

[III] Opinions Presented in the Open-Ended Question Responses

Here we will include open-ended responses that can help us understand students' attitudes towards religion as well as their ways of thinking about religion and closely related matters. We will both discuss overall trends as well as share representative and distinctive responses.

“Open-ended responses” refer to the responses of students who selected “Other” for multiple-choice questions. There were responses basically the same as provided answer options, but also unexpected ones. While some of the responses were probably written facetiously due to it being an anonymous survey, these are part of what respondents were thinking and should therefore be considered.

Below we have included responses about faith-related matters, society-related issues involving religion, as well as issues related to organ transplantation after brain death, Yasukuni Shrine, Aum Shinrikyō, and Islam. We have included at the beginning of each section the questions to which students were responding.

Chapter 17: Faith and Religion-related Issues

a) Details of interest in religion and related phenomena

We asked the below question about the aspects of religion in which respondents were interested in each of the eight surveys from 1995 to 2005. This question was for people who, in response to another question, said that they do not have religious faith yet are interested in religion. Below we will present the responses of students who did not choose one of the multiple choice answers.

Question Content

Please circle all of the below items that you are interested in.

1. Religious books like the Bible and Buddhist scriptures.
2. Novels and non-fiction that involve religion.
3. Television shows that cover religious organizations, religions of the world, and so on.
4. Tours of religious facilities such as Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples.
5. Other (Please write concretely)

(1) 1995

In this year, 305 out of 3,773 respondents (8.1%) provided an open-ended response. Being immediately after the Aum Shinrikyō attack, the greatest number of them were related to Aum Shinrikyō (40 people). This was followed by religious culture, such as “religious paintings,” “religious art,” “religious music,” “the cultural backgrounds of religions,” and so on (16 people). Unexpectedly, 13 respondents wrote, “religious studies.” 12 respondents wrote something along the lines of “why people believe in religion.” Some respondents touched on new religions as well as on specific religions (Christianity,

Tibetan Buddhism, Islam, etc.). Other responses included myths, religious psychology, religious thought, and religious conflict.

Below we have included somewhat distinctive responses.

- “What is/are god[s]? What kind of thing[s] is/are god[s]? Do[es] god[s] know all good and evil?”
- “Since I don’t feel that religion is necessary and think it should be done away with, I would like to begin by knowing my enemy”
- “The relationship between Japanese people’s ethnic characteristics and how it is hard for religion to take root in Japan”
- “The abilities that are brought out of one by having faith”
- “Books about the nature of life and happiness”

(2) 1996

In 1996, 306 of 4,344 respondents (7.0%) provided an open-ended response. About 10 respondents expressed an interest in people who believe in religion. As in the previous year, there were a number of people interested in religious culture. However, there were also some responses skeptical or critical of religion.

- “I want to know each religion’s basic way of teaching”
- “Each religion’s doctrines, etc., why there is religion”
- “Why are there an almost uncountable number of religions in the world?”
- “Why did humans come to believe in god[s]?”
- “Why do people seek an anchor for their heart and mind in religion? Religious structures in architecture”
- “I want to know why people get caught up in that kind of religion”
- “Ancient religion”
- “Social movements caused by religion”

(3) 1997

In 1997, 300 out of 5,718 respondents (5.2%) provided an open-ended response. As before, there were people who wrote that they were interested in Aum Shinrikyō. There was a slight increase in topics covered in fields like religious studies, such as the relationship between religion and society or the state. There were also some responses that expressed interest in religion yet caution about religious groups.

- “‘Death Education’ [in English in original] in Christianity”
- “I want to know the reason that humans are attracted to religion, I want to know about the role of religion”
- “The legendary living things like gods and demons talked about in a variety of religions and the like”
- “How much money people use for religion”
- “By the way, I am interested in religion but hate religious groups!!”
- “Why humans need religion, why religion has been used for politics, attacks on other religions, etc.”

- “Fraud and money-making done in the name of religion”
- “While I am not interested in joining a religious group, [I am interested in] each religion’s teachings”

(4) 1998

In 1998, 710 of 6,248 respondents (11.4%) provided an open-ended response. This was the year with the greatest percentage of people who did so. While there were no major differences in overall tendencies, responses were very diverse. Some were very specific.

- “Why do humans need religion?”
- “Religion and history in Germany”
- “Witch hunts and black magic in Europe”
- “Books related to the Bible being a history book”
- “Records of religious figures’ words”
- “The thoughts of people who believe in religion”
- “New religions [*shinkō shūkyō*]”
- “People who get into religion”
- “The Aum problem”
- “So-called ‘fishy’ religions: Aum, Sōka Gakkai, etc.”
- “Learn on my own about only the true Truth of religion that disregards trivia”
- “Religious precepts, societal structures (especially Islam)”
- “Conflict caused by religion”
- “End of the world thought”
- “Buddhist art, like Buddhist statues and cave temples”
- “Occult groups”
- “Religion and politics, military affairs, etc.”

(5) 1999

This year, 710 out of 10,941 respondents provided an open-ended response (6.5%). They were again diverse in content. Below we have included opinions that were somewhat unusual.

- “Preaching, and kinds of teachings and prayer methods”
- “Prehistoric [“primitive”/*genshi*] religion in New Guinea and elsewhere”
- “How does one know that there are/is god[s] despite not being able to see them?”
- “The world’s distribution of religions from a geography perspective”
- “The differences in the positions of men and women as dictated by religions”
- “I did a homestay for about a year in a Mormon household in the state of Utah, and therefore developed an interest in the ways of life of people who believe in religion”
- “The sermons of head priests of Buddhist temples”
- “Philosophy of no religion (*mushūkyō no tetsugaku*)”

(6) 2000

This year, 325 out of 6,483 respondents wrote an open-ended response (5.0%).

- “The distinctiveness of Shinto”
- “Philosophy, negative theology”
- “History of religion and religious conflict in the Middle East”
- “For example, while at my house we say ‘the Buddha’ [*hotoke-sama*] in reference to the home altar [*butsudan*], in general do people pray to their ancestors or the Buddha [at their home altars]?”
- “The kind of humans people become by having a religion”
- “Five elements thought”
- “Fictional novels, comics, etc. under the influence of religion”
- “Happy Science [*Kōfuku no kagaku*]”
- “I like novels like ones about Heian period *onmyōji*”
- “The sublimity of Tibetan Buddhism”

(7) 2001

This year 337 of 5,759 respondents wrote open-ended responses (5.9%).

