims living in Japan and a variety of "Japanese Muslims". There are Japanese Muslims who joined the faith on their own, Japanese Muslims who joined the faith by marriage to a foreign Muslim, and Japanese Muslims who naturalized from foreign citizenship (they are "Japanese Muslims with foreign connections"). Among children and young Muslims, there are naturalized Japanese Muslims who have "ties to a foreign country," Japanese Muslims who are "Born Muslims" from Japanese Muslim

married couples, and Japanese Muslims who are "Born Muslims" from "households consisting of a foreigner and a Japanese couple" ("Japanese Muslims who have ties to a foreign country"). Some of them are "second-generation immigrants" (Japanese Muslims with "ties to a foreign country"). Among them, there are also "second (possibly third) generation immigrants" and "second generation Japanese Muslims".<sup>22</sup>

To summarize the population, according to an estimate based on the "Statistics on Foreign Residents" in Japan, there are 12,000 Japanese who became Muslims by marriage, and 23,000 children and young Muslims. In addition, there are 3,000 naturalized Muslims (including Japanese by marriage) and 2,000 Muslims who have joined the faith on their own. The number of children and young people, including children of naturalized Muslims and Muslims who have joined the faith themselves, is estimated to be over 25,000, and the second and younger generations are thought to comprise more than half of the "Japanese Muslims".

However, even if the estimate of about 40,000 is close to the "actual" number, it should be noted that this paper does not ask about the nature of their religious practices or statements of faith. It would be more accurate to say that there are 40,000 people whom I categorize as "Muslims" and whom I identify as "Muslims," regardless of whether they themselves self-identify as Muslims or not. This does not mean that there are 40,000 people who actively identify themselves as "Muslim" (Kawakami 2016). Those who joined the faith through marriage, those who were born to Muslim parents as "Born Muslims," and those who joined the faith on their own are certainly considered "Muslims" according to the principles of Islamic law, but the way they practice their faith and deal with Islam varies widely. For example, even those who do not practice prayer or fasting are considered "Muslims". Therefore, it should be noted that the Japanese Muslims who pray in mosques and those who are introduced in books, the media, and on the Internet do not represent the totality of "Japanese Muslims". In particular, I would like to add the following about Japanese Muslims who are children and young people. There are young "Born Muslims" whose parents are Muslim but who profess, "I am not a Muslim". Islam is a religion in which the individual confronts God directly, and the faith of the parents and the faith of the children are two different things, and it is up to the children to decide how to deal with Islam.<sup>23</sup>

When naturalized Muslims or Japanese Muslims with "foreign connections" in Japan are referred to as "Pakistani Japanese Muslims," for example, they have a layered religious identity in addition to their ethnic origin and civic nationality. There is no doubt that "Expatriate Japanese Muslims" who have such a complex identity structure, account for more than half of the estimated "Japanese Muslims" (Sasaki 2016). How do they perceive and reconcile "being Japanese" and "being Muslim," or "Japaneseness" and "Muslimness," and "having ties to a foreign country"? If we consider the future of "Islam in Japan" from the perspective of "Japanese Muslims," we must consider, in particular, how children and young people, the majority of whom have "ties to foreign countries," will build a relationship with Islam in Japanese society, and how they will reconcile "being Japanese" and "being Muslim". How do they reconcile their "Japaneseness" with their "Muslimness" in Japanese society?

Considering that "Japanese Muslims" will play a role in the future formation of "Islam in Japan," the next task is to discuss what "Islam in Japan" or "Japanese Islam" is, as well as the social activities of "Japanese Muslims" and the diverse identities of "Japanese Muslims".

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{Appended Table }

Note: For the tables, no English translations have been made. We apologize for the inconvenience, but we ask that you refer to the tables listed in the original Japanese paper. <https://www.imemgs.com/muslim-research/504/>

Footnote:

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<sup>1</sup> Naturalized Japanese citizens, children born from international marriages, etc. There are also expressions such as "having roots in a foreign country" and "connected to a foreign country" (Aramaki 2017: 17). Since there are differences in the implication of depending on the expression, we use the more objective expressions here.

<sup>2</sup> According to Article 2 of the Nationality Law enacted in 1985, a child whose father or mother is Japanese becomes a Japanese citizen.

