

Promoting Dakwah in Japan Through Infaq

Ahmad Che Yaacob

Academy of Islamic Civilization, Faculty of Social Science and Humanities, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Islam is new to Japan and little research has been done about Islam in Japan mainly because of its small Muslim population. In recent survey, the population of Muslim in Japan is around 230,000 compared to the total population of Japan of 126 million. The accurate number of Muslim is unknown because Japan consider religion as a private matter and there is no compulsion to declare one's belief in the registration. Most of the Japanese is ignorance about Islam despite the bad images shown by the media. In recent years, Islam is growing with the establishment of new mosque and halal restaurants. To date there are 113 mosques throughout Japan, compared to only 15 in 1999. However, most of the mosques are built by the foreigners without local architecture. Therefore, it lacks the local interest for the Japanese sees Islam as for the immigrants. Thus, it is timely to build a new mosque with Japanese architecture and culture. This paper aims to elucidate the history and development of Islam in Japan. Also, the paper analyses the empowerment of commendable infaq or waqaf as an instrument to promote dakwah in Japan. It is hope that the paper would be able to propagate Islam as an emerging religion in Japan, and to create better awareness for the Muslims to contribute funds in term of waqaf to build a new mosque in Osaka Japan with Japanese architecture and culture.

Keyword: Dakwah, Japan, Mosque, Infaq, Waqaf, Islam

INTRODUCTION

Fauziah Fathil and Fathiah Fathil (2011) maintained that little has so far been discussed or written on Islam and Muslims in Japan. One of the reasons is because of its small population. It is estimated that the Muslim population in Japan is varied from 70 – 250 thousand. According to view of the majority, the estimation of Muslim population was about 100 thousand out of the total population of 126 million. Most Muslims are the immigrants where 90% are foreigners and only 10% are local Japanese. Most of the Muslims are foreigners migrated from Türkiye, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia since 1980s, and they are mainly working as factory and construction workers, businessmen and students. In short, the percentage of Muslims in Japan is still very small which is only 0.08%. The accurate number of Muslims is unknown because Japan consider religion as a personal life, thus is not compulsory to record it in the registration.

History of Islam in Japan.

There are claims on the coming of Islam to Japan before Meiji era, however, there seems to lack historical records. There is view that the first Muslim who contacted the Japanese were the Malay sailors who served the British and Dutch ships. During the Meiji era (1868 - 1912), western traders started to come to Japan. The Japanese started to learn about Islam and the life of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ Peace Be Upon Him) through western books. Nevertheless, at this stage there is no serious study about Islam.

In the late 19th century, Japan had a notable Islamic influence when the book on biography of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) was translated into Japanese. However, unlike other countries, religion in Japan is not considered as an important demographic factor. It is deemed as a matter of individual's choice and religious freedom. Therefore, Islam is considered new to Japan and most Japanese are ignorant about Islam.

Research Problems.

In recent years, there are growing interest in Islam and Japan became a tourist destination from all over the worlds

including from the Muslims countries. Therefore, there is an urgent need to build more mosques with halal food premises. However, most of the mosque in Japan are built by the immigrants or known as Gaijin (外人) by the Japanese, thus, Islam is viewed as non-relevant to the Japanese culture. In this manner, Japan

Dakwah Centre (JDC) in Osaka is planning to build a new mosque embedded with Japanese architecture and culture known as Masjid Al-Da'wah.

Research Objectives.

This paper aims to elucidate the history and development of Islam in Japan. Also, the paper analyses the empowerment of commendable infaq or waqaf as an instrument to promote dakwah in Japan.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Monzer Kahf (2017) maintained cash waqaf is not new to the Muslims and it was practiced in early Islam. Murat Cizacka (2000) Tawfik Azrak (2022) argued that cash waqaf (Awqaf Al-Nuqud) was one of the significant contributions to the Turkish Ottoman civilization. It was a source of funding for the development of economics in health, education and social welfare. Khairil Faizal Khairil, et. al. (2017) maintained cash waqaf can solve the undeveloped waqaf lands in Malaysia.

