

# Among Schoolchildren, or Islam Outreach in Japan

In Japan, concerned about “anti-Muslim hostility,” some teachers have had the bright idea of having their pupils “learn about Islam” by visiting the main mosque in Tokyo. Of course, they must have thought, what better way to have their students get an “unbiased glimpse of Islam” than to visit a mosque, where Muslims welcome their guests, telling these curious and credulous schoolchildren how wonderful Islam is, and what a peaceful faith it is, and how it teaches the equality of all people, and how it has been so badly misunderstood because of the actions of a few people, especially in the so-called “Islamic” State, whose fighters only “claim” to be Muslim, or are described as having, almost incidentally, “Muslim backgrounds,” and then the mosque members allow those young visitors to watch as they prostrate themselves in prayer. It’s apparently been a stirring lesson for these students, with fears of Islam dispelled as words incomprehensible to them are recited, and zebibahs silently thicken, and then the students go home, satisfied that they have learned all they need to know about much-maligned Islam, and a good time, by Allah, has been had by all.

The dismal tale of this terminal naivete, exhibited by teachers as well as students, is told enthusiastically in the report below; I have included a running commentary, bold within brackets.

“Schools take in Tokyo mosque to get unbiased glimpse of Islam,” by Magdalena Osumi, [Japan Times](#), June 3, 2016:

*A recent wave of terror has fueled anti-Muslim hostility worldwide, fostering a negative image of Islam – a faith still unfamiliar in Japan.*

Is it only “a recent wave of terror,” or a continuous decuman of terror since 9/11 that has “fostered a negative image of Islam”?

*But Japan’s youth have been seeking answers to questions including what Islam really teaches and why it is blamed for violence.*

Implicit is the assumption that “what Islam really teaches” must be different from what all that violence by Muslims suggests it teaches.

*Many schools have introduced visits to Tokyo’s largest mosque in the belief that the cultural experience will provide students with a tangible, unbiased grasp of Islam. The visits already have proved effective.*

The repetition of the epithet “unbiased” – “unbiased glimpse,” “unbiased grasp” – reminds us that we, non-Muslims, are all sunk in a media-induced miasma of islamophobic misunderstanding, which these mosque visits are intended to dispel.

Might there be a better way for students to acquire an “unbiased grasp of Islam” than to visit a mosque? How about having those students instead read, with a commentary, much of the Qur’an, including the “Jihad verses,” and some of the “authoritative” Hadith, to begin to understand Islam? Or why not have them discover what the articulate defectors from the Army of Islam – e.g., Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Wafa Sultan, Ibn Warraq, Nonie Darwish, Magdi Allam – have had to report about Islam? Or find out what is written in Saudi textbooks, or what the Grand Sheikh of Al-Azhar says about anti-Jewish verses in the Qur’an, or what leading clerics routinely preach about Jihad and Infidels in their Friday sermons?

*Shunya Senaga, 17, called the opportunity to watch Muslims*

*pray a “precious experience,” adding it made him understand how important Allah is to their culture.*

Do you think that Shunya Senaga knows the contents of those prayers, and what, through the medium of his messenger Muhammad, Allah instructed Muslims to do to Infidels? Do you think even one of those many Jihad verses in the Qur’an – e.g., where Allah instructs Muslims at 2.191: “*And kill them [Infidels] wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out. And Al-Fitnah [disbelief or unrest] is worse than killing...*” – was revealed to innocent Shunya Senaga by his Muslim hosts?

*Senaga said he knows one Muslim, but only on a greeting basis.*

*“That person is so accustomed to Japanese culture that I didn’t think of differences between us,” he said.*

*Although basic knowledge...*

Knowledge of the Qur’an? Of the Hadith? Of Muhammad’s biography, one that includes little Aisha, Asma bint Marwan, Abu Afak, the Khaybar Oasis, the Battle of the Trench? Or is this knowledge of the feelgood variety, where Islam is “one of the three abrahamic faiths” and the “fastest growing religion in the world” (a testament, presumably, to its sheer attractiveness).

*...of Islam is part of the school’s curriculum, he said, news reports concerning issues involving the Islamic State group and the impact it’s had “make us perceive Islamic culture negatively.”*

He says this as if it is unfair to “perceive” (i.e., judge) Islam on the basis of what Muslims in the Islamic State do, even if they say they are only following the Qur’an and

Sunnah, and adduce apposite quotes to prove their point.

