

FIRST NATIONAL MEETING OF MASJID REPRESENTATIVES IN JAPAN

The Laboratory on Asian Societies, Faculty of Human Sciences, Waseda University sponsored and held the First Preparatory Meeting of Representatives of Masjids in Japan, "Muslim Communities in Japan," on February 11, 2009, at Waseda University in Tokyo. The program of the meeting was as follows:

Program

Venue: Okuma Memorial Tower, Room #302
Chair: Hiroshi Kojima, Faculty of Social Sciences, Waseda University

Opening Remarks

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

Short Speeches by Masjid Representatives

Otsuka Mosque
Kanagawa
Islamic Center Japan
Islamic Circle of Japan
Nagoya Mosque
Gifu Fatih Mosque
Niihama Masjid
Toda Mosque

Lecture

"The Situation of Japanese Muslims"
Mr. Mimasaka Higuchi
Former President of the Japan Muslim Association

Roundtable Discussion

"The Future of Muslim Communities in Japan"
Discussion among Masjid Representatives
Questions and Comments from the Audience

Closing Remarks

Hirofumi Tanada

Comments

Exactly one hundred years ago, in February 1909, Shigenobu Okuma, the founder of Waseda University, held a talk with Abdurreshid Ibrahim, a famous Tatar Muslim who was later to become the Imam of Tokyo Kaikyo Reihaido (Tokyo Mosque), opened in 1938. A century later, we held this meeting, "Muslim Communities in Japan," at Waseda University.

At present in Japan, about fifty masjids have been established, and according to our estimates, approximately 100,000 foreign-born Muslims and 10,000 Japanese Muslims are living in Japan. For this meeting, eleven representatives of masjids were invited to discuss their present activities and the future of Muslim communities in Japan. We provided a room for prayer and wuduh. Halal cookies made in Japan were served to all participants' as refreshments. The total number of participants was about fifty-five.

In the first session, each representative made a short speech about their masjid's activities, and difficult problems they face such as education for Muslim children, the lack of graveyards, and communication with Japanese communities. Thereafter, Mr. Higuchi, former president of the Japan Muslim Association, gave us a short speech about the current status of ethnic Japanese Muslims.

In the second session, the representatives spoke together about the second or third generations of Muslims living in Japan, the importance of Masjid networking for the future, and the formation of positive relations with local Japanese communities. Finally, they also discussed the role of Japanese Muslims in shaping the future Muslim communities in Japan.

This was the first meeting of the representatives of masjids in Japan ever to be held. However, the meeting was a great success with the active participation of the representatives. They had a lively discussion about Muslim communities and established new personal network as a result of the meeting.

We are planning to hold a second meeting in the near future and we hope to invite many representatives of masjids from Hokkaido to Kyushu for more fruitful discussions in order to expand the infrastructure for Muslim communities in the future Japan.

Media Note

The only media coverage seems to have come from UrduNet, an online news agency of Pakistan. Their report is in Urdu language only, but many photos of the event have been posted.

<http://www.urdunetpodcast.com/urdu/showNews.php?newstime=1234388151>