In this manner, Murat Cizacka (2000) highlighted that there are two important issues regarding cash waqaf: perpetuity and riba. The jurists agreed that cash can be considered as moveable property, thus, it can accept as waqaf. To avoid riba, money collected as cash waqaf can be invested through the contract of mudarabah. Mustapahayuddin (2018) maintained that the Council for Fatwa of Malaysia in 2007 has decided that cash waqaf is acceptable.

Zunaidah Ab Hasan and Abd Halim Mohd Nor (2017) viewed that waqaf has significantly play an important role in the development of socio-economic aspects of the ummah. However, the most important factor for the success of the institution of waqaf is the aspect of governance to make sure the efficient and transparent management of finance.

Fauziah Fathil and Fathiah Fathil (2011) maintained that dakwah is to be done without coercion since Islam emphasizes no force in the matters of belief. There are three ways to conducting dakwah namely through wisdom, good advice, and proper dialog. Among the challenges faced by dakwah in Japan is the slow progress of Islam among the people in Japan due to the reason that large proportion of the Japanese are ignorant of what Islam is. The factors that lead to the ignorance of Islam in Japan are lack of interests in getting to know Islam, lack of personal contacts with the Muslims, and lack of Muslim da'i (preacher) who are fluent in Japanese.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Development of Islam in Japan.

The Asahi Shimbun (May 25, 2023) reported that there is a progress of the success of dakwah of Islam in Japan. According to Professor Hirofumi Tanada from Waseda University, Muslims population in 2020 is estimates around 230,000 compared to 100,000 in 2009. Many of them became Muslim through marriages. There were 113 mosques across Japan in March 2021, compared to only 15 in 1999. The latest is Masjid Istiqlal Osaka (MIO) and mainly the donors are from Indonesia.

Masjid Istiqlal Osaka (MIO) was opened on 12 January 2022, through a donation drive led by Mr. Herizal Adhardi, an Indonesian entrepreneur. In 2020, he began a search for land and buildings to build a mosque in the Osaka area. But there were no properties available that met his criteria. While searching for properties, he continued conducting a donation and collected over JPY200 million (RM6 million) the contributions from countries all over the world. When he has reached the amount, a friend called and introduced him to a property. He immediately went to view the property, and it had a size close to what he envisioned. Even better, it is in a perfect location. He then purchased the property for JPY190 million, and the remaining balance used for the renovation. The building was originally owned by a Japanese company, and he later renovated it into a mosque.

When completed, MIO has received lots of visitors. During Eid al-Fitr 2022 more than 2,700 people has visited MIO, but the building can accommodate for 900 people only for one occasion for prayer. On the first floor, there is halal shop and Islamic Cultural Centre that contained book collections which is also open to the public. The 2nd floor is the prayer space for women, complete with a waiting room and a women-only lift. The 3rd and 4th floors are the prayer space for men, where there is also a waiting room. Each floor can accommodate for 300 people, so all together 900 people can pray in the building at the same time. The 5th floor of the mosque serves as a school for children to learn about Islam and sleeping areas for the teachers.

The empowerment dakwah through commendable Infaq (Waqaf).

Infaq is an effort in carrying out the command of Allah in terms of spending the wealth to gain Allah's pleasure. Anyone can be subjected to infaq, and there is no nisab or specific amount for infaq. Receivers of infaq can be from the family as well as unknown person. There are many types of infaq, whether mandatory, commendable (sunnat), mubah and haram or prohibited. For this paper, it will focus on commendable infaq or waqaf. The intention of spending property through waqaf is to get closer to Allah.

Dakwah is the responsibility of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH), as well as the Prophets before him. After the Prophet, his followers and the ummah (Muslim community as a whole) assume the responsibility for it. A dā'ī, is a person who invites people to Islam, calling people to do good deed with the promise of heaven. Allah says in Al-Qur'an surah Al-Nahl, verse 125 in which it reads "Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is Most Knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is Most Knowing of who is (rightly) guided".

Dakwah literally means to call upon or invite towards something. Technically, dakwah is one's effort and commitment in achieving the desired goal, thus it carries the elements of jihad and good deeds. Berhanundin (2023) maintains that before embarking on the mission of dakwah, one must gain a deep understanding of subject matter, and the relevant methods to be applied.