- “Religion-related festivals”
- “Movies that can be looked at in a religious way”
- “The Fishiest of the Fishiest! Religious Professionals”
- “The social welfare activities of religious groups”
- “The history of Christianity”
- “Religions of ancient civilizations. Objects of faith and their worldview”
- “Legends and myths about gods and demons”
- “I am interested in the songs sung in hymns”
- “Comics about religion”
- “Conflicts in the Middle East, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere”
- “The restraints people live with in life based on their religions, the differences between religions, etc.”
- “Shamanism, ritual structures, etc.”

(8) 2005

This year, 216 out of 4,252 respondents provided open-ended responses (5.1%).

- “Religious traditional events”
- “The mechanisms of religious groups”
- “The similarity between religion and revolution”
- “What death is to people with faith”
- “The benefit and harm of religion”
- “What believers have to say”
- “The relationship between religion and political parties”
- “The relationship between religion and civilization / values”
- “Religion and crime”

b) Regarding friends with religious faith

Each year between 1995 and 2000 the survey asked about friends with religious faith. Since answers did not really change in content, we will omit responses from 1997 and 1998.

Question Content

What would you do if you found that a certain friend believed in a religion?

1. Interact with them as before.
2. Depending on the religion, I might change how I associate with them.
3. Stop associating with them.
4. Other (Please write concretely)

In all years, the overwhelming majority of respondents selected “Interact with them as before,” indicating that respondents’ interactions with friends are not really influenced by the latter’s religious faith.

(1) 1995

113 of 3,773 respondents (3.0%) wrote an open-ended response. However, some of these were basically the same as the provided answer options. Otherwise, 7 people responded that they would change how they associate with or stop associating with the friend if the friend pushed their religion onto the respondent. 6 people responded that they would ask questions about the religion. 1 person offered a somewhat unusual response: “I would thoroughly explain to them and convince them of the wonderfulness of Japanese-style a-religiousness.” Below major responses are listed.

- “I basically would not change how I interact with them, but if it was a religion that didn’t seem to be good I would convince them [of this]”
- “If it appeared that they were going to recommend their religion to me, I would stop associating with them”
- “If it was a new religion [*shinkō shūkyō*] or something similar I would stop associating with them (I have actually done so. There was someone who joined the Unification Church and asked to borrow money)”
- “If the friend was going to force their religion on me, I would think about what to do, but if this wasn’t the case then I would want to respect it”
- “Insofar as it wasn’t abnormal like Aum, then I wouldn’t consider it a problem at all, but if it seemed abnormal then I would think about what to do”
- “Insofar as it was not a cult religious organization like Aum, then I wouldn’t change how I interact with them”
- “I would become even better friends with them”

(2) 1996

132 of 4,344 respondents (3.0%) wrote an open-ended response. The general drift of them did not really change, and we have therefore included a few representative ones

below.

- “I would ask why they joined that religion and what happens after one joins”
- “I’d say you’re a dumbass”
- “If the person didn’t change due to the religion, then I would interact with them as I did before”
- “If their personality, etc., changed due to this, then I would change how I associate with them”
- “I would want them to teach me its doctrines and such”

(3) 1997

165 of 5,718 respondents (2.9%) provided an open-ended response. Below are some examples.

- “If I judged that this religion was having a bad influence on the friend then I would persuade them of this”
- “If they were a maniacal believer and the religion had a scary ideology then I would rethink my relationship with them”
- “While ideally I would not change how I interact with them, in reality I think I would change how I associate with them”
- “I would ask about the reason”
- “I would listen to their story”
- “I would study my friend’s religion”

(4) 2000

213 of 6,483 respondents (3.3%) provided an open-ended response. There were no major differences from before. Below are a few example responses.

- “I can’t imagine that happening”
- “If they tried to get those around them involved I would warn them to stop”
- “I would seek a logical explanation from the friend regarding why they believe in that religion”
- “I might feel confused”

c) Regarding spirituality

The survey asked about spirituality in 2007 and 2015. Responses showed the influence of television in various ways.

Question Content

What do you feel when you hear the expression “spiritual” [*supirichuaru*]?

1. It feels like something with depth of spirit [*seishinteki ni fukumi no aru koto*].
2. It feels easier to approach than something “religious.”
3. It feels fishy.
4. I don’t really know what it is.
5. Other (Please write concretely)

While some overlap with the provided options, by going through open-ended responses we can see how respondents understand this word. In 2007, 42.2% of respondents chose “It feels like something with depth of spirit.” In 2015, this was 38.0%, slightly lower. In 2007, 26.8% of respondents chose “It feels fishy,” and this increased to 33.5% in 2015. In this time the negative image of this word had grown stronger, and the number of negative or skeptical expressions in open-ended responses had also increased somewhat. There were also pronounced differences in what people associate with the term.

(1) 2007

In the 2007 survey, 255 respondents provided an open-ended response (5.9%). 60 people included the name Ehara Hiroyuki and 15 people the name Miwa Akihiro. 19 respondents included the name of the television show in which they appeared, “*Ōra no izumi*” (The Spring of Aura). We can see that at the time this show was popular and influenced the younger generation. 8 people wrote the word *shinpiteki* (mystical). 8 people used the expression *reiteki* (lit., of spirits / spirit-like, sometimes used as a translation of the English “spiritual”). There were also responses that used negative words: 7 respondents wrote *usan-kusai* (dubious) and 9 respondents *inchiki* (charlatanism).

Below, example responses have been categorized as positive or negative. There were more negative open-ended responses than positive ones.

Positive Assessments

- “It feels like something with a depth of soul”
- “I don’t really know what it is, but I do have the impression that it’s a good thing”
- “I think it’s something on a different level than the likes of religion and that roughly speaking it is about how a person should be [*hito no arikata*]”

Negative Assessment

- “Those guys who are on TV are fakes”
- “I just feel like the word ‘spiritual’ itself is in the first place a word game”
- “I feel like it’s kind of charlatanism”
- “Money making. A new business”
- “Recently in the media and the like it’s been used not so much in its original sense but more in reference to divination-like elements, so I don’t really have a good impression of it”
- “It sounds like a big lie that’s following a recent trend”
- “Recently it has been used too much and it seems like something fluffy”
- “*Feng shui* and divination kind of thing”

(2) 2015

226 respondents provided an open-ended response in the 2015 survey. Unlike 2007, no one wrote down Ehara Hiroyuki’s name. While there were 4 people who referenced Miwa Akihiro, this is much less than before. Here the influence of television is vividly

appearing. “*Ōra no izumi*” was broadcast from 2005 to 2009. 2007 was during this period. By 2015, six years had passed since its broadcast had stopped. This difference clearly is reflected here.

