

Message from H.E. Mr. Nobuaki Tanaka
Ambassador of Japan

I would like to take this opportunity to offer my warm greetings to the Pakistanis. I recall still vividly my first impression of Islamabad in 1997, accompanying then Foreign Minister Mr. Yukihiko Ikeda. The city was lush green, spacious and peaceful, and the backdrop of the Margalla Hills greatly enhanced its beauty. I was also very impressed by the people of Islamabad whom I found to be courteous and hospitable. I am happy to be back here as the Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Relations between Japan and Pakistan have been expanding steadily in recent years. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, Pakistan has gained the respect of the international community for shouldering a key role in dealing with the threats of international terrorism. Japan recognizes the vital and indispensable role that Pakistan plays for peace and stability of the international community as the front line state against new threats, and fully supports Pakistan’s efforts to build a moderate welfare Islamic state. I feel my assignment is very challenging as the present situation is an advent to further strengthening Japan’s relations with Pakistan, to which Japan attaches importance. The Japanese Foreign Minister Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi visited here in August 2004 and confirmed Japan’s desire to further strengthen relations with Pakistan. The visit has given additional momentum to the

H. E. The Ambassador's Dinner for the MAAP Alumni

H.E Nobuaki Tanaka, Ambassador of Japan, hosted a dinner reception for the MEXT Alumni Association members at his residence on Nov.22, 2004 at 6:00 pm. More than fifty members from different parts of the country, Japanese Embassy officials and number of journalists attended the function. The ceremony started with welcome remarks of the Ambassador. He praised the alumni members for maximum contribution in the development of their country. He thanked Mr. S. Sikandar Khan, President, MEXT Alumni Association, Dr. Najam Siddiqi, Secretary and other members for running this Association and delivering a taste of Japanese culture to the Pakistani society. He especially mentioned about the Japanese food which the members cook and enjoy in Pakistan. Mr. S. Sikandar Khan in his speech thanked the Ambassador for inviting all the members to such a wonderful Japanese dinner. This has now become an annual event and gives a unique opportunity to all members to discuss different issues.

The Alumni members with H.E. Nobuaki Tanaka, Ambassador of Japan (1st row, 3rd from left). Also seen in 1st row are Mr. Hisao Nishimaki, Director Culture, Dr. Zubaida Chaudhry, Mr. Sikandar Khan, Dr. Shinwari, Dr. Najam & Dr. Ashraf
continued from p/1 . . . . Ambassador of Japan

development of our friendly relations.
Political ties, economic cooperation and cultural interchange are the three main pillars of the Japan-Pakistan relationship. Japan and this region have held close cultural ties from ancient times when the Gandhara civilization flourished, and active traffic of culture and goods took place through the Silk Road at that time. We still maintain some goods that came from this region in ancient times as national treasures in our museums. In Japan, elementary school pupils are learning the word “Indus Civilization-Moenjodaro” in social studies. In order to deepen our mutual understanding, we need to know each other in every field. Therefore, during my tenure as Ambassador, I wish to encourage political relations, economic cooperation as well as cultural collaborations.

continued from p/1 . . . . Alumni Dinner

Mr. S. Sikander Khan mentioned the desirability of developing a Japanese garden with cherry blossom trees in Islamabad. The President said that memories of Japan are still fresh in our minds and we can never forget the changing colours of the autumn leaves.

Mrs. Zubaida Chaudhry, an alumna who attended the last Alumni Re-union in Tokyo gave a detailed report about the various events at the re-union. In the end Dr. Najam Siddiqi did “Compai” which means “Cheers!” in Japanese. It was followed by a group photo and then dinner. The party ended at around 8:00 pm.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere wishes to the Government and people of Pakistan for their continued progress and prosperity.
The fourth Reunion (Tsudoi) of Former Students in Japan from the Southwest Asian and Middle Eastern Countries was held at Tokyo Prince Hotel Golden Club from 3rd to 9th October, 2004. The Participants were from Syria, Egypt, Oman, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Bangladesh, Nepal, India, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. From Pakistan Mr. Zafar Mehmood of NEC Corporation Islamabad, Mr. Toqeer Aslam from SUPARCO Lahore, Dr. Wazir Khan Baluch from Sindh University and Dr. Zubaida Chaudhry from NARC Islamabad participated.

The Tsudoi this time was particularly important since former students from Mid-East countries also participated for the first time. In this way, Tsudoi became an international event with participants from various countries and academic fields.

