

Egypt national day

Egypt: next holiday destination

On the occasion of the National Day of Egypt, The Japan Times had the opportunity to interview the Egyptian Ambassador to Japan, Hisham El-Zimaity, who has held the position since September 2011, to hear his views on the bilateral relationship and other issues.



Excerpts of the interview follow:

First of all, I would like to express my deepest respect to Their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko; and best wishes for progress and prosperity to the friendly Japanese people.

Last July, President Mohamed Morsi was removed from power and an interim government was installed. Could you tell us about the current political status of Egypt?

During the year when the Muslim Brotherhood took

power, Egypt was losing its unity and historical identity.

Some people mistakenly call what happened last summer a coup d'Etat, but it was actually the restoration, by the people, of the identity of Egypt, a tolerant country where Muslims and Christians live side by side. It was the people's revolt against fascism that led the army to save Egypt from civil war.

Now we have restored stability and security. The government has relaunched business development plans and we are open for new investments.

Japan regards the new Egyptian government as legitimate as Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida released a statement in May that the government of Japan considers the election of H.E. Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi as the new President of Egypt following the May 26th to 28th presidential election, as an important step towards political normalization in Egypt based on the roadmap and offered congratulations on this occasion.

What were the recent developments in Egypt-Japan diplomacy since last July?

Our former Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy, who was the ambassador in Japan from 1997 to 1999, visited Tokyo last December. He met H.E. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and H.E. Kishida, as well as the Speaker of the Lower House of the Diet. It was agreed to resume the level of cooperation we previously enjoyed. Also, in December, the Egypt-Japan Business Council was held in Tokyo, which saw many business leaders from Egypt come to Japan to discuss business cooperation and opportunities with their Japanese counterparts.

The director-general of the Middle Eastern and African Affairs Bureau of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited Cairo in February, right after the adoption of our new Constitution in a popular referendum.

In April, H.E. Yutaka Iimura, the special peace envoy of the government of Japan, visited Egypt during a tour in the region. He had frank discussions



President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi EMBASSY OF EGYPT

with many officials, and met Mr. Al-Sisi, who was then a presidential candidate. They had an honest conversation and exchanged opinions on a variety of subjects related to the Peace-Process, the stability of the region, and common efforts to fight and eradicate terrorism.

Just a few days ago, Parliamentary Senior Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Nobuo Kishi had fruitful discussions in Cairo with H.E. President Al-Sisi, H.E. Prime Minister Mehlh, as well as Foreign

Minister Sameh Shoukry on bilateral cooperation and the situation in Gaza.

How will Egypt-Japan diplomacy develop moving forward?

It will certainly develop further and the bilateral relationship will get better, closer and deeper.

There is long standing trilateral cooperation among Japan, Egypt and Africa as Japan backs Egypt's support for Africa. This trilateral cooperation has been on-going since the mid-1980s.

For example, Egypt hosts an advanced institute of agriculture, where Japanese experts train African specialists in rice cultivation, food production and other agricultural activities.

Also, Japan sponsors the training of African nurses at a nursing school near Alexandria, the second largest city in Egypt after Cairo.

Regarding peacekeeping, counterterrorism and security in general, we have the Cairo Regional Centre for Training on Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa, of which Japan is a main sponsor. Our two nations organize training seminars for African Officers, policemen, jurists and others at the centre.

How about academic ex-



Tohoku teenagers visit Egypt for a New Year's celebration. EMBASSY OF EGYPT

changes?

At any given time, there are about 350 Egyptians attending doctorate courses or post-doctorate courses at Japanese universities. That is a big number and we are proud of maintaining this number during this time of financial difficulty. The majority of these students are studying science such as medicine, engineering and information technology, while a few are studying literature and other liberal arts.

Just outside of Alexandria, lies the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology, or E-JUST. This institution is sponsored by 11 leading Japanese universities, which send professors to E-JUST. All E-JUST professors are Japanese and the language of instruction is English.