In place of “*Ōra no izumi*” appeared “Love Live!” (*Rabu raibu*). 10 people wrote the name of its imaginary character Tōjō Nozomi. In the show, she is presented as a mysterious spiritual girl. 5 people wrote her nickname “Nontan.” 12 people wrote the name of the television show. 6 people wrote “anime.” 38 respondents wrote *shinpiteki*, and 6 *shinsei* (sacred). 4 people wrote “aura.” Many respondents used negative terms such as *usan-kusai*. Below we have categorized responses into positive responses, negative responses, and other.

Positive Assessments

- “Having a pronounced atmosphere, a pure, clear feeling. Like ‘power spots’”
- “The mysterious. Cannot be explained by science”
- “Things with an effect on the mind / spirit [*seishin*] that people cannot manipulate”
- “It strikes my interest and I feel something like beauty”

Negative Assessments

- “A term created by the television industry. Staged faking. It has taken on a meaning that’s different from its original one”
- “TV-like, dubious”
- “Dubious. Seems like your money’s going to be taken. Seems like it’ll be tricking people, using a foreign loan word to make things vague”
- “All the things expressed by the word spiritual are not concrete, visible, or reproducible”
- “Waving around ridiculous theories”
- “Mistrust or suspicion that it might catch people who don’t really think”
- “While in the past it reminded me of exploring the world of the spirit/mind [*seishin sekai*], now it’s been used too much and has changed into an expression that evokes cheapness and fishiness”
- “Necessary for palliative care”
- “Recently it’s been used too much and feels fluffy”
- “Feels more dubious than religious”
- “A scam-like business that uses self-serving propaganda”
- “It evokes simple and convenient trends, consumption, and commercial-ness rather than true believers or legitimate temples”

Other

- “On ‘Love Live!’ Tōjō Nozomi often says ‘It’s spiritual!’ but I don’t really get it”
- “I feel that there’s the intention of making religious concepts easier to approach”
- “While it has a mystical ring, I don’t find it appealing”

d) Psychological impact of the Great East Japan Earthquake

In 2012 and 2015 we asked about the psychological effects of the Great East Japan Earthquake that occurred in March 2011 (“3/11”).

Question Content

Due to this disaster, has anything changed greatly in how you live your life or think? Please circle any of the below that apply (multiple responses allowed). Those who did not really experience any such changes should choose response no. 6.

1. I reaffirmed the importance of connections between people.
2. I came think seriously about the meaning of living.
3. I had a renewed awareness of the size of nature’s power.
4. I came to think about death as a close-at-hand issue.
5. Other (Please write concretely: _____)
6. Nothing changed in particular.

In both years the greatest percentage of respondents chose “I had a renewed awareness of the size of nature’s power.” In 2012 it was 68.9%, and 67.8% in 2015. This was followed by “I reaffirmed the importance of connections between people” (50.7% and 44.4%, respectively).

(1) 2012

In 2012, 165 respondents offered an open-ended response (4.0%). 10 people touched upon the importance of family. 7 people touched upon the issue of nuclear power. Some responses expressed contemptuous disbelief, saying that people must have known the nuclear accident was going to happen. To a limited extent respondents also expressed frustration at not having been able to have done anything.

- “I decided to value the time I spend with my family more”
- “My belief that Japan is safe collapsed”
- “I thought to myself that even if humans are shocked by a large disaster, they easily forget”
- “I decided to live the present to the fullest because we don’t know when something might happen”
- “I got angry at myself for not being able to do anything”
- “I thought about why, despite such a bad thing happening, I was not acting in any way, as well as how I should be involved into the future”
- “Several of my friends died, and I thought to myself that humans die when they die”
- “I understood the principle of acting in accordance with the flow of nature and being unattached [*kōun ryūsui*]”
- “Overseas news said that Japanese people are cool-headed but I thought that they are strong”
- “I felt irritated at the increased number of people who began to again repeatedly and loudly go on about the importance of bonds between people [*aratamete kizuna to renko suru hito*]”
- “I was really disappointed that there were so many people who put on airs of being

concerned but did not try to make sacrifices. I think that this is related to the nature of Japanese religion”

(2) 2015

148 people wrote open-ended responses (2.6%) in 2015. Like 2012, there were 5 people who said something like that they realized what they take for granted in everyday life is happiness or precious, or said that they were reminded of the importance of family. 9 people touched upon the scary nature or danger of nuclear energy. One also finds people expressing distrust in information on the internet as well as some acerbic opinions.

- “I found out how precious and important what we take for granted is”
- “My negative image of uneventful, normal, regular days turned into a positive one. My feeling of gratitude for them grew stronger”
- “My feeling of wanting to protect my family grew stronger”
- “[I felt] their sadness and agony, and, conversely, forward-looking people felt their hope and radiance”
- “I came to think about how I should act in a disaster”
- “I felt our powerlessness”
- “I came to feel that the preciousness of life and the miracle of being born is not something to be taken for granted”
- “No matter who it is, when someone dies there is someone who is sad”
- “When in agony it’s better to laugh wildly than cry”
- “I felt something close to Buddhism’s view of impermanence”
- “Living in Kyushu without any problems [at the time], I found that part of me was calm and cold, feeling that SNS and TV news were making a fuss, and that another part of me wanted to provide support”
- “I felt that I was using too much electricity. Humans can live without electricity”
- “I became strongly convinced that there are things I can and should do as a civil engineering technician”
- “That government administration is irresponsible or unprepared”
- “I was reminded how Japan is a country that doesn’t take responsibility”
- “My distrust of scientists increased”
- “Information on the internet should be taken with a grain of salt, I stopped seriously believing in it. My views of the spread of nonsense and lies changed.”
- “I felt the foolishness of humans (becoming excessively sensitive when hearing the word ‘Fukushima’)”
- “I was surprised at the number of people calling themselves volunteers who, despite not being useful, would go to the affected areas and then post it on SNS”
- “I thought that when it comes to living or dying, there are only people who think about themselves”
- “I thought to myself that I was an ugly human”

e) Image of souls or spirits

In the years 2000 and 2005 people could write open-ended responses about souls / spirits.

Question Content

Please choose statements below that match your image of souls / spirits [*reikon*], regardless of whether you believe in them or not. (Multiple responses accepted.)

1. Things in living humans.
2. The spirits [*rei*] of dead people.
3. The spirits of animals.
4. The spirits of trees, plants, and flowers.
5. Other (Please write concretely: _____)
6. No specific image comes to mind.

(1) 2000

In 2000, 213 respondents provided an open-ended response (3.3%). The greatest number were along the lines of “they exist in all life” and “all living things have them.”