According to Al-Bukhari, there is an authentic tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ Peace Be Upon Him) that serves a guide to perform commendable infaq or waqaf. As mentioned in the tradition:

'Umar (RA) got some land in Khaibar and went to the Prophet (ﷺ PBUH) asking his command regarding it and said, "O Allah's Messenger, I have acquired a land in Khaibar which is the most valuable property that I have ever acquired." He replied, "If you wish you may make the property Waqaf (an endowment) and give its produce as Sadaqah." So 'Umar (RA) gave the land as Sadaqah (in endowment on the condition) that must not be sold, inherited, or given away. And he gave its produce as Sadaqah to be devoted to the poor, relatives, the emancipation of slaves, in Allah's Cause, for travelers and guests, and there is no sin upon the one who administers it if he eats something from it in a reasonable manner or gives something to a friend to eat, provided he does not store anything as goods (for himself). [Agreed upon; the wording is Muslim's]. Sahih AlBukhari (Volume 4 Chapter 29. Page 27).

The advice of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) has been a crucial point for the success of dakwah in early Islam. In another tradition, Al-Bukhari also mentioned that another companion of the Prophet has surrender his property to obtain Allah pleasure.

Anas b. Malik is reported as saying: Abu Talha was the one among the Ansar of Medina who possessed the largest property and among his property he valued most was his garden known as Bairaha' which was opposite the mosque, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ PBUH) often visited it and he drank of its sweet water. When this verse was revealed: "You will never attain righteousness till you give freely of what you love" (iii. 91), Abu Talha got up and, going to Allah's Messenger (ﷺ PBUH), said: Allah says in His Book: "You will never attain righteousness till you give freely of what you love," and the dearest of my property is Bairaha' so I give it as Sadaqa to God from Whom I hope for reward for it and the treasure with Allah; so spend it, Messenger of Allah, on whatever purpose you deem it proper. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ PBUH) said: Well done! that is a profitable deal, that is a profitable deal. I have heard what you have said, but I think you should spend it on your nearest relatives. So, Abu Talha distributed it among the nearest relatives and his cousins on his father's side. (Sahih Bukhari. Book 12, Hadith 52).

The companions of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) have surrendered their wealth upon hearing the verses of Al-Qur'an and with the advice of the Prophet. It is known that all companions of the Prophet have practiced

commendable infaq as was directed by Al-Qur'an. Thus, Islam has become stronger with the establishment of waqaf funds. The Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) himself has built the Masjid Nabawi in Medina in a land he purchased from Sahal and Suhayl in the first year of Hijrah (circa 622 CE) upon his arrival at Medina. It took seven to eight months for the building to fully completed.

The Annual Report of General Authority of Awqaf of Saudi Arabia (2022) mentioned another successful waqaf can be witnessed was the practice of Saidina Othman bin Affan (RA) who purchased the well of Rumah, northwest of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, and the well still irrigate the city's residents with its water and waters their palms and trees.

The story of the well began when Medina began to flourish after the migration of the Prophet (peace be upon him). The Muslims found that one of the freshwaters of the city was a well located in Al-Aqiq al-Asghar called the Well of Rumah. They also found that all the city's waters dried up except for the well of Rumah, but access to the well was not easy, as whoever wanted to drink from it had to pay its owner, which is something was not affordable for many residents of the Prophet's city at the time. The hadith of the Prophet (peace be upon him), "Who will buy the well of Rumah and dip his bucket in it alongside the buckets of the Muslims, in return for a better one in Paradise?" prompted Othman bin Affan (May Allah be pleased with him) to hasten to buy it and make it a public endowment from which everyone can drink for free. The waqaf of well by Othman Bin Affan is still available until today since it was purchased 1400 years ago. In 1372 AH, the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia rented the well and its farm from the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Endowments, Call and Guidance to benefit from the water. It is considered a resource for the city's residents and visitors. In the era of Saudi Arabia, it took care of it and reclaimed the land in which the well is located. It was used in the cultivation of palms and the distribution of its fruits to the needy.

