

SPEECH BY MR. AKIRA OUCHI, CONSUL-GENERAL OF JAPAN IN
KARACHI,
AT “KOTO” AND “SHAMISEN” CONCERT
ON SUNDAY, MAY 31

Her Excellency Ms. Sharmila Farooqui, Minister for Culture and Tourism,
Government of Sindh,

Mr. Arshad Mahmud, Director of National Academy of Performing Arts
(NAPA),

Mr. Pervez Iqbal, Vice President of Pakistan Japan Cultural Association,
Sindh,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalam-o-Alaikum.

It gives me a great pleasure to welcome you all at Ms. Sumie Kaneko's special concert, “Japanese Traditional Music and Improvisation” this evening. This event is being co-organized by the Consulate-General of Japan in Karachi, National Academy of Performing Arts, and Pakistan Japan Cultural Association-Sindh, in cooperation with Pearl Continental Hotel.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ms. Sumie Kaneko for coming all the way from New York to Karachi for this occasion. She is an internationally-recognized *Koto* and *Shamisen* player as well as a jazz singer and songwriter. Playing since the age of five, Ms. Kaneko has made splendid performances throughout the world, received numerous honors and has collaborated with many well-known international artists.

I am very happy to present to you Japanese traditional music here in Karachi this evening. In the cultural field, Japan and Pakistan have many things in common. Both countries have developed their own string instruments in their history. Pakistan has Sitar, Sarod, and Santoor, Japan

has *Koto*, a Japanese harp, and *Shamisen*, a Japanese guitar. When you listen to a Japanese traditional music for the first time, you may feel it is different from the music you are familiar with. But when you listen to a collaboration of the musical instruments of the two countries, I am sure you will find a great harmony. Tonight, you will experience both pure traditional Japanese music and a collaboration of the artists from Japan and Pakistan. We have some famous Pakistani music artists from National Academy of Performing Arts (NAPA) who will make a collaboration with Ms. Kaneko at the second half of the program. I appreciate the participation of NAPA in this event.

I would also like to mention that there is another interesting collaboration tonight. Her Excellency Ms. Sharmila Farooqui, Honourable Minister for Culture and Tourism, Government of Sindh, who is the chief guest for tonight, kindly suggested us about the collaboration with a unique instrument called *Surando*, a very old and rare musical instrument of Sindh. We invited the highly recognized maestro of the instrument in the country, Mr. Muhammad Hassan Mahano, from the city of Thatta for this occasion.

I hope this event will be a great opportunity to experience fascinating diversity of Japanese traditional music and memorable fusion of Japanese and Pakistani compositions for you, thereby contributing to further promotion of cultural exchange and friendship between Japan and Pakistan.

Thank you very much.

Bahot shukriya

(End)