- “Particles”
- “Something that resides or resided in all things”
- “Something immortal, the essential part of humans”
- “All life on Earth, including forests, rivers, mountains, animals, and grasses”
- “Something that resides in all living things”
- “Aggregations of the electrical signals in people’s brains”
- “Psychometry”
- “Incidental energy”
- “Bundle of light”
- “Just one’s imagination”
- “The spirit of people who have just died”
- “A shape like a flame”

(2) 2005

In 2005, 209 respondents (4.9%) wrote open-ended responses. They did not change that much from the year 2000.

- “Something that transmigrates”
- “The matter called *yūshi* 幽子”
- “Something which resides in all phenomena”
- “A copy of the consciousness of others”
- “Something that exists regardless of change in the world”
- “Tutelary spirits, guardian spirits”
- “A particle as of yet unknown”
- “Energy residing in all things”
- “Something that cannot be explained with science”
- “A concept for understanding phenomena, shared by society, which sees certain forms of relations as having an actually existing essence”

Chapter 18: Social Problems Involving Religion

Here we present open-ended responses on two subjects: solicitations from strangers regarding religion or divination and the role of religion in society.

a) Regarding solicitations from strangers

Multiple times surveys asked about respondents' experiences of religious solicitation. In 2007, the questions focused on solicitations from strangers and provided the option of writing an open-ended response. This was to find out the primary content of such solicitations.

Question Content

What did the person talk about? Please choose from the following. (Multiple responses allowed.)

1. "I study palm reading."
2. "I can see your guardian deity."
3. "I feel that you have a special aura."
4. "If things continue as they are you'll encounter misfortune."
5. "Now is a turning point in your life."
6. Other (Please write concretely: _____)

136 people offered open-ended responses (3.2%). Multiple patterns are identifiable, including praising the person, saying something that makes the person feel uneasy, and saying something to heightens the person's interest.

- "You have beautiful eyes"
- "I study physiognomy. You have a face of considerably good fortune"
- "Such nice palm lines"
- "We were parent and child in a past life"
- "Have you ever gotten in an accident?"
- "You aren't talking full advantage of your good fortune"
- "Something like, 'You must be concerned about something'"
- "Have you ever gotten in an accident? If you buy this expensive thing . . ."
- "You look fragile. Perhaps your life goals and future are undecided?"
- "Are you satisfied with your current life?"
- "I have something to tell you about your ancestors"
- "Are you interested in crystal balls?"
- "Please meet [our] teacher"
- "Please let me pray for you"
- "When I felt sick and was hunched over in the train station, someone asked me if I am interested in Christianity"
- "Please let me draw a caricature of you"
- "What about listening to the good word [*arigatai okotoba*] of [the] god[s]?"
- "Someone started talking to me, and for some reason I said that I was a student. They then said that they don't read the palms of students"

- “They said to me that I have no future”
- “Did you know that divination is science?”

b) Social role of religious persons

The survey asked about this topic in 2005 and 2010.

Question Content

Please select any of the below things that you think someone should do if they are religious.
(Multiple responses allowed.)

1. Activities to eliminate discrimination.
2. Mental and emotional care for victims (of disasters, etc.).
3. Mental and emotional care for people facing death.
4. Social welfare activities for disabled and elderly people.
5. Pray for peace.
6. Other (Please write concretely: _____)

While some of the “Other” responses overlapped with existing answer choices, in general they can be divided into three major categories: those describing what religious persons should actively do, those asserting that religious persons do not need to do anything particularly special, and very acerbic and critical opinions. The greatest number were of the latter type. Perhaps it is only natural that many people wrote critical responses because the answer choices were positive. From these responses we can acquire a good understanding of where students’ criticisms of contemporary religions and religious persons are directed. While there were some that appear to have been written with Aum Shinrikyō in mind (“Not turn followers into criminals”), generally responses were directed at religion in general.

(1) 2005

In 2005, 278 respondents (6.5%) offered open-ended responses.

Opinions: Active

- “Create modern translations of religious terms”
- “Actively engage in societal action. (Elections, petitions, living a normal life while following the rules, etc.)”
- “Activities to let people around them know what kind of religion they belong to”
- “Pray for the country’s prosperity”
- “Accept the wishes of people who come to them”
- “Activities to spread their religion in the world”
- “Care for victims of cults”
- “Engage in protests against cults and the like and speak out about societal problems”
- “Action for peace, and dialogue”
- “Religions have different ways of thinking and therefore one cannot make a blanket statement about what they ‘should do’”

Opinions: Passive

- “It’s fine if one believes in just the god[s] that one thinks exist[s]”
- “Pursue an academic and philosophical path”
- “Investigate Truth”
- “There is nothing they should do if their heart and mind is satisfied by their faith”

Opinions: Critical

- “Pay an especially large amount of taxes”
- “Stop receiving money”
- “Religion is not needed to do something”
- “Not engage in money making”
- “Stop demanding donations”
- “Live plain lives ([I have] a strong image that they have money)”
- “Allow people to talk to them about problems for free”
- “Stop fighting with other religions and understand and make space for each other”
- “Stop conflict between religious persons”
- “Engage in a movement for not going to war on religious grounds”
- “Eliminate conflicts and incidents that arise due to religion”
- “Before doing things to others, look at themselves more”
- “Have an interest in other religions as well and eliminate boundaries”
- “Do not flaunt or put out in the open the religion one believes in”
- “Act, do not just pray”

(2) 2010

In 2010, 191 respondents (4.4%) offered open-ended responses. We will divide them into the same three categories as we did with the 2005 responses.

Opinions: Active

- “Environmental protection, education, protecting children”
- “Help out with international aid”
- “Engage in activities that become a base for the local community”
- “Talk with people about their troubles”
- “Preach more to death row criminals”
- “Mental and emotional care for families of the deceased”
- “They should proselytize, publicly stating the situation in which they came to believe in their religion, how they changed spiritually / mentally [*seishinteki ni*], as well as how their money and daily life situation changed”
- “Even if they don’t go as far as to engage in a movement, I think they should be pacifists”

Opinions: Passive

- “I don’t think there is a need to do anything in particular”
- “Religious training”

- “It’s fine as long as they have faith”

Critical Opinions

- “Not recommend their faith to others”
- “Not pushing their own faith upon others. Understand that each person has their own views”
- “I want them to not do anything and be quietly well-behaved”
- “They should try not to do anything. Each person’s values are different”
- “The founder of the religion should not live luxuriously”
- “Not gather money and only teach to people who are seeking teachings that serve as mental and emotional support”
- “They should become conscious of wars and killings between religions and repent”
- “Create a rule of not visiting homes to engage in religious solicitation”
- “Stop being a religious person as a livelihood. In other words stop engaging in money making”

As can be seen above, critical perspectives primarily were centered on religion’s exclusionary nature, religious conflict, religion being money driven, and forcing religions on others.

