Japanese Language Workshop at Hotel dePapa’e

Japanese Language classes were started on Feb. 10, 1998, at Hotel dePapa’e located in Blue Area, sponsored by Monbusho Alumni Association of Pakistan. More than twenty students were given admission. Mr. Fujii, Urdu language student at NIML very kindly accepted the responsibility to teach Japanese. Initially, the course was for 4 month duration, but due to the strong demand from the students, the course will continue for another four months. The students gave a welcome party to Mr. Neki, the new Director, Information and Culture, Embassy of Japan and Mr. Kokubo, Japanese Language teacher at NIML who will be returning to Japan this year. The students thanked the MAAP for organizing the Japanese Language classes and their teachers for taking special interest in teaching. Mr. Neki welcomed all the students and expressed deep satisfaction on their proficiency in Japanese language. He said that these courses were very useful for those people who wanted to learn something extra along with their routine jobs during the morning hours. He further added that these workshops also increased cultural understanding between the two friendly countries. In the speech, Mr. Kokubo praised the efforts of Monbusho Alumni Association for arranging such short courses. He declared the course a success. Dr. Najam Siddiqi, President, in his address mentioned the aims and objectives of MAAP. He also added that Monbusho Alumni will continue to promote cultural exchanges between Pakistan and Japan. All the students demanded continuation of the course which was agreed upon by Mr. Neki and the President MAAP.

Mr. Kinzo Nakagun leaves for Australia

Mr. Nakagun, Director, Information and Culture, Embassy of Japan, left Islamabad for his new assignment in Brisbane, Australia. He served in Islamabad from Jan. 1995. Mr. Nakagun completely revitalized the activities of the department and can be credited for introducing the popular Japan Cultural Month, in Nov./Dec., and it was due to his efforts that MAAP came into existence. We wish him all the best in the future.

Mr. Hitoshi Neki, the New Director, Information and Culture

Mr. Neki arrived at Islamabad in Jan. 1998 as the new Director, Information and Culture, Embassy of Japan. A welcome party was arranged at Islamabad Club by the life members of Monbusho Alumni Association of Pakistan living in Islamabad. At the meeting, Mr. Neki was warmly welcomed and introduced to the MAAP member. He was very pleased to meet the members and expressed great satisfaction on the activities of MAAP.

Mr. Takuroa Fujii: a Japanese with a Pakistani touch

Mr. Fujii, 34 years old, a resident of Yokohama was working in a Steel industry as an electrician, where he met Pakistanis. Soon they became friends, and it was due to their motivation that he decided to visit Pakistan. He came to NIML and successfully completed two years Urdu language course. Now he is working in Peshawar.
Many people in Pakistan wonder how Japan rose from the ashes of the Second World War and became, in a period of a few decades, the second biggest economic power of the world, without having large natural resources such as oil, gas and other minerals. It, indeed, seems like a miracle that the Japanese who were devastated during the war and also suffered nuclear holocaust, quickly built up their country and became a leading industrial power in textiles, ship-building, electronics, automobiles and a number of other industries.

There are a number of factors that have contributed to Japan's phenomenal success, such as discipline of the Japanese workers, thriftiness of the Japanese people and their habit of saving money, hardwork, fairness in dealings with each other, fatherly attitude of the superiors to their subordinates, and their sense of responsibility. But one single thing that has contributed more than anything else to Japan's progress and prosperity is universal and free basic education. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868 when some progressive, development-minded nationalists ousted the Tokugawa feudal lords and restored the young emperor Meiji to power, the imperial capital was shifted from Kyoto to Tokyo. Radical and far-reaching reforms were introduced in every branch of national life. The government, soon thereafter, issued the imperial rescript on education making basic education both compulsory and free. A large number of brilliant students were sent to various European countries and to America to acquire modern scientific and technological knowledge. At one time, about 70% of the annual budget of the Ministry of Education was being spent on those students studying abroad. At the same time, schools were established all over the country to impart modern knowledge to Japanese youth. Renowned professors and lecturers from foreign countries were hired to come and teach at the Japanese universities and they were paid high salaries and given large houses to live in. In this way, an educational revolution was brought about in the Japanese society.