Several important personalities attended the reception on the first day. The presence of former Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Tsutomu Hata was a pleasant surprise. This also reflected the importance given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to this meeting. Similarly, several important members of the Diet also attended the reception and later mixed with the participants and had very frank and cordial discussions. Another very important personality was the Agricultural Vice Minister of Japan. We had a brief but very useful discussion with him related to the development of agriculture in Pakistan.

A series of lectures and seminars gave the participants an idea of the changes happening in Japan in social and economic fields. The lecture by Mr. Seiichi Kondo, Director General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan was really thought-provoking and gave a good insight into the socio-cultural changes happening in modern Japan. Mr. Zafar was chosen as one of the two speakers and was invited to give comments after the speech of Mr. Seiichi Kondo, on the topic of "Tradition and Modernization".

Another contribution of the Pakistan group was that the topic suggested by us i.e. "Role of Ex-Foreign Students in the Development of their Respective Countries" was chosen as one of the two topics for panel discussion.

At the end of the two-day seminars and lectures, the participants spent a day visiting the show room of the Sharp Company displaying the latest technical developments. This gave them a chance to observe the recent technical development going on in Japan. The participants were also taken for a visit to "Daiba" which is a modern hostel for foreign students in Yokohama, and also to the Tsukuba University of Science & Technology. In this way, the Tsudoi was a very valuable & memorable experience for all of us and gave us a chance of knowing a little bit more about new developments in Japan.
Dr. M. Akbar, Vice President
MAAP, Visited
Tokushima University

On the invitation of Dr. Matusoka of Chubu University, Dr. Mohammad Akbar, General Manager, High Voltage & Short Circuit Lab., Wapda, Rawat, Islamabad, attended the IEEJ Conference in Nagoya on August 5-6, 2004. Thereafter, he attended the "Insulator Seminar" organized by Chubu University on August 8-9, 2004. During this seminar, Dr. Akbar delivered one-hour lecture on "Insulator contamination problems of arid countries" which was attended by over 80 active researchers from various Japanese Universities and Research Institutes.

Availing this opportunity, Dr. Akbar made a courtesy call on Prof. Katsuo Isaka of Tokushima University who acted as adviser for his MS thesis (1975-1977). During the visit, Dr. Akbar had an exchange of ideas with the researchers of Isaka Laboratory on a wide range of topics of mutual interest.

Cricket in Pakistan - Softball in Japan

In Pakistan, cricket is the most popular game, and most Pakistanis love to play and watch cricket. Being a Pakistani as well as a big cricket fan, I always look for a chance to play cricket in Japan, especially at the beautiful playground of the University of Tokyo. While it is very difficult to reserve the ground to play cricket, I somehow managed to get it on a couple of occasions and we arranged a cricket match. All the Pakistani students participated with full enthusiasm. While the match was in progress, most of the Japanese passersby stopped for a while to observe what was going on, as majority of the Japanese are not familiar with the game of cricket. By contrast softball, which is a modified form of baseball, is very well-known to all Japanese, but is Greek for most of the Pakistanis. Softball/baseball are so popular in Japan that one can definitely find a baseball match whenever television is turned on at any hour of the day.

Every year we have the Chemistry Department Softball Tournament and my lab team always participates in this tournament with full preparation and enthusiasm. Preparations for the tournament start well in advance, and my classmates play practice matches throughout the year to do their best in the tournament. Sometimes I also participated in the practice games to learn the basis of the game, and discovered that softball is very easy to play if one knows how to play cricket. The use of a bat and a ball, throwing of the ball by the defensive team, and hitting the ball by the offensive team, scoring by running between two distinct ends, a wide ground etc. are the most common features of cricket and softball. Both games require precision in timing, skill, physical energy, and discipline to play and win the game. Hitting a ball over the boundary line without touching the ground is called a six (score six runs) in the cricket language, and a home run (one point) in the case of softball. Hitting a six or making a home run is the most exciting event of these games.

Recently, I have developed great interest in baseball, and this year I also participated in the softball tournament. By utilizing my cricket experience for the softball, I managed to play well by hitting the ball hard and made home runs. My Japanese lab fellows now call me the "pinch hitter". Now whenever I miss playing cricket I try to play softball and satisfy my thirst for cricket.
Dr. Shiro Usui, a senior professor and researcher from Japan, recently visited Pakistan at the invitation of Mr. Zafar Mahmood, his former student at Nagoya University who is an Alumni member now.

Dr. Shiro Usui was an Associate Professor at Nagoya University in the 1970s and later Professor at Toyohashi University of Technology. Presently, he is the Head of the Neuroinformatics Lab Brain Science Institute (BSI) at RIKEN (Rikagaku Kenkyu Sho) which is a prestigious national research institution of Japan. Professor Usui is an internationally renowned researcher in this field. He is also an active member of a multi-national research body involved in brain research.