Chapter 19: Issue of Organ Transplants from Brain-Dead Donors

An open-ended response option was included in 1998, 2005, 2012, and 2015 for a question regarding organ transplants after brain death. There were many comparatively similar open-ended responses, and therefore we will look at overall trends using answers from 1998 and include only distinctive answers from later years. While in 1998 between three and four percent of respondents provided an open-response, in subsequent years this fell to between the comparatively low range of one and two percent.

Question Content

What do you think about donating your organs if you were to become brain dead?

1. I readily want to donate them.
2. I am okay with donating them.
3. I don't really want to donate them.
4. I definitely do not want to donate them.
5. Other ()

(1) 1998

221 of 6,248 respondents (3.5%) provided an open-ended response. There were some that did not necessarily understand the question, particularly the meaning of "brain death." However, these are useful for grasping students' views of organ transplants in general, and we will therefore include them regardless of their level of understanding.

Depends on My Family's Opinion

- "I will ask what my family thinks"
- "I would leave it to my parents"
- "If my family gives permission then I am okay with donating"
- "I myself am fine with it but first I will ask my family and/or acquaintances about their views"
- "I would leave it to my family"
- "Depends on the Recipient"
- "If they were donated to children, then yes"
- "If I can specify the recipient"
- "If I can choose who to donate them to and I thought the person was fine, then yes"
- "I would be okay with donating to certain recipients"
- "If it is someone that I like, then yes"
- "If it is my parents or siblings, then yes"

Depends on the Organ

- "Depends on the organ"
- "While I would not donate organs, I want to donate my corneas"

Seek Compensation

There were some answers along the lines of “I would want to sell them for money” or “if money was given to me.”

- “If my family is given money”

With Conditions

- “If I am healthy then I am okay with donating”
- “Depends on the part” “Depends on the area”
- “I think it would be hard to donate parts that would involve a change in appearance”
- “The success rate after donating is low, so I would want to donate if the rate becomes higher”
- “If I was judged as being brain dead and my life was going to end, then I am okay with donating. However, deciding to stop organs without the person themselves agreeing is a separate issue. If there is a chance of coming back then I would not want to die”
- “On the condition that, for example, if I don’t wake up even after a year”
- “If the proper laws are in place then it’s okay”
- “I readily want to donate if the following conditions are in place: agreement has been reached in advance with no problem and I can be confident that the donation method is safe”

Other

- “I want to live as long as there is a chance”
- “Insofar as I cannot find an answer regarding where to draw the boundary of death, I cannot answer this question”
- “But I do not want to donate those of my parents”
- “I wouldn’t know until it happens”
- “I am a registered donor”
- “I neglect my health and therefore do not think that I have organs inside of me that can be donated to others”
- “I see brain death as death, so they can do anything to me if I am dead, but I do not *readily* [want to] donate”
- “I cannot really agree with organ donation from an ethical perspective”
- “Shouldn’t groups, doctors, and nurses who say ‘donate organs!’ do it first?”

(2) 2005

61 of 4,252 respondents (1.4%) provided an open-ended response.

- “What happens to me after death doesn’t matter”
- “My agreement would depend if my family members and I agree to donate to each other when asking them about it in advance”
- “I don’t even consider thinking about it”
- “If my parents’ opinion and my intention doesn’t match, I don’t know . . .”
- “I would leave it to someone who holds me dear”

(3) 2010

82 of 4,311 respondents (1.9%) provided an open-ended response. Responses did not differ in content in any major way from 1998 results. In this year as well, people who touched upon their family stood out (13 people). Below we have primarily included somewhat distinctive responses.

- “If correct knowledge about the Act on Organ Transplantation spread throughout the whole nation then I am okay with donating. With the Japanese people’s current awareness, I do not want to donate”
- “Donating is fine after 49 days have passed”
- “I am fine with donating if money is received”
- “In the first place I think that brain death is not the death of a person”
- “If it is what my spouse wants, then yes”

(4) 2015

85 of 5,773 respondents (1.5%) offered an open-ended response. While there were no major changes, responses that focused on which organs would be transplanted stood out somewhat. There were 4 people who wrote something along the lines of “besides eyes.” The reason for this is unclear.

- “I have a weak stomach, so I could donate other organs”
- “I think that my organs are not healthy”
- “Donate organs besides the heart and eyeballs”
- “If it’s my heart, then yes”
- “If my family [would be the recipient], then I am okay with donating”
- “I want to help people and I also want to die as I was born, so I don’t really know”
- “I will follow (ask about) the opinion of my parents, the ones who brought me into this world”
- “I am okay with donating but if my family says that they do not want [me] to donate then I do not want to donate. I do not want to increase [their] sadness.”
- “If the chance of returning from brain death becomes lower than twenty percent, I am okay with donating”
- “Once research on brain death progresses further then I am okay with donating. At present it is still too unclear”
- “I have doubts about brain death”

Chapter 20: The Yasukuni Problem

The survey asked about the Yasukuni problem in 2005 and 2015. In 2005, those who said that they were aware that there are differences of opinion regarding the prime minister visiting Yasukuni Shrine were asked to “write one or two concrete reasons given by people opposed that the prime minister should not visit.” Of the 4,370 respondents, 2,547 wrote at least one reason; we could say that there was considerable interest in this issue. Also, in 2005, the South Korea survey asked the same question, and we have included these answers as well for comparison.

a) Japan survey

We asked respondents to write one or two reasons. Of the 2,547 who provided an open-ended response, 866 wrote two reasons. Therefore, in total there were 3,413 open-ended responses. Ones only comprised of statements like “I don’t know” are not included in this figure. Generally speaking, responses fall into several categories. We have included examples below of each.