After completing the first phase, which ran from 2009 to 2013, the school entered the second phase in 2014. Now it has a new president and board of trustees. Additionally, the number of master's and doctoral degrees awarded has exceeded 100 graduates.

For Egypt, education and



Aida Opera cast poses with Ambassador Hisham El-Zimaity (center) EMBASSY OF EGYPT

technology are top priorities and I am grateful for Japan's continued support in these fields.

Additionally, many Japanese study Arabic at Cairo University, spending one or two years there. I'd like to encourage more Japanese students to come because exchanges between young Japanese and Egyptians help guarantee the future of our bilateral friendship.

Another project between

Japan and Egypt is the Grand Egyptian Museum, or GEM. It is currently under construction and is scheduled to be completed within two years.

Located near the pyramids, the museum will be the largest museum in the world and many Pharaonic masterpieces and treasures will be displayed there.

Additionally, the museum has a data center, financed by Japan, which contains

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Continuing support for Egyptian democracy

Masahiko Komura
HONORARY CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-EGYPT PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP LEAGUE

As honorary chairman of the Japan-Egypt Parliamentary Friendship League, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to H.E. President Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi and the people of Egypt on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



Egypt has gone through two

political changes in the past three years, and is now in an important phase politically and socially. Amid such a situation, the presidential election was held in a peaceful and fair manner in May. I would like to pay respect to the process of establishing a democratic system.

H.E. Al-Sisi was elected with significant support from the Egyptian people, and I hope he will use his excellent leadership to realize stability and prosperity by steering his country's government and economy in a manner that includes a wide range of Egyptian people.

As an old friend, Japan has

supported the development of Egypt for a long time. From now, Japan would like to continue and strengthen support for Egypt's efforts to establish democracy and stabilize the society and the economy.

Egypt plays an important role as a pillar of peace and stability in the Middle East and Africa. Egypt is an important friend with whom we have a long-established and cooperative relationship, as well as an important partner in the Middle East and Africa. I am confident this tradition of amicable relations between Japan and Egypt will not only continue, but further deepen in various fields.

We, the members of the Japan-Egypt Parliamentary Friendship League, are determined to make our utmost efforts to further enhance this excellent bilateral relationship. I heard a parliamentary election is scheduled to be held and a new Egyptian parliament will be formed. In that case, I would like to work on strengthening exchanges and cooperation between parliamentarians of both countries.

Last but not least, I would like to express my best wishes to the people of Egypt for great happiness and health and sincerely hope for the realization of stability and prosperity in a new Egypt.

Congratulations

to the People of the Arab Republic of Egypt

in commemoration of their 62nd National Day on July 23



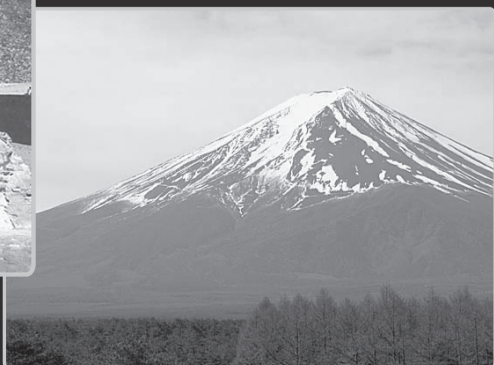
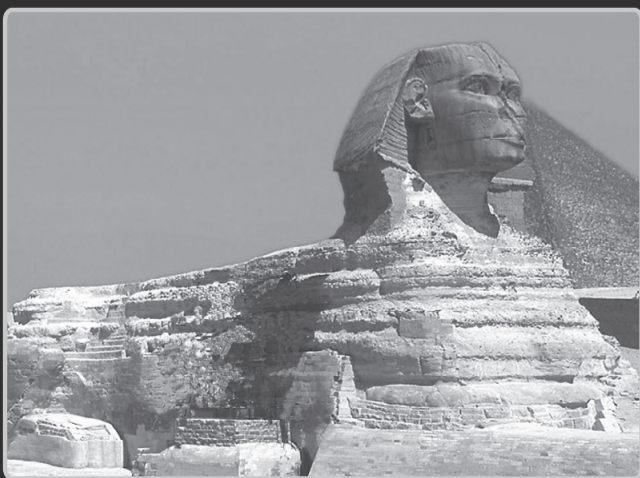
The Japan-Egypt Arts and Culture Friendship Association