There was some concern about the reaction from the conservative elements to this large scale import of knowledge from the western countries. It was genuinely felt that certain elements of traditional Japanese culture needed to be protected and preserved. The slogan of “Western Knowledge, Eastern Spirit” was coined in order to select the best values and traditions from both the West and from the Japanese culture.

With this beginning and with sustained efforts, Japan has been able to achieve mind-boggling success in the fields of industry and economy. Japanese people give great deal of respect and affection to the teachers as well as to students. The common address of respect in Japanese language is “sensei” which means teacher or professor.

I hope that we Pakistanis will also learn from the Japanese experience in the field of education in order to develop our country. At the same time, I hope that the Japanese government will continue to give educational help to Pakistan. I also hope that the number of cultural scholarships given to the Pakistani students by the Japanese Ministry of Education will be increased to the level of India or Bangladesh to keep some sort of parity between the three South Asian countries.
One of the sweetest memories of my life is a two-day stay with a Japanese family at a city called Ageo-shi in the Saitama Prefecture of Japan. All the countries that I have visited in my life, I never got an opportunity to stay with a traditional family and to closely observe that family life. So any understanding of the way of life of the country used to be, at best, superficial.

In Japan, it was different since our sponsors had been prudent enough to arrange a two-day "home-stay" event in our, otherwise hectic, schedule of activities during the study-tour. Of our 45-member international group, my lot fell with the Matsumoto family of the Ageo-shi. The family was a little above middle-class by Pakistani standards and owned a beautiful house in the serene suburbs of the Ageo city. The head of the family, Mr. Matsumoto Kiyoi, was an employee of the postal service department of Japan while the lady of the house was a housewife.

For two days, the two became my temporary "Otosan" (father) and "Okasan" (mother). The day when Okasan, her eldest son Seiji and two friends of the latter, were coming to pick me up from our residence in the Urawa city, was passed in excitement and anxiety as I had been wondering all along what it would be like to spend a couple of days with a family I was seeing for the first time. The organizers of our tour had given the participants a fact-sheet each, containing the particulars about the respective would-be host families. Similarly, the latter also knew sufficient things about the prospective guests and had seen their photographs as well.

So even our first encounter with each other was very friendly, not like the one that is between strangers.

For the next two days, I was lavishly feasted, showered with nice Japanese gifts and shown around several places of tourist attraction in Ageo and in Tokyo. The eldest son Seiji, the only one who could also manage some English and was exactly of my age, became a good friend of mine. I was treated as elder brother by his three younger siblings; brothers aged 16 and 5, and a charming sister aged 13. I got the taste of traditional Asian hospitality, in the real sense of the word in those two days. In return, at the time of leaving their home, I presented to them few Pakistani souvenirs.

I felt how congruent are the Asian values, be it in Japan or Pakistan. The politeness, hospitality, candour and mutual cooperation are the common Asian traits. Also, there was a striking similarity in family structures and the roles and relationships of members of a family, between Japan and Pakistan. I keenly observed the eating, dressing and speaking habits within the family. Everything was so beautiful, so disciplined and so nice that all this made me envious of our Japanese friends.

The day when I was to leave Japan, the family once again drove down to Urawashi to bid me farewell and to present me a beautiful album of my photographs with them. I cannot even forget those last 30 minutes that I spent with them. It has been six years since that day. We regularly exchange letters and postcards. One thing that I thought often is to get once again a chance to spend "two more days" with the same family and to relish the delicious Sakana (fish) that the Okasan had cooked for me.

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Yamanashi Medical University and Affiliated Teaching Hospital

By Dr. Najam Siddiqi

Located about two hours drive South West of Tokyo in the beautiful prefecture of Yamanashi, is one of the most elegant, newly developed national Yamanashi Medical University, and its teaching hospital. I arrived in Yamanashi in April 1987 on a Japanese Government scholarship. Yamanashi prefecture is surrounded by mountains, all lush green and the famous Mount Fuji could be seen peeping behind other mountains. Dr. Yamaguchi, a young lecturer in the Department of Orthopedic Surgery received me very warm-heartedly. He was assigned a special duty by the Professor of the department to look after me. He did his utmost to help me settle down. I got a five room house, rent free, where I stayed for five years.

