

To Realize Multicultural Conviviality in Nara

1. Motivation behind Research Paper

Foreign people living in Japan need food as a minimum. Now that one in four of the world's population is Muslim, making it the second largest group after Christians, there are probably more than a few Muslims who have difficulty finding a restaurant in Japan where they can eat in peace, as there is no food on the menu for them due to their religious affiliation. When I visited Beppu City on a study tour, I learned that there is a Halal Map, a map that lists restaurants that carry halal food for Muslims. Halal food is considered acceptable for Muslim to eat according to Islamic teachings. When we checked to see if such a map exists in Nara Prefecture, there was no map or information available that we could actually pick up and check quickly. With such a map, Muslims would be able to enjoy Nara with more peace of mind.

2. Introduction

The aim is to enable Muslims in Nara Prefecture to enjoy Nara in a safe and comfortable environment and to promote multicultural coexistence in Nara. The research group looked into various restaurants and places of worship that serve Halal food and improved the map created. Research was also done into the current situation and problems of Islam and Halal food. Information was gathered through primary sources such as people from the Nara Prefecture Sarusawa Inn Foreign

Tourist Exchange Center and PY Halal Kitchen, the only restaurant in Nara Prefecture that serves halal food.

3. Results and Analysis

The halal map we created is folded in three, and when opened, it shows a map of the area around Kintetsu and JR Nara Stations. This map was hand-drawn, as we could not use Google Maps or other maps due to copyright issues. The map is numbered in three colors: red, yellow, and green. Red indicates stores that sell halal food, yellow indicates famous tourist spots around Kintetsu/JR Nara Station, and green indicates facilities that have space for worship. Halal food stores in red are listed with permission from Halal Gourmet Japan, a website that lists restaurants that serve halal food. In making our own appointments, we found that the information on that site was outdated, as the stores themselves did not know "halal" and were not aware that they were handling halal food, and some stores had already closed, so our pamphlet provided new information. On the back cover, we described how we created this map and our thoughts on the map. The information on stores and facilities and our thoughts on the map are written in English, but we are planning to make the map in Chinese, Korean, and other languages in the future.

The Sarusawa Inn staff informed us about the current situation and problems of Muslims. The Foreign Visitors Exchange Center is equipped with a prayer's room. The prayer's room is a place to pray. It can be used by people of any religion, but it is mainly designed for Muslims, who are required to pray five times a day. Many people who use the prayer room are Indonesian and Malaysian. They have few restaurants that can introduce Muslim-friendly menus to such people who are strict in their faith.

PY Halal Kitchen is the only restaurant in Nara Prefecture that serves halal food. Here, we learned that halal food is more strict than we thought. Halal certification is required to publicize that you are dealing with halal food. Halal certification means that the Halal certification organization audits that the target products and services are produced and provided in accordance with Islamic law, and recognizes that they meet certain standards. This Halal certification is not given to stores that deal in non-halal food. Therefore, we found that if we were to make our own judgment and publish the name of the restaurant, it could become an international problem. Based on this, we improved the map to make it more user-friendly and safer for Muslims.

4. Conclusion and Future Problems

The benefit from this map is that even in environments without Wi-Fi, visitors can sightsee with a paper map and use it even if they are not good at handling digital media. It also provides a memorable experience, as the pamphlet can be taken home as a souvenir or gift. I believe that multicultural coexistence in Nara Prefecture can be achieved by disseminating information about local halal restaurants and having Muslims in Nara use it as a tool to eliminate religious and cultural barriers and to encourage more people to love Nara Prefecture.

Listening to the people from Sarusawa Inn and PY Halal Kitchen, I realized that no matter how much time and effort we put into making a halal map, if the viewpoints of those who make it and those who use it are not the same, it will end up being useless. I would like to rethink how Nara is responding to Muslims and how this map can be used to attract more people's attention. In addition, since the information on this map is new and we have been able to check for ourselves

whether the information is actually correct or not, we would also like to think about how to constantly update it with new information.

5. Reflection

Before creating the Halal Map, I did not know much about Islam and thought it was something that did not concern me much. I also thought that halal food was just about not eating pork or drinking alcohol, so I did not really understand the hardships faced by Muslims and foreigners who come to Japan. However, by making this map and learning about the current situation, I realized that Muslims are very close to me. Today in Japan, foreign people come from many different countries. Despite this, I learned that Japan still lacks consideration for religions. Therefore, we would like to understand and accept people of various backgrounds, not only Muslims but other religions as well. I would also like to continue to learn about halal and other religious matters, as well as the cultures of various countries, and to communicate this information to the people around me. By doing so, I believe that we can realize multicultural conviviality.

6. Work Cited

Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. "Toward the Promotion of Multicultural Conviviality in Local Communities." Report of the Workshop on the Promotion of Multicultural Conviviality. 2006. Print.

https://www.soumu.go.jp/kokusai/pdf/sonota_b5.pdf

Tokyo Metropolitan Government Bureau of Industrial and Labor Affairs. "World Muslim Population Distribution." Muslims Omotenashi Handbook. ed. NPO Japan Halal Association. 2021. Print.

https://www.sangyo-rodo.metro.tokyo.lg.jp/tourism/muslims_omotenashi_2021.pdf