日本エジプト芸術文化振興協会



Haruhisa Handa

Chairman of the Japan-Egypt Arts and Culture Friendship Association



The Japan-Egypt Arts and Culture Friendship Association promotes mutual understanding and strengthening of the relationship between Japan and Egypt, through artistic and cultural exchange.

Egypt national day

Many interesting things for visitors to see and do

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4
information on the history of each artifact: where, when and who discovered it, and in which shape it was found. It also keeps track of who restored them and other relevant information. There is also a restoration center where experts trained in Japan work to return newly discovered artifacts to their original condition. Thanks to a great deal of Japanese equipment in the center, we are now able to restore many items, including copper and wooden works, cloths and mummies and others. It's a fantastic gift from Japan to which we are thankful.

There is a reason that Japan is deeply involved in Egyptian archaeology. Renowned Japanese Egyptologist Sakuji Yoshimura was in charge of the team that discovered the second Sun Boat, a wooden boat said to have been used to carry ancient kings' bodies to eternity in the direction of the sun disk, the home of the god Ra. Professor Yoshimura's team is doing a magnificent job restoring the sun boat.

Because of humidity, the wood was found in a very fragile state, so they treated it in a very professional way. The final phase is to restore the boat to its original condition, which requires a high degree of skill, and I am grateful to professor Yoshimura's knowledge and wisdom in handling this job.

What sightseeing venues would you recommend to Japanese people visiting your country?

Japanese are fond of Pharaonic history and they enjoy visiting the Pyramids in Cairo and the temples in Luxor, Aswan and the Great Abu Simbel. Mr. Kishi and his delegation enjoyed their visit, three days ago, to Luxor, and promised to encourage Japanese tourists to resume their trips to Egypt, which is now very safe.

I also recommend that Japanese tourists visit our oases. We have six oases in Egypt that can be reached by traveling across the desert by car within four or five hours.

In the oases, there are what



Clockwise from top left, His Highness Crown Prince Naruhito visits a King Tut exhibition in August 2012. Ambassador Hisham El-Zimaity (left) and Japanese VIPs cut an Egypt-Japan Friendship Cake. Arabic language students pose at a graduation ceremony at the Egyptian Cultural Centre. The Egyptian ambassador offers an "ankh" (the key of life) to the governor of Fukushima as a symbol of eternal friendship and solidarity. EMBASSY OF EGYPT

we call eco-lodges. Eco-lodges are similar to hotels, but are built with local materials found in the oases. For example, the buildings and furniture are built with palm trees and the ceilings are made of bricks of salt brought from the lake shore. Since the salt is transparent, moonlight enters the room from the ceiling, so you enjoy a magnificent night view. There are no lights in the middle of the desert, allowing visitors to observe millions of beautiful stars. There are no mobile phones or Internet so visitors can enjoy the natural environment.

The most famous oasis is the Siwa Oasis. It is where Queen Cleopatra regularly bathed, and people can still dive and swim in the same place where the most famous queen Cleopatra bathed. Another place that makes Siwa famous is the Temple of the Oracle, which is where Alexander the Great sought counsel from the god Ammun

before taking over rule of Egypt and conquering the world. He is said to be buried somewhere in the desert near Siwa.

Also, people sometimes fail to visit cities like Alexandria because they don't have time. However, it's a beautiful city, called the "Bride of the Mediterranean" because of its history and remnants of Greco-Roman times. Cleopatra's treasures were discovered undersea near Alexandria and are displayed at the Alexandria National Museum. It really is a nice place to visit.