Dr. Usui is the author of several books and research articles and has made important contributions in research in various fields of Biomedical Engineering extending over a period of more than 30 years.

During his short visit to Pakistan, Professor Usui gave a lecture and presentation at Al-Khwarizmi Institute of Computer Research at Lahore University of Engineering and Technology about his current research. He also gave a lecture at Lahore LUMS. Both lectures were attended by faculty members and students of respective universities who showed lot of interest in his research and asked several questions. It is hoped that these lectures will lead to further cooperation in mutual research among these organizations.

We deeply express our thanks to Professor Shiro Usui on behalf of all the members of the MAAP Alumni for his visit and lectures. We hope that in future similar visits would be organized.

Dr. Usui visited AI-Khwarizmi Institute of Computer Science at University of Engineering & Technology, Lahore.

Prof. Shiro Usui giving a seminar at LUMS in Lahore

Prof. Shiro Usui (3rd-L) and Mr. Zafar Mahmood (2nd-L) with his sons at his residence in Islamabad

Prof. Shiro Usui (3rd-L) and Mr. Zafar Mahmood (2nd-L) with his sons at his residence in Islamabad

I received the Monbusho scholarship in April 2001. Currently I am enrolled in the PhD program at the Institute of International Health at the University of Tokyo.

In any field, to write a research proposal for one's doctoral thesis is never an easy task. One has to go through a systematic procedure of reading relevant materials, innovative thinking and finding novel ideas. I also went through this procedure. Being a medical doctor my area of interest is in the health system in Pakistan.

Over the last few decades very little attention has been paid to preventive medicine in Pakistan. Most of the investment and research has been funneled into the clinical side. As a result, vital indicators such as infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rates, have gone up and are amongst the highest in world. Our health system faces three major problems; increasing access, decreasing costs and improving quality of services to the community.

The theme of my research focuses on all the above-said issues in the area of maternal and child health in the provinces of Punjab and NWFP. It looks into the issues of the community's access to health services, comparison of our public hospitals infrastructures with international standards and the community's perception of the quality of services from public hospitals.

In December 2003, I visited Pakistan as part of the data collection phase of my research. Initially, I had to get permission from both the provincial ministries of health for the data collection from public hospitals. Then I visited those areas which are included in my research. In Punjab, I visited Jhelum, Mianwali, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Sahiwal, Lodhran, Okara, Khanewal, Toba Tek Singh contd...p/6

http://www.maap.edu.pk
The MEXT Alumni Association of Pakistan (MAAP) organized a lunch in April 2004, at the Islamabad Club to welcome Mr. Hisao Nishimaki, Director Press, Information & Culture, Embassy of Japan, to Pakistan. The various activities of the MAAP were introduced by the outgoing Director Mr. Hajime Kido. Mr. Hisao Nishimaki briefly spoke on the occasion and hoped to further strengthen the Alumni Association in the years to come. He joined the Japanese Embassy during March 2004 and his last place of employment was in Australia.

Sayonera to H. E. Mr. Minoru Shibuya

H.E Mr. Minoru Shibuya left Islamabad on 29th August to take up his new assignment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. During the one year and ten months tenure of Mr. Minoru Shibuya, he worked tirelessly for strengthening the existing friendly ties between our two countries. He was particularly interested in MAAP activities and appreciated the efforts of the former students of Japanese universities to inform and disseminate various aspects of Japanese culture to the Pakistani people. We wish Mr. Minoru Shibuya every success in his life and hope that he will visit us again some day.

continued from p/S ... health system in Pakistan

Multan and Bahawalpur. In NWFP, I had to visit Swat, Lower Dir, Haripur, Swabi, Charsadda, Kohat, Karak and Bannu.

It was undoubtedly a very tiring journey, but I am hopeful that the data collected will be helpful for researchers and health policy makers in making decisions, in the area of maternal and child health in Pakistan.

Through my research, I am hoping to comment on the current situation of public hospitals in all the districts I visited, both their weaknesses and strengths in infrastructure and in service delivery. The research will also give an insight on community perceptions of the quality of the services they get from public hospitals. It will assist decision-makers in making decisions to improve the hospitals infrastructure, improve standards, quality of services and cost sharing mechanisms with the community.

Although the trip to Pakistan was hectic I think it was worth while. I believe that if young scientists can contribute a little bit to the cause of a better and more developed Pakistan, it will definitely pave the way for scientific and social development. It will ensure our place in the community of developed nations in the world.

Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari
Vice-Chancellor Kohat University

On Sep. 8, 2004, Dr. Shinwari became the Vice Chancellor of newly opened Kohat University of Science and Technology, Kohat, NWFP.

Dr. Zabta Khan Shinwari has D.Sc. in Molecular Systematics from Kyoto University (Japan), besides being a Post-Doc Fellow of Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS) and a STA Fellow.

He was the founding member of the National Herbarium at Quaid-e-Azam University, later nominated as programme leader of COMS TEC for Frontier Technologies Research Center, Islamabad. He has more than 100 research papers to his credit. He is member of 13 national/international scientific bodies and has published 3 books. All the MAAP members congratulate him on his new appointment and wish him success in the future. Dr. Shinwari was the first president of the MEXT Alumni Association of Pakistan.
A one-day seminar on Life & Education in Japan was organised by the MEXT Alumni Association of Pakistan in Earth Sciences Museum Hall of the Quaid-e-Azam University on 21st October 2004, to inform and educate students who wish to apply for scholarships for higher studies in Japan. Professor G.S.K. Niazi, Office Incharge, Student Affairs, Quaid-e-Azam University, introduced the speakers, Mr. S. Sikander Khan and Dr. Najam Siddiqi. The speakers gave a brief introduction to the living conditions, customs and the culture of Japan with the help of slides. The students were also provided information about the MEXT scholarships and how to apply for them, the admission requirements of the Japanese universities and the teacher-student relationship. Two video films depicting student life in Japan and life at the university campuses were screened. The lecture was followed by a lively question-answer session.
H.E. Nobuaki Tanaka, Japanese Ambassador, inaugurated the Japanese film festival 2004 on Dec. 10, at Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Chairman CDA, Mr. Kamran Lashari was the chief guest and TV artist Ms. Leyla Zubairi was the Guest of Honour. Dr. Najam Siddiqi, secretary MAAP, started the program thanking all the guests on behalf of the MAAP and the Embassy of Japan. He also mentioned Japanese gardens and the desirability of having a Japanese style garden in Islamabad and requesting Mr. Lashari to allocate a suitable place for it at Damanekoh or Pirsohawa, where cherry blossom trees could also be planted. Mr. Lashari, in his brief address assured his full support to this idea and suggested that soon a committee would be formed to select the most suitable place for the Japanese-style garden. He made a request to the Japanese ambassador for technical support. The ambassador in his speech said that the Japanese movies are about the Japanese way of life, its culture and traditions and of everyday living of Japanese people. The film "The Twilight Samurai" was shown to the guests. It was followed by light refreshments.

H.E. Nobuaki Tanaka, Japanese Ambassador and Mr. Kamran Lashari, Chairman CDA addressing the audience

Few MAAP Members' Profiles - "Minna San Gambarimasho"

Dr. Mosood A. Tindyala
Dr. Tindyala graduated from Tokyo Institute of Technology, Tokyo, in 1969 with a B. Eng. in Ceramic Engineering. He worked in Prince Glass in Pakistan and Celanese Research in the US before going to Rutgers University, NJ, for a Master's in 1977 and a Doctorate in 1979, both in Ceramic Engineering. He has worked in States in Inland-Ispat as a Senior Staff Research Engineer and in Raytheon as a Consultant Engineer. Currently, he works internationally as a consultant. Dr. Tindyala has arranged and chaired a number of international conferences and has presented several technical papers. He has extensive publications in the fields of High Temperature Materials, Steelmaking Technology and Energy in technical journals such as American Ceramic Society, Iron and Steelmaker, AISI and ISS-AIME. He was a member, Executive Board, Iron and Steelmaking Society, USA.

Dr. Nasir Khan
B.Sc., M.Phil, Ph.D.
Dr. Nasir M. Khan received his B.Sc. Engineering (Agri.) degree from the University of Faisalabad in 1990, M.Phil in Water Resources Management from UET-Lahore (1994).

He was awarded MEXT scholarship for the session 1998 to 2002 to pursue his Ph.D program at the University of Tokyo in the field of Bio-environmental Engineering. He conducted his Ph.D. thesis on "Analysis on Environmental Land Degradation caused by Hydro-salinity in Semi-arid Irrigated Regions". He was also awarded post-doctoral fellowship under JSPS, Govt. of Japan, for two years (2002-2004) in the University of Tokyo, Japan. Dr. Khan is now working as Resident Sr. Engineer in the Japanese Consulting Engineers (Nippon Giken Inc., Pakistan Office in Islamabad) since June 2004. He is the 1st individual from Pakistan to join the CIGR Commission.

http://www.maap.edu.pk