

Speech by H.E.Tetsuo Shioguchi, Ambassador of Japan on the occasion of the Japanese Language Graduation Ceremony on Saturday, 27 February 2010, at the Multi-Purpose Hall of the Embassy of Japan

**Dear proud graduates, distinguished teachers and guests**

Good afternoon and welcome to this special graduation ceremony.

It is a real honor for me to address yet another batch of dedicated, hard working, and outstanding group of students. I would like to extend my sincere welcome to all of you here associated with Japanese language -- teachers, parents and friends. But, most of all, I am here to acknowledge you, the Japanese language graduates. Congratulations!

To begin with, language is a culture and a tool for communication; a mean by which people exchange ideas and get to know each other better. In today's world, foreign languages are essential for developing communication and common interests among people.

Graduates – I really appreciate the motivation and enthusiasm you have showed in learning the Japanese language. I would like to thank you for building an important bridge between Japan and Jordan. Through learning each others' languages, our two nations and our peoples will create closer ties of friendship, respect, understanding and mutual benefit. Your parents and teachers are all so very proud of you. We celebrate how far you have come and we look forward with eagerness and anticipation to see how far you will go. Can I issue you one challenge myself? Don't give up on your high level of Japanese Language. It will assist your future career. You must continue to use it and converse as often as possible.

And to you teachers, I want to thank you for the time and energy that you have put in to enable these students to achieve and reach their academic goals. Our celebration today is a tribute to your commitment, your foresight, and your excellence in applying your given skills.

Last but not least, to the parents who have supported your sons and daughters, thank you.

I am very proud to inform you that all your efforts in learning Japanese language in the past decade have proven successful and borne fruit because of your dedication. Each year, a number of Jordanians are awarded with postgraduate scholarships by the Japanese government to pursue their studies at Japanese universities. A good number are currently taking up research in Japan, others have finished and returned to Jordan while some will start their studies in this coming April.

On a much related note, the Embassy of Japan, in cooperation with the university's Faculty of Foreign Languages, has been running an annual Japanese Language Speech Contest since 1997, giving students an opportunity to contemplate and examine their speaking proficiency.

Furthermore, the Embassy of Japan in cooperation with Japan Foundation has been running an annual Japanese-Language Program for Overseas Students in which outstanding students of Japanese language are given the opportunity to visit Japan and to deepen their knowledge of Japanese language, society, and culture for the purpose of further encouragement of their study.

In this regard, I am very happy and honoured to inform you that all of these great achievements have led to the approval of establishing a BA course in Japanese- English Language and Literature at the university, expected to open in September 2010.

I am hopeful therefore, that you continue to work harder to achieve higher levels of Japanese language ability and motivate your friends and colleagues to follow your steps!

Congratulations once again and I wish you all the very best for the future.

Thank you.