Cairo is also a very diverse and cosmopolitan city. It has Pharaonic, Islamic, Coptic and even Jewish flavors mixed together. There is a place where a synagogue, a church and a mosque are just beside each other, and I feel this shows my hometown Cairo as a symbol of tolerance and the broadmindedness of the Egyptian people.

How about foreign direct in-

vestment in Egypt? What business fields will Japanese companies have chances in?

We gladly welcome Japanese companies to Egypt. We already are pleased to host over fifty Japanese manufacturers of automobiles, machinery, equipment and other products.

The Egyptian government has announced a master plan to develop the zone surrounding the Suez Canal; and the creation of industrial zones, especially catering to high-tech industries. We hope Japanese companies will profit from these excellent opportunities.

Moreover, one area we intend to focus on is energy and electricity, where Japan has a lot of experience. For example, Japan has an advanced technology for clean coal that emits very little carbon dioxide, and this may be a rewarding area for Japanese investment in Egypt.

The agro-industrial field is also important. We have 86 million people in Egypt and the population is growing, making the agro-industrial field a potentially lucrative investment for Japanese companies.

es you would like to see happen?

I would like to encourage Japanese artists and singers to perform in Egypt. For example, we have a beautiful opera house offered by Japan, where operas and other theatrical performances are held. I would like to see some contemporary Japanese singers perform in the opera house and perhaps even in front of the Pyramids and Sphinx.

Finally, I would like to seize this opportunity to encourage our Japanese friends to make Egypt, the oldest nation on earth, their next holiday destination.

Are there any other exchange-

Development will lead to stability

Yuriko Koike
CHAIRMAN, JAPAN-EGYPT
PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDSHIP
LEAGUE

I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the National Day of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

H.E. Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi was elected president in May's presidential election, and I would like to express my admiration that Egypt has taken an important first step in line with the road map toward democracy. I would also like to pay heartfelt my respects to the fact that Egyptians are in unity working toward a new Egypt under the new administration.

The political and social significance of Egypt in the Middle East and the Arab region



will become greater and greater. Since the Arab Spring took place three years ago, Egypt's role has been growing larger than before. Japan and the rest of the world have expectations that stability and continuous development of Egypt will lead to not only Egyptian nationals' safety but also regional safety and stability.

In order to develop areas that have enjoyed great potential over the long-term, including agriculture, tourism and human resources, Japan, as an old friend of Egypt, is determined to support Egypt in the establishment of democracy and the stabilization of its society and economy.

Amid the recent critical situation in Palestine, Egypt must play a significant role. The world is watching and has high expectations for Egypt's leadership.

As a graduate of Cairo University, I will try to promote exchanges between the young

people of both countries. This year marks the 40th anniversary since Cairo University established the Japanese Language Department, and I am grateful the young Egyptians who will make up the future Egypt are studying Japanese language, history and culture, successfully bridging both countries.

I also hope young Egyptians learn Japanese sincerity toward science, technology and engineering at the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology, and play an important role in building a powerful country.

As the chairman of the Japan Egypt Parliamentary Friendship League, I hope the parliamentary elections will take place soon and we can expand exchanges with our Egyptian counterparts.

Last but not least, I sincerely hope for the prosperity of Egypt and the Egyptian people.

Congratulations

to the People of the Arab Republic of Egypt
on the 62nd Anniversary of Their National Day

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DAI NIPPON CONSTRUCTION

International Division

6-16-6, Nishi-Shinjuku, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 160-0023, Japan

Phone: +81 3 5325 6211 Fax: +81 3 5325 6214

http://www.dnc.co.jp/en/

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JAPAN TOBACCO INC.

JT Bldg., 2-1, Toranomon 2-Chome, Minato-Ku, Tokyo 105-8422, JAPAN
Phone: (03) 3582-3111 Fax: (03) 5572-1463 URL: http://www.jt.com

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