The Enshrinement of War Criminals

The most common type of open-ended response touched upon the enshrinement of war criminals. 559 responses noted that Class A war criminals are enshrined. 25 individuals wrote “Class A war criminals” as “permanent war criminals” (*eikyū senpan*). 4 people wrote “Level 1” (*ikkyū*). 15 respondents mentioned Tōjō Hideki by name (“War criminals like Tōjō Hideki and others are enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine,” etc.). Some wrote in more detail:

- “It is thought that since Class A war criminals are enshrined (jointly enshrined), visiting is legitimizing [the] war”
- “Because those who were in command during the war are enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine”
- “War criminals like Tōjō Hideki and others are enshrined at Yasukuni Shrine”
- “Disliking that Class A war criminals are jointly enshrined”
- “War criminals who led the war and were put to death after the war are also enshrined”
- “To visit a shrine where war criminals are enshrined is to approve of what the war criminals did”
- “To visit a shrine where war criminals are enshrined is inexcusable [thing to do] to those harmed by the war”

To Visit is to Approve of War

- “Because visiting Yasukuni Shrine means something like that it is okay to engage in war”
- “Because they want a perfect enemy since their own country is not united”
- “It approves of war”

Other

- “The prime minister, the top of government administration, giving special treatment to a specific religious facility”

- “Because the United States is scary”
- “Because it is not a temple but a shrine (because temples mourn the deceased and shrines sacralize the war dead, glamorizing war)”
- “Because war criminals from Christianity and other religions are jointly enshrined without their consent”
- “It is just harassment”
- “Joint enshrinement that ignores the wishes of the families of the deceased”
- “For no special reason they just feel like opposing”

b) Korea survey

In the 2005 South Korea survey, 481 out of 1,288 respondents provided an open-ended response. 258 of them provided two reasons, for a total of 739 reasons. As expected, the greatest number of respondents touched upon the enshrinement of war criminals: 144 people, or approximately twenty percent. 6 people used the expression “Class A war criminal.” 4 people used the expression “Level 1 war criminal.”

The Enshrinement of War Criminals

- “It is hard to understand why one would visit and pay respects to Class A war criminals”
- “Because after World War [II], war criminals were enshrined and the Japanese prime minister is using this for political aims”
- “The deification of war criminals”
- “While they’re called war victims, in reality even people who are the war’s primary culprits are enshrined”
- “Yasukuni Shrine is a place where people who started a war are enshrined and it’s ridiculous to venerate them”
- “Because, while the people who are enshrined as gods are historical heroes in Japan, they are war heroes who killed very many people”
- “Enshrining people who killed others itself is a problem”

Not Reflecting on the Past

Many respondents in South Korea (73) stated that the past is not being reflected on in Japan. Below are some examples.

- “Japan is not reflecting on past mistakes”
- “Worshipping people who started a war itself is hard to understand”
- “Visiting such a shrine as the country’s prime minister means that Japan is not reflecting and is legitimizing war”
- “Because going to pay respects to people who committed crimes means that one can do the same thing”
- “Because going to pay respects to people who started war means that one is not reflecting on the past”

The Resurgence of Militarism and Imperialism

48 people touched on this topic.

- “Revering war criminals like gods”
- “Japan is again aiming to conquer the world”
- “It appears that [the prime minister], recalling that time, is again dreaming of world hegemony”
- “The resurgence of imperialism”
- “Orchestrating the re-appearance of the right-wing extremism of the past”
- “Yasukuni Shrine is a product of a war of aggression”
- “Still militarism (a sign that imperialism still exists)”
- “The resurgence of militarism”

Diplomatic Issues

While respondents did not really touch upon this topic in Japan, 72 respondents in South Korea mentioned that Yasukuni visits become a diplomatic problem between Japan and South Korea and / or China.

- “There is the possibility of South Korea-Japan and China-Japan foreign relations growing worse”
- “It antagonizes China and South Korea”
- “The problem is that it ignores [Japan’s] relationship with surrounding countries”
- “Isolation in the international community, diplomatic problems”
- “Criticism and alarm in the international community”

Other

There were some responses that appeared to indicate a lack of interest as well as ones that demonstrated an incorrect understanding of the war.

- “It is not a place where the enshrined people are good to the extent that one should publicly go to pay respects to them”
- “People drafted from Korea who died in suicide corps do not wish to be included in the Yasukuni Shrine visitors’ log”
- “It is the same as enshrining Hitler as a god”
- “To worship people who killed others is to lack respect for the people who died. However, in war there is nothing right or wrong, so it is fine to go visit”
- “While it is fine to visit, I want them to not make a show of it”
- “It is an affront to Koreans who died in the war”
- “While I have heard of it, honestly I am not very interested. It’s fine whether they do or do not
- “I think that visiting Yasukuni Shrine has no benefits for South Korea or Japan”
- “An act in which the prime minister leans rightward”
- “While people who fought against Korea at the time are enshrined as heroes in Japan, if thinks about it from another position, these are people that [South] Koreans dislike”

Chapter 21: The Aum Shinrikyō Issue

In 1996, 1997, and 1999 there were questions about Aum Shinrikyō that included an open-ended response option. The question in 1997 and 1999 was the same.

a) Regarding people who joined

Question Content

(1996)

What do you think about the people who were not involved in the crimes but had joined Aum?

(Please choose one answer.)

1. I cannot understand at all the actions of people who would join that kind of religion.
2. I can understand to an extent why they wanted to join.
3. I think that there is the off-chance that I would have joined.
4. It's unrelated to me so I do not have any opinion about it.
5. Other ()

390 (9.0%) respondents chose response no. 5. While there were some responses that made fun of or criticized such followers, other opinions were sympathetic or demonstrated a degree of understanding towards them.

Responses Making Fun of Followers, Calling them Weak, Etc.

9 respondents used the phrase “weak.”

- “I think doing something like joining that kind of religion is stupid”
- “I find them pitiable because they were tricked” [Editor’s note: while this response is placed here in Japanese version, it would fit better in the next section “Somewhat Sympathetic Responses: Bad Luck, Tricked, Etc.”]
- “Stupid, you reap what you sow”
- “Those that join that kind of religion are stupid humans”
- “It’s strange that they didn’t think that it was off”
- “As bad as it gets, as low as it gets”
- “Stupid people who only think of themselves”
- “A stupid group”
- “While I can understand that such people exist, I think that they are weak”
- “A group of weak people”
- “Since they’re people who must rely on religion, they should just go to another religion”
- “[Their] disposition of trying to rely on others gets on my nerves”
- “I think that mentally and emotionally weak people were tricked by smooth talk”
- “People are all weak [but it] all depends on the person”
- “I think they are people who have a low self-defense awareness”
- “All should be given the death penalty”
- “No longer qualified to be humans”

Somewhat Sympathetic Responses: Bad Luck, Tricked, Etc.

15 respondents used the expression “tricked.” 22 used phrases meaning “pitiable” or indicating feeling sorry (11 *kawaisō* and 11 *ki no doku*).