*Senaga was one of 360 students from public Omiya Kita High School in Omiya, Saitama Prefecture, who in late April visited Japan's largest mosque – the Tokyo Camii & Turkish Culture Center in Shibuya Ward.*

*“All the news about IS jumps into your subconscious, but apparently Muslims are really good people. Only some are acting against their values,” said Senaga's 16-year-old classmate Naoto Takaku.*

“Apparently Muslims are really good people” is the conclusion arrived at by this sixteen-year-old on the basis of this one visit to a mosque, where accommodating Muslims did their level best to put on a show for the visiting schoolchildren.

*The visit to the mosque came ahead of a trip this fall to Singapore and Malaysia, where they plan to spend a day observing Muslim families in rural Malaysia.*

*“In a place like this they can get a glimpse into the Islamic world and see what kind of religion Islam is,” teacher Akiko Kobayashi, who will be in charge of the trip, told The Japan Times.*

*“I want students to see how people in Islamic communities co-exist, support each other, and show them their everyday life to help them understand it's a religion advocating for peace,”...*

That is, the “peace” that is attainable once the Kuffar are subjugated and Islam everywhere dominates.

*...she said. “I want them to get rid of biases.”*

That is, teach them to ignore anything negative reported about Islam.

*For nearly all of the students it was their first close...*

That is, superficial.

*...encounter with Islam.*

That is, with one of the required daily prayers, an outward and visible sign of Islam.

*Before stepping into the mosque, some were hastily taking off their shoes, while female students, with apparent excitement on their faces, took snapshots with their heads covered.*

What Halloweenish fun for Japanese schoolgirls, to play “let’s pretend” using their scarves as hijabs, especially when they are unaware that Muslim men *require* Muslim women and girls to cover themselves, and have no idea *why* the men do this.

*“I believe school education is one of the best ways Japanese can get more familiar with Islam ... and all teachers who bring their students here are more than welcome,” the mosque’s spokesman, Shigeru Shimoyama, said.*

*Shimoyama, a Muslim convert who served as their guide that day, believes young people need more exposure to religion at an early age so they can deepen their understanding about religious facts.*

*He invites students to learn about the religion’s values, including that in the eyes of Allah, all people are equal,...*

Did any of the teachers involved in this ongoing farce think to find out something about Islam, for the sake of their students, or were they content to collaborate with the earnest mosque spokesman Mr. Shimoyama? “All people are equal” is hard to reconcile with the Quranic passages telling Muslims that they are “the best of peoples” and non-Muslims the “vilest of

creatures,” or the dozens of verses that dilate at length upon the awfulness of those non-Muslims and the right of Muslims to subjugate them

*...about the achievements of Islamic civilizations,...*

What do you imagine those “achievements” might be? Most likely the usual list – paper-making (which came from China), algebra (from Sanskrit mathematicians), Greek philosophers translated into Arabic (but by translators, in Baghdad and Cordoba, who were Jewish and Christian).

*...still present in daily life, that have been overshadowed by media reports on terrorist acts carried out by radicals with Islamic backgrounds.*

The terrorists are not “radicals” who just happen to have “Islamic backgrounds,” but Muslims who have taken to heart, and are acting upon, and according to, relevant Islamic texts, from which they solemnly quote to justify their every act.

*Shimoyama said that in the past, Tokyo Camii only drew attention from elderly people or fine arts students who would come with sketchbooks to study the mosque’s architecture.*

*But in the past few years, the number of visitors from junior high and high schools has risen significantly, he said.*

*The second-year students from Omiya Kita High School represented the largest non-Muslim youth group to enter the mosque to date.*

*“I am happy when young people learn something new here, something they can’t find in textbooks,” Shimoyama said.*

But Islam is a text-based faith. If you don’t read the canonical texts you cannot possibly understand Islam; these lightning visits to the mosque, promoted by Mr. Shimoyama, are

nearly worthless for acquiring that knowledge of Islam that the students, that all Infidels, need.

*During the lecture, Shimoyama spoke about how Japan's Islamic community has grown since the construction of Tokyo Camii, which in its initial form in the 1930s served as an educational and social service center for Tartar immigrants who fled the 1917 Russian Revolution. Later demolished and reconstructed, it was completed in its current form in 2000. Shimoyama added that of the roughly 100,000 Muslims living in Japan, about 10,000 are Japanese.*

*Several adherents arrived to offer prayers. Students raised their heads when a group of Muslims started chanting loudly and, encouraged by Shimoyama, moved closer to observe the ritual.*

*The fact that prayer is the central element of Islam...*

But how important is the duty of "Jihad"?

*and Muslims must roll out their prayer rugs five times a day made an impression on the young listeners.*

Those young listeners could not have understood the prayers, or the imprecations against Infidels they contained, but they came away thinking they had learned something when they had learned nothing, a delusion apparently shared and encouraged by their teachers.