Although Yamanashi Medical University was a newly built institution, but still not lacking in any of the fields. Faculty included more than 40 professors in all the specialties including basic sciences, 30 associates and 34 assistant professors. Total number for faculty staff exceeded 245 in 1988. Research facilities were excellent. At that time Prof. Hisao Takayasu was the President of the University. Prof. Noriya Akamatsu was Chief of Orthopedics and his main interests were Total Joint Replacements. They have designed their own total hip replacement through computer simulations and animal experiments. Dr. Ide was the charge of computer

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simulation, very hard-working and dedicated person, an orthopedic surgeon but fully devoted to his computer simulations. He also developed a gait training robot, which was used daily for bedridden elderly patients for early gait training. Prof. Hamada, a hand surgeon, very kind hearted person, taught me every thing about hand surgery and later basic research on tendons.

In Japan, the medical degree of MD is six-year course, the first year is spent in studying non medical subjects such as Humanities, Social Sciences, Foreign Languages, Pre-medical education, etc. This is necessary because in Japan the students enter the medical school after Matric.

In the 600-bed teaching hospital, I was astonished and amazed by the hard work of all the staff starting from the Prof. to the nurses. Professors are not allowed to do practice, however, the other faculty members are allowed to visit private hospitals once a week. The schedules of all the faculty members are planned by the professor. In Japan, there is no such department as Department of Health, instead the professor of each department of the Medical University is responsible to send doctors to the rural hospitals in his area.

The nursing staff is even more hard working than doctors. They have to work over time because there is acute shortage of nurses in Japan. Every ward has a nursing station, well equipped with all the modern facilities e.g. a monitor through which all the patient's data could be reached including laboratory reports, treatment charts, x-rays, etc. This hospital had two unique mechanisms to deliver different materials from one place to another. One was a tube system with vacuum inside, and bullet-shaped carriers carry the material through these tubes which linked all the wards, OPDs, main reception, operation theaters (OT), emergency rooms etc. Another system was a rail trolley which ran on the ceiling. They have station at all the above mentioned places. No need of a peon to carry things, just put these things in any of the two carriers, press the number of the location where you want to send the material and press start.

The operation theaters were also especially designed. They had a control room, which was just like a TV studio with a monitor for each operation room. A single person, the chief nurse, could keep an eye on all the operations simultaneously and she could talk to any body she wanted. The roof had porous ceiling from where a current of clean air entered all the rooms and exhausts were placed at the lowest level close to the floor so that any dust, or bacteria in the air must be pushed to the floor. The patients coming from the wards enter the OT through a sliding window and the patient stretcher remains outside the main OT walkway. The OT was attached with a very big sterilizer room and emergency laboratory for making frozen sections, etc.

Their reception also had a well developed computerized system. The new patients get a card with a computer identification number on it, and a record file. On every visit, the card is passed through a scanner which automatically opens the patient's record file on the computer. Then a message is sent to the record file room which will send his file to the department where the patient is heading, using the ceiling railway or vacuum tube system. Even the patients are so disciplined that I never saw any pushing, shouting, at the reception. Patients wait quietly until their names are announced on a microphone.

I was amused to see the working hours of the doctors. The hospital activities finish around 4 P.M. and after that until 9 or 10 P.M. all the doctors were busy working on the computers, compiling data, making slides for the presentations etc. There is no such concept that we go home at 2:00 PM and eat lunch there, then sleep in the afternoon. I have visited many countries and worked at different hospitals in USA but could not find as hard working nurses and doctors as in Japan.

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**Editorial Board**

Dr. Najam Siddiqi  
Dr. S. Sikander Khan  
Dr. Ashraf Hussain

**Add:** # 595, St. 69, I-8/3, Islamabad  
**Tel:** 9251-443999  
**Fax:** 9251-443999  
**E-mail:** najam@ortho.sdnpk.undp.org  
http://japanemb.org.pk