- “Being pursued by the mass media, I feel sorry for them”
- “I sympathize with them since they didn’t join knowing the whole truth, but one should take all responsibility for one’s actions”
- “I think that their luck was bad”
- “I think that it’s unfortunate for them that the religious organization they happened to join was a criminal organization”
- “I think that Aum used clever techniques so there’s not much that could have been done to have avoid it”
- “There’s nothing they could have done because they didn’t know that such a thing was being done”
- “There’s not much that could have been done because they were taken advantage of when they were insecure—since they had only studied up until then, they had no friends, and couldn’t manage human relationships in society”
- “If they didn’t know anything about the crimes, there’s nothing they could have done”
- “I think they are pitiable people who appeared due to the warped parts of society”
- “Are there not few who joined out of their own desire? I think that maybe they all didn’t have somewhere they belonged”
- “They’re all the more pitiable because they are good people”
- “I just think that they are pitiable”
- “I feel sorry for them that this kind of thing was done by the [group] that they relied on and believed in”
- “I think it’s pitiable. While it’s tough to have what one believes in be rejected, I would like them to have had the courage to realize [what was happening] at an early stage”
- “I think the people who were believers are pitiable, not bad”
- “I think they’re pitiable people who were tricked by Aum”
- “People who joined Aum are pitiable: despite seeking a mental and emotional home in it, they were tricked”
- “I think that they’re a bit pitiable: they lost their mental and emotional home and were betrayed despite believing”

“It’s Hard to Say”-Type Responses

- “It’s hard to speak simplistically about it. There are societal factors too”
- “I think that there’s the off-chance that I might have also been made to join”
- “Since sarin and the like was done by people at the top on their own, the believers who knew nothing about it are not bad and I have no desire to criticize them”
- “As is the case with all other religions, I don’t think we can say things about the people who belong to a religious organization that did something”
- “It’s hard to say because the solicitations [to join] might have been really convincing”
- “It’s freedom of religious faith so it’s fine”

- “I think that whether their motivation for joining was good or bad and the crimes are not related that much”
- “I think that people joined due to various reasons and therefore each of them have different ideas”
- “I think that it is fine if the person themselves believed in it”

Lack of Knowledge and Insight

- “A decreased ability to properly understand religion / a lack of religious knowledge”
- “I think they knew nothing about other religions.”
- “I think that people like them with fundamentally mistaken ideas appeared because religion was taboo in public”
- “I think that there’s a problem with the current educational system”
- “I thought that they do not have much of an ability to recognize the essence [of Aum Shinrikyō]”
- “While I understand how they felt, I wish they had looked at the religious organization from a more third-person perspective”

Incomprehensible

- “I cannot understand what was attractive about Aum”
- “It’s a mystery why one would lose one’s objectivity to that extent”
- “While I understand their feeling in joining, I don’t understand why they are still followers after they found out about the crimes”

Other

- “I want to ask them about how they were brainwashed.”
- “I want to know why they joined”
- “I think that they are probably conscientious people. Also, I have the impression that many of them are talented, very proud, and convinced they are special people”
- “I want them to leave and move on”

b) Regarding coverage of Aum

Question Content

(1997, 1999)

Q18: Currently how interested are you in news coverage of Aum Shinrikyō? Please choose from the following.

1. I am very interested.
2. I am somewhat interested.
3. I am not that interested.
4. I am not interested.

SQ18. People who chose answers 1, 2, or 3 in Question 18: Please indicate what you are interested in. (Multiple answers accepted.)

1. Trial developments

2. People who are still followers
3. People who left Aum returning to society
4. The words and actions of Asahara Shōkō (Matsumoto Chizuo)
5. The teachings of Aum Shinrikyō
6. Victims of the sarin gas attack
7. Other (Please write concretely: _____)

(1) 1997

In 1997, 289 (5.1%) of respondents provided an open-ended response. Many of them said that they are interested in news regarding Asahara Shōkō (28). 13 people touched upon how the news reports themselves, 9 people referred to those wanted for crimes, 7 mentioned the sarin gas attack, 6 touched on mind control, and 4 wrote Jōyū Fumihiro's name.

On News Reports

- “While I'm interested in Aum's attack and actions, I don't rely on news reports”
- “The way news reports are done and the psychology of the ordinary people who endorse these reports”
- “The dubiousness of commentaries in news reports”
- “Facts about the birth and childhood of Aum's followers, former followers, leaders, and founder (I have no need for celebrity-entertainer reporters' dogmatism and biased views)”

The Current Activities of Aum Shinrikyō and Their Danger

- “The current threat”
- “Whether Aum will commit terrorism again”
- “About suspects who are still on the run”
- “What the families of people who died in the sarin gas attack are doing now”
- “Aum's current activities”

The Background of the Attack

- “The relationship between the era / societal background that gave rise to this kind of religion and the psychology of the people who became followers”
- “Why religions engage in anti-social activities”
- “Why people seek salvation in fraudulent religions”
- “Why does a societal phenomenon like Aum Shinrikyō arise?”
- “The personality and nature of the people who were attracted to Aum Shinrikyō”
- “About why followers joined”
- “What motivated them to join”

Other

- “Religious studies' scholars opinions regarding Aum”
- “I am interested in Jōyū”

- “The opinions that ordinary people (Japanese people, foreigners) have about this incident”
- “I want to know how much they will be punished”
- “I’m just curious about everything”
- “The children who were at Satyam, the reception and reaction of locals”

(2) 1999

In 1999, 728 (6.7%) of respondents provided an open-ended response. This was more than in 1997, both in absolute numbers as well as in a percentage of the whole. Notably, 31 respondents mentioned the Subversive Activities Prevention Act. Over 50 people said that they wanted to know about the current activities of Aum Shinrikyō. There were also 27 people who mentioned developments related to followers and other similar topics. 5 people mentioned Jōyū Fumihiko. Over 10 people expressed distrust of the mass media’s coverage.

Concerns about Aum’s Return, Restrictions on Aum’s Activities, etc.

- “About the application of the Subversive Activities Prevention Act, the formulation of special legislation”
- “The three fugitives who continue to run away”
- “How the activities of such dangerous groups should be restricted in the future”
- “I feel like they’re going to come back sometime”
- “The concern that a sarin attack will happen again. Or a similar incident”
- “How true the assessment is that ‘Aum is returning’”
- “That the number of believers are increasing and [Aum is] expanding its power throughout the country”
- “Whether Aum Shinrikyō will again grow big”
- “The existence of opposition movements in cities and other places that followers are trying to live, what is trying to be done next”
- “The current activities of Aum Shinrikyō, trouble they are having with local residents”
- “People who came back despite having left. People who become followers despite the sarin gas attack”
- “Jōyū’s release and subsequent Aum activities”
- “The words and actions of leaders after being released from jail and those of followers at the time”

Other

- “Japanese society’s way of thinking about religion into the future”
- “The reasons and aims of Aum leaders who joined after having graduated from top universities”
- “It’s a mystery to me why the national government recognized [Aum] as a religion despite the founder Asahara being like that”
- “Why they were able to make sarin”

Chapter 22: The Issue of Islam

The survey asked about Islam three times: once in 2005, 2012, and 2015. An open-ended question was included in 2012 and 2015 regarding whether one would feel uneasy if a mosque was going to be built in one's neighborhood.