*Shimoyama believes this kind of knowledge [!] is indispensable because the Muslim population is projected to grow and eventually exceed the population of Christians, noting the spread of Islam is already noticeable, even in Japan.*

*"Of all religions practiced worldwide, only Christianity and Islam have become the world's largest, but Islam, with*

*world's second-largest population of 1.6 billion adherents, remains unknown in Japan," he said.*

*"Many Japanese insurers are now tapping markets in countries like Indonesia," where over 90 percent of the population is Muslim, Shimoyama said, adding that Indonesians also constitute the largest Muslim group among visitors to and residents of Japan. But following gruesome incidents last year, including the execution of Japanese freelance journalist Kenji Goto in Syria and the deadly coordinated attacks in Paris, the Islamophobic attacks on Muslim communities did not spare Tokyo Camii.*

*"You Muslims get out of here," Shimoyama recalled one caller telling the mosque over the phone. "But I try to respond and listen to their claims.*

Why does the reporter use the term "islamophobic," which suggests – irrationally – an irrational fear? Why not clearly identify those responsible for the Paris attacks as Muslims? What about rewriting that sentence as: "But following gruesome incidents last year, including the execution of ...Kenji Goto...and the deadly coordinated attacks in Paris, all by Muslims, the Tokyo mosque received a phone call: 'You Muslims get out of here.'" We know that this phone call was the worst thing that happened, because if there had been anything worse, Mr. Shimoyama would surely have reported it. So that's what the reporter's ferocious "Islamophobic attacks on Muslim communities did not spare Tokyo Camii" amounted to: a not-terribly-threatening phone call to the mosque.

*Shimoyama blames the media for evoking a negative perception of Islam, especially among those unfamiliar with the religion.*

Could the 28,500 terrorist attacks by Muslims all over the world since 9/11 possibly have something to do with the



media's reports "evoking a negative perception of Islam"?

*What drove Shimoyama to convert was the hospitality he found in Muslims he met when traveling.*

*When Japan-born Shimoyama visited Africa in his university years, he had not heard much about Muslims before. But their hospitality sparked his interest in Islam's teachings, from which he believed their kindness sprang.*

Where do we begin and where do we end with the passages from which "their kindness sprang"? How about Qur'an 5:51: "Take not Jews and Christians as friends, for they are friends only with each other"? Or Qur'an 2:6-7? 2:29? 3:110? 4:74? 5:33? 8:12? 8:39?

*Since his return he has been advocating for Japan's Islamic community and working to raise awareness and remove misconceptions of the faith caused by radical extremists.*

*According to Shimoyama, unlike those abroad who feel threatened by the growing presence of Muslims in their countries, today's Japanese show greater interest and don't tend to express anti-Muslim sentiment.*

Those living in countries with a larger Muslim presence than in Japan have, as a consequence, learned more about Muslim attitudes and behavior than the Japanese, and have endured terrorist attacks by Muslims, from which Japan has not yet suffered, and surely that explains why they "feel threatened" and "express anti-Muslim sentiments."

*Shimoyama also visits schools around Tokyo to talk about Islamic society.*

In a letter addressed to Shimoyama, a sixth-grader from an elementary school who attended his lecture wrote: "I used to

think of Islam as something scary ... that caused so many people to lose their lives.”

Implicitly, “but now I know differently on the basis of your talk,” concludes this sixth-grader with a sixth-grader’s understanding.

*In their letters, other classmates, too, admitted to having linked Islam with terrorism, but added that getting to know about Islam made them contemplate why some believers started turning violent.*

“Contemplate” here clearly means “question” or “wonder,” for now that they have had their crash course in what they are told is the “real” Islam, it’s even more of a puzzle as to why “some believers started turning violent,” and neither the mosque members nor the students’ teachers are likely to enlighten them by quoting from the Qur’an or Hadith.

*They felt sorry for their brethren in conflict-torn areas.*

Now those Muslims in conflict areas have hearteningly become, for these Japanese students, their “brethren”; but it’s unidirectional, for no Muslim would ever think of non-Muslims as his “brethren.”

*“In the future I’d like to become a doctor . . . and go abroad to rescue victims of wars like those . . . in Syria,” wrote one girl.*

If only she had learned enough about Islam to have written instead about her wish “to rescue victims of violent Jihad like those Christians in Syria, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Bangladesh...” but no one in the mosque, including Mr. Shimoyama, was going to bring up any of that unpleasantness.

These students wanted to learn about Islam in the worst way,

and, it is clear from the report that, through their farcical mosque-visits, these gullible young Japanese did learn about Islam – but in the worst way.