

H.E. Ambassador Tetsuo Shioguchi speech
on the occasion of the annual Japan- Jordan Academic Society
gathering on Saturday 20 March 2010

Dear proud alumni and friends of Japan

Good afternoon

I am very pleased to welcome all of you here on this special and sixth gathering of the Japan-Jordan Academic Society.

At the very outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Mohammed Matouq, President of the Japan-Jordan Academic Society and to all members who have successfully established this academic and friendship organization dedicated to Japan. I highly appreciate the efforts and assistance which each one of you has individually done to further enhance the relationship between our two friendly countries.

Today's meeting sees different segments associated with fostering strong relationships between Japan Jordan getting together. I would like to welcome representatives from JICA, Japanese Society, Japanese Schools, Jordanian Ministry of Higher Education, University of Jordan, media personnel, and Japanese Language Speech winners who did a great job last week. Also, what makes this gathering special is the attendance of the five new Jordanian scholars who will be pursuing their postgraduate studies in Japan this year.

Saying that, I am glad to describe this cultural diversity as a global village; an opportunity for all of you here standing under one roof to contact with a diverse group of people, to meet with the experts, to network, mix and socialize, exchange views and ideas and build friendships. I hope young Jordanians and Japanese will make use of today's event and fulfils its aim of successfully getting to know others better, discussing issues of mutual concern, strengthening existing ties in addition to deepening interest in each others' cultures and exploring similarities and differences thus forming long lasting friendships and influence each others.

Dear friends

Six years ago, the Japan-Jordan Academic Society saw the light. Its members grew to more than seventy since the establishment of the scholarship program in the 1975. Many have come back to Jordan to assume outstanding positions as doctors, leaders, experts in their fields and promising academics, while a number are currently pursuing their undergraduate and postgraduate studies in Japan.

I am sure that everyone of you have had a quite a unique experience in Japan and that despite the geographical distance and differences of cultural background, there is a lot of common ground between Japan and Jordan. I would like to thank you all for actively contribute in the development of Jordan and also in the enhancement of relationship between Jordan and Japan.

Next month, we will be seeing five outstanding Jordanian scholars off to Japan. Mr. Tymoor Hamdokh, our brilliant Japanese teacher, will leaving us to pursue his PHD at Waseda University, Ms. Rua Samara, a very dedicated and smart Japanese language student, will attend Keio University, Ms. Maha Saadi will join Sophia University, Mr. Mohannad Nassar will attend Tokyo Medical and Dental University, while Mr. Abdelrahman Shuqaifat will pursue his postgraduate studies at Osaka University.

I would like to wish you a very memorable stay and study in Japan. I hope that your experience in Japan would provide you with new perspectives, offer you opportunities for dialogue with Japanese and help you grow professionally and personally. Always remember that each one of you is an ambassador of Jordan to Japan.

I hope the number of young Jordanians scholars studying in Japan would grow in the future. I would encourage you all to spread the word about the Japanese government scholarships and in specific I would recommend all winners of the latest Japanese Language Speech contest, who are among us today, to apply as they have proved their excellent abilities in mastering the Japanese language and thus I am sure you will make great scholars.

In this regard, I am so happy to say that Japanese language is gaining popularity among Jordanians. This has led to several discussions between Japan and the University of Jordan aiming at establishing a BA course in Japanese- English Language and Literature at the university. I hope this program would see the light in the next academic year.

As for JJAS role, I expect more effort from all of its members in order to promote mutual understanding and cordial relationships between Japan and Jordan through education, culture and business activities. I also would like to hear about events organized to promote opportunities to exchange news and views; and provide a forum for communication and introduction of new Jordanian graduates from Japanese institutions. I hope to hear of new and novel activities in this year.

I would like to conclude my remarks by adding that as part of the embassy's cultural events, I would like to invite you all to a concert by Hanatemari, a duo by sisters Mikiko and Naoko Goto, in which they will play the koto, a traditional Japanese stringed musical instrument, and the western flute, on Monday 26 April 2010 at 7:00pm at Al Hussein Cultural Center.

Many thanks for attending this gathering. I wish you all every success and all the best.