Question Content

Q16C. If a mosque (Islamic temple) was going to be built in your neighborhood, would you feel uneasy?

1. I would not feel uneasy.
2. I would feel a little uneasy.
3. I would feel very uneasy.

Q16D. People who chose response (2) or (3) in the above question: please briefly explain why.

()

(1) 2012

Of this year's 4,094 respondents, 1,782 said in Question 16C that they would feel "a little uneasy" or "very uneasy." 1,447 people, or over eighty percent (81.2%), concretely wrote why they felt this way. Most were only simple responses like "scary, dangerous," "they'd probably commit terrorism," "[I have a] bad image [of them]," and "they would cause trouble and law and order would deteriorate." In other words, most were based on respondents' images of Islam or Muslims.

Over 200 people used the word "scary." 54 people used the word "terrorism." 5 people used the word "dangerous." While the majority of responses were along the lines of "scary," "because it's scary," "seems scary," "kinda scary," "because it's kinda scary," "something scary about it," and "something unpleasant about it," there were also more concrete responses.

Fear (Terrorism, Etc.)

- "Because Islam's way of thinking of 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' is scary"
- "Islam has a strong religious faith and is therefore scary"
- "Because it seems like they would do something extreme"
- "Because I'd be scared of terrorism considering that they might be extremists (or extremists might come)"
- "There is the danger of terrorist acts by extremists"
- "Because I think Islam is, while only a little bit, connected to terrorists"
- "Because I would be concerned that terrorism or something would occur"
- "Because there is the possibility that terrorists would be hidden amongst them"
- "Because I think there is the danger of it being misused by terrorists"
- "Because I have the image that Islam is scary if you make [its followers] angry"
- "Because I don't have a good image of mosques"

Feeling Uneasy about a Mosque Being Built Nearby

- “People who don’t like Islam might harm the mosque or Muslims. I would fear that I would get wrapped up in this”
- “Because there would probably be people who for no real reason dislike Islam and this would probably lead to problems”
- “Because Muslims and nearby residents might cause trouble”
- “Because it’s a religion I don’t know and being solicited [to join] would be scary”
- “I am concerned about what would happen when there was trouble because I think [the] religion’s solidarity is firm”
- “Because I would dislike it if religious protests and the like happened in my neighborhood”
- “Because there’s the possibility that I would be harmed when religious trouble arose”
- “Because many people would come, transportation would become inconvenient”
- “Because religious conflict might occur”
- “I have an image that Islam has always been at war with Christianity and end up thinking that they’re planning something against Christianity. Also simply that foreigners increasing in number is scary”
- “Because I feel uneasy when I think that many people would come every day and that opposing people would come”

Awareness of One’s Ignorance about Islam

- “Since I have never had any involvement with Islam itself, I don’t know what kind of religion it is”
- “Because I’ve never interacted with Muslim (I know nothing about them)”
- “Because I don’t know what Islamic temples are like”

Other

- “Because the mosque might loudly announce [that it is time for] prayer multiple times a day (This was the case when I went to Indonesia.)”
- “Because it would be a little bothersome to have *azan* broadcast the first thing in the morning”
- “Because I was surprised at a mosque when I went to Singapore”
- “As a Christian I would feel concerned that there might be friction. I would also be uneasy that an incorrect religion’s temple is being built”

(2) 2015

In 2015, 3,519 of 5,773 respondents replied that they would be “somewhat uneasy” or “very uneasy,” and 2,798 of them wrote concrete reasons why. Compared to 2015, more people said that they would be uneasy. Notably, there were a significant number of explanations that touched upon ISIS. We can sense deep interest in Islam; approximately eighty percent of respondents wrote concrete reasons for their unease.

While we only asked people who said that they would feel somewhat or very uneasy to explain why this the case, there were many people who, having said that they would not

feel uneasy, explained why (1,550 of 2,104 respondents, or approximately 74%). We can see that to a limited extent people are in their own way trying to understand Islam. The majority of these responses stated that reasons people feel uneasy relate only to a small portion of Muslims. In other words, after touching upon Islam having a scary image, that ISIS has emerged as an issue, or that its emergence is frequently covered in the news, these respondents state that they do not think such issues related to Muslims in Japan.

Below we have included some concrete responses.

- “While I know it’s not the case with everyone, recently the extremists are scary”
- “Because just ‘Muslims are coming’ doesn’t mean ‘criminals are coming’”
- “While there are some people that engage in terrorism as the Islamic State, I don’t think all Muslims are like this or that Islam is a dangerous religion”
- “Because I think there are very few extremists like ISIL”
- “Because IS and Islam are different”
- “Because I think that while it was talked about on TV, this only some of them”
- “Because I don’t think that they’re suspicious”
- “Because part of Islam’s teachings is close to what I think”
- “Because I don’t feel uneasy about Islam itself”
- “Because I don’t have a bad image of Islam”
- “Because Islam is not a dangerous religion”
- “Because Islam is a religion that people have adhered to for a long time in history and the majority of people are not terrorists”

More Concrete Reasons

- “Because only some people who believe in Islam do dangerous things. In terms of the world population, there are many [followers of] Islam, so I am not concerned about it”
- “Because Islam is a religion that people have adhered to for a long time in history and the majority of people are not terrorists”
- “Because it’s just a ‘religious’ building and I wouldn’t think it was built for ‘political purposes’ (people might say that peace has made me stupid, though)”
- “Because I think that ISIS is just a small portion of Muslims who use stretched interpretations of scripture to do what they want”
- “Because I hear that only a small number of Muslims are dangerous like IS and most are peaceful”
- “Because I don’t think that Muslim equals extremist. I think that it’d be fine since Japan has good public security”
- “Because just a small portion of Muslims are crazy and it would be strange for other ordinary Muslims to be discriminated against”
- “Because it was reported on TV that Muslims are conscientious and not allowed to kill people”
- “Because I don’t feel that Islam is a scary religion and think that it would be the same as having a church nearby”

- “Because I am studying about Islam and therefore going to a mosque once a week”
- “Because I think the existence of Muslims and Islam is not something to be opposed by others but necessary”

In 2015, overall 110 people used the words IS, ISIS, or ISIL when writing an open-ended response. 42 people used one of these acronyms when explaining why they would not feel uneasy, and 68 people used one of them when explaining why they would feel uneasy. This is respectively 2.7% and 2.4% of respondents—close percentages. Even if a person has IS (the Islamic State) in mind, this does not directly lead to them being uneasy about a mosque being built nearby.