

The Mosques of Tokyo

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When I lived in Tokyo in 2003 on a generous grant, I entertained the possibility of making a documentary called *The Mosques of Tokyo*.

I was told there were 22 mosques in the city, the largest of which had a Turkish design and was located in Yoyogi, which can fit over 1,000 people.

My idea: to go to each mosque and observe how the five daily prayers are conducted. I wanted to capture the sort of people who would go there: How many would be Japanese versus how many migrant workers/expatriates/tourists? If they were non-Japanese, which countries would they be from?

The camera would literally never leave these mosques. Perhaps you can hear sounds of things happening outside (Traffic? Advertising jingles?) — sometimes these sounds would be so discreet they seem to be as unreliable as a rumor.

There will be no talking-head interviews. Perhaps there is some

sort of narration (about what?). Or perhaps no talking at all: the camera would be very still and just observe the environment as the call to prayer in each mosque is sounded; each duration the same, very James Benning!

We are meant to note the subtle differences between each of these mosques — architecturally, aurally, in terms of social composition — to find the unique in the midst of seeming uniformity. Some mosques would be more crowded than others; some might even be empty during certain prayer times.

The reason I didn't make this documentary is that back in 2003 Islam was such a trendy topic in documentaries. Blame the terrorist violence of just a couple of years earlier. So I didn't want to jump on that CNN-friendly bandwagon.

But the idea is still there; you are welcome to steal it. You don't even have to credit me; just say you were divinely inspired.