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- <sup>3</sup> The term "immigrants" here refers to those who are residing in Japan with regular status of residence.
- <sup>4</sup> In some cases, they were born abroad or educated abroad, so to speak, and were born and raised as Japanese.
- <sup>5</sup> On Friday in April 1922, a "ceremony" (group worship) was held in Ushigome, Tokyo, where about 100 Tatars gathered.
- <sup>6</sup> For specific calculation methods, see the following. My article 2013, "Muslim Population in the World and Japan 2011," *Journal of Human Sciences* 26(1):29-39.
- <sup>7</sup> A table of the foreign Muslim population classified as "undocumented" is provided at the end of this report.
- <sup>8</sup> The estimated Muslim population includes all sects, including Sunni and Shi'a. It also includes adherents of the heretical Ahmadiyya sect. For more information on the Ahmadiyya, see the following paper. Minezaki, Hiroko 2013, "Believers in Diaspora: Identity in Global Situations among Ahmadiyya Muslims in Japan," *Cultural Anthropology*(in Japanese), 78(2), Supplement: 204-224.
- <sup>9</sup> In this section, the number of Japanese Muslims as spouses is estimated according to the estimates at the end of 2010, using the percentage of adult Muslims (20 years old or older) based on the estimates in Table 1. In the analysis in the main text below, the estimates are based on the age group 25 years and older.
- <sup>10</sup> There is an Islamic norm that Muslim men can marry Christian and Jewish women, but Muslim women can only marry Muslim men. In this paper, all spouses are assumed to be Muslim.
- <sup>11</sup> Shuko Takeshita and Kazumasa Hanaoka 2011, "Fertility Trends of Muslim Families in Japan," *Bulletin of Shigakuan University*(in Japanese), 45:15-26. The above paper is a study using individual census data. The average number of children born to Muslim families, whose wives are under 40 years old, is about one.
- <sup>12</sup> According to Kojima, referring the 2000 census, 80% of Pakistani and Iranian spouses are Japanese, 50% of Bangladeshis, and 40% of Indonesians and Malaysians, respectively.
- <sup>13</sup> According to Takeshita and Hanaoka (see above), the total number of "general households where one or both spouses are from Islamic countries and the wife is under 40 years old" is 10267 (2005 Census). The foreign Muslim population as of 2005 was 44,740 according to Takeshita et al. In view of these figures, the estimate of 19,000 households in this paper is consistent to a certain extent.
- <sup>14</sup> For an overview of naturalization permits, see the following paper. Akihiro Asakawa, "An Overview of Postwar Naturalization Permit Holders: An Analysis of Official Gazette Notices of Naturalization Permits"(in Japanese), (Asakawa 2003, Chapter 1).
- <sup>15</sup> Ministry of Justice website ([www.moj.go.jp/content/00180510.pdf](http://www.moj.go.jp/content/00180510.pdf), retrieved on June 10, 2017)
- <sup>16</sup> This is a membership fee-based service that allows users to search and browse the contents of the Official Gazette from May 3, 1947 to the most recent date by specifying the date and keywords. Although the personal information collected is publicly available, this report does not include any details of such information.
- <sup>17</sup> Muhammad is a typical male name, and Yasushi Kosugi says that one out of every six men in the phone book of the Cairo metropolitan area in Egypt corresponds to Muhammad. He also introduces an Egyptian saying that "half of the men are Muhammads" in the rural areas. Yasushi Kosugi et al., *Islam as a Way of Life*, (in Japanese), 2017, NHK Publishing, pp. 62-63. Although there is no information on gender in the official gazetteer, some Muslim names can be identified as female, but gender was not included in this analysis.
- <sup>18</sup> Other errors such as oversight, misidentification, and misreading are also possible, but they are not reflected here as errors in the estimation. In this sense, it is difficult to say that the extraction is close to perfect.
- <sup>19</sup> There are two types of households: those consisting only of a married couple and those including children.
- <sup>20</sup> The data are for households from the late 1980s to the 2010s, and are an aggregate analysis based on households at different points in time over a period of almost 30 years.
- <sup>21</sup> Interview with several officers at the office of the Japan Muslim Association (July 6, 2017).
- <sup>22</sup> It should also be noted that Muslims in Japan are not a monolithic group, but a "multi-ethnic" group of

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believers, consisting of Muslims from more than 100 different countries, multinational, multilingual, and of many different denominations, including Sunni and Shiite.

<sup>23</sup> Research in Western societies where Muslims are a minority indicates that 60% of Muslims are cultural or sociological Muslims, those who value "Islam as culture". They identify themselves as Muslims, but are not concerned about their religious practice. Another 20% are Muslims who belong to Islamic organizations and attend mosques, and another 20% have no affiliation with mosques or Islamic organizations, but are deeply religious and are committed to practicing their religion in the private sphere, such as in their families. The categorization of Muslims in Western societies as "Possible Muslims" and "Actual Muslims," "Visible Muslims" and "Invisible Muslims," etc., also reflects the diversity of Muslims (Sakaranaho 2006: 208-213, Nielsen et.al., eds, 2009 : 127-128, Jeldtoft & Nielsen 2012: 1-8).

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