Al-Qur'an has mentioned the story of Prophet Sulaiman (AS) that one day, he was reviewing this army when he noted that the hoopoe bird was absent without permission. In fact, the bird had been travelling to the country of Queen of Sheba (modern-day Yemen) and reported the Queen and her people are worshipping the sun (Al-Quran. 27: 22-24). Upon hearing this, the Prophet Sulaiman (AS) invited the Queen to visit his palace. When the Queen enter the palace, the floor was made of shimmering glass, which shined like water, and the queen, thinking it to be real water, so she lifted her skirts so that she would not get wet. Upon knowing the beauty and magnificent building, Queen Sheba submitted herself to Allah. (Al-Qur'an. 27:44).

Masjid Al-Dakwah in Osaka.

Zulkarnain Hasan Basri (2024) the founder and President of Japan Dakwah Centre which is in Osaka has carry out a fundraising project to raise fund for the building of new mosque in Osaka. From the website of Japan Dakwah Centre (JDC) it is mentioned now there are only 2 mosques available in Osaka. Therefore, JDC hopes to build a new mosque known as Masjid Al-Dakwah. JDC recites the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ PBUH) that reads: "Whoever builds a mosque for Allah, Allah will build for him a house like it in Paradise." (Sahih Muslim).

JDC is planning to build the Masjid Al-Dakwah in Osaka that will be adopting the design using the concept of Japanese architecture and culture. This because most of the mosques in Japan are built by the immigrants with foreign elements distinct from Japanese culture. Therefore, Islam has been viewed by the Japanese as irrelevant to the local people. JDC wants to change this norm through a mosque imbued with Japanese architecture and culture, as it will be the first one in Japan. The focus of Masjid Al-Dakwah is to serve as one stop centre for religious activities, including dakwah, welfare and community, Islamic knowledge and economy for locals.

Masjid Al-Dakwah is targeting for 2nd generation of the Muslims because some of these youths are said to be losing their Islamic identity as they are raised in Japan. Masjid Al-Dakwah also aims to raise awareness for women to participate in mosques activities, because most mosques in Japan are pioneered by men while women have little role in it. Thus, JDC hopes to change this norm by creating more opportunities for women to have bigger roles. Masjid Al-Dakwah also will serve for conversion of Islam. In Japan, there are more females converts than males. However, there are limited spaces for women in mosque, be it to learn Islamic knowledge or to associate with fellow Muslimah. Thus, JDC aims to make a comfortable space for Muslimah and female Japanese too who are interested in learning about Islam.

Masjid Al-Dakwah will reflect Japanese design and architecture, the first of its kind in Japan. By incorporating Japanese-style, it would help to make Japanese people feel "at-home" when visiting mosque. Also, to promote Islam as a religion for all instead of a 'foreign religion'. The facilities in Masjid Al-Dakwah will include prayer space, Da'wah Studio, Small Library, Learning Centre, Muslim Community Centre, Islamic Economy Centre and Cafeteria as well as Halal Shop. The motto of Masjid Al-Dakwah is Masjid Al-Dakwah is My Second Home. JDC is hoping to gather the fund for the building of Masjid Al-Dakwah which is estimated about JPY600 million (RM6 million). Until 15 August 2024, the total fund received is about RM1.5 million or 25.61% of the total cost. Therefore, much help is needed.

CONCLUSION.

Dakwah is the responsibility of every Muslims to convey the beautiful message of Islam. In fact, Allah praises the person who is committed to enjoin the mission of dakwah. Allah says: "And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims."" (Al-Qur'an. Surah Fussilat, verse 33). There are many ways to practice dakwah, including to spend wealth for the cause of Islam. Indeed, through infaq, Islam has flourished and developed to every corner of the earth. The success story of infaq should inspired the Muslims to spend their wealth to obtain Allah's pleasure especially in building a mosque as a one stop centre. Queen Sheba who was a sun worshipper without prior knowledge of Islam but was curious to learn when she was invited to visit the palace of the Prophet Sulaiman. Later, she has submitted to Islam upon witnessing the magnificent building made by the Prophet Sulaiman (AS). Therefore, the Muslims are urged to show the beauty of Islam to attack the local Japanese to know about Islam. It is hoped that with the establishment of new mosque embedded with Japanese architecture and culture can gain more interest amongst the local Japanese to know about Islam as envisioned by Japan Dakwah Centre of Osaka.

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