

## **Multicultural Symbiosis Through the Eyes of Islam**

### 1. Motivation behind Research Paper

What are the first things that you think of when you hear the phrase, “multicultural symbiosis”? Does your mind go to race, birthplace, or language? Personally, I think that religion is one of the most important things to think about when I hear his phrase. For my global exploration project, I decided to investigate multicultural symbiosis through the lens of tourism specific to Islamic culture in Nara prefecture. What are the things that people associate upon hearing the word Islam? Unfortunately, there are many people who think of terrorism, radical protests, and disputes. Honestly, when I heard the phrase for the first time, I also thought of violent and negative images. However, after doing research on the topic, I learned that Islam is based on religious precepts to help those in need. As a result, I decided to join the seminar called, “Power Created by the Global Community” because I wanted to know more about other cultures, and create a stronger sense of multicultural symbiosis in Nara prefecture. This essay aims to connect and understand how Japan views multiculturalism and the Islamic religion.

### 2. Introduction

Through my research, I decided that the most important goal would be to try and connect and understand multiculturalism symbiosis more deeply. By making a tourism map for Muslim people, Japanese people can learn more About Islamic

culture. From there, my group and I hope that an informative map would help inspire Japanese people to study about other cultures too. According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the number of foreign tourists accepted in Japan before the spread of Covid-19 was 31.18 million people. This rank was twelfth in the world. I think that this result is good but at the same time, I think that Japan is still lacking consideration and understanding of the culture of tourists. My group and I collected information from the Internet. We also researched shops providing only Halal food. Halal food means the food which was determined to be okay by Islamic holy books. There are many foods that have been banned by these texts, such as pork and alcohol. Next, we also did research on Islamic prayer rooms.

### 3. Results and Analysis

After creating the cultural map, it could not be put in stores without first being checked. We were able to make appointments with one store and hotel with a person who works at the Nara Tourism division that had been put on the map to have it checked. The store and hotel generously suggested some improvements to make our cultural maps more attractive and effective for tourists. For example, there are many unused blank spaces on the map where we could insert easier to understand icons and include QR codes. There are also some shops which provide non-Halal food as well as Halal food without getting the necessary Halal Certification. It turned out that this might become a serious problem if we were to publish the map including these uncertified stores. Improvements to the map will be made based on this feedback. Through this experience, my group and I realized that it is dangerous for us to accept information without questioning its validity. Thinking about one thing

from different points of view is very important. The effect of spreading the cultural map around Nara prefecture means that not only can Muslims go sightseeing more comfortably, but it will also become a bridge for people who are either learning about Islam for the first time or are interested in Halal food.

#### 4. Conclusion and Future Problems

The effect of the map serves two purposes: first, it can help Muslims tour Japan more easily and comfortably. Second, it will function like a bridge for people who are interested in Halal food and help them know more about Islam for the first time. I would like to put up these maps at airports or train stations which are connected to Nara because if tourists can access them before coming to Nara prefecture, they can go to the store and sightseeing spots without hesitation. There are two problems. First, if people stop making an effort, only through our group trial, the effect of the map will not spread. That is why tourists cannot go sightseeing comfortably and many people lose the chance to know about other cultures or other people's thinking. Second, though we put in so much effort to spread the map, there is a limit for students. We need help from enterprises, the prefecture, and so on in order for this plan to be successful.

#### 5. Reflection

Through this research, I learned that even if I wanted to take action and positively impact the community, I cannot do anything without knowledge. It is important for people to understand each other to become aware of new sides of thinking styles and values. I think that multicultural symbiosis needs to be achieved in order to become more united globally. If we keep taking actions without

considering others' values, it will not spread to other people and it will always end up on a small scale. Rather than being passive, it is important to take a step forward and act on your own initiative.

#### 6. Work Cited

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