

The Relationship between Japan and Pakistan

I am very pleased to attend the Ceremony of Launching a new book on “Pakistan-Japan Relations” today.

This year marks the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Pakistan. And the publication of this book certainly serves as a good reference book on the 60 years history of the relations between Japan and Pakistan.

Today I would like to talk about the relationship between Japan and Pakistan. Japan and Pakistan have always had a friendly relation throughout the last 60 years.

Japan and Pakistan established diplomatic relations in April 1952. Their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan paid a visit to Pakistan in January 1962 as the Crown Prince and Princess. In November 1992, Their Imperial Highness Prince Akishino, the second son of the Emperor and Princess visited Pakistan.

The friendly relationship between the two countries is mainly centered on economic cooperation. Having started as a trading partner particularly in cotton and textile sector in the 1950's, Japan's textile industry was dependent on Pakistan's raw cotton. And then Pakistani business started to export value-added cotton yarn instead of raw cotton and the modernization of spinning industry in Pakistan began from this time onwards. Japanese spindles played an important role to build Pakistan's textile industry. Japan exported a lot of textile machineries to Pakistan and imported the cotton yarn from Pakistan at that time. Therefore Japan made a notable contribution to the modernization of Pakistani textile industry.

Since 1954, Japan has been extending ODA to Pakistan. The schemes of cooperation range from technical cooperation, grant aid and ODA loans in various sectors like health, education, environment, water supply, agriculture, transportation, infrastructure and so on. The cumulative amount of ODA from Japan to Pakistan up to Year 2010 is about 5,889 million US dollars.

In the area of emergency aid, Japan provided emergency assistance to Pakistan at the time of earthquake in 2005 and the floods in 2010 and 2011 and this year Japan decided to provide emergency relief goods such as tents, blankets, etc. worth 35 million yen and

Japan also decided to provide additional emergency grant aid worth 4.7 million US dollars, comprising of food through WFP, shelters through IOM and water and sanitation through UNHABITAT.

Pakistan too extended assistance to Japan at the time of Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in March last year. Pakistan provided relief goods such as mineral water, milk and biscuits to Japan and the Pakistani people in Japan went to Tohoku region to serve curry and rice to the victims. This proves that the cordial and friendly relationship between Japan and Pakistan has always been maintained.

Pakistan is a country with great potential for economic growth and Karachi is the key area for such economic growth. Pakistan has a large population of 180 million, the 6th largest in the world. This means there is a large market in Pakistan. And Pakistan is very near to the Middle East. So a large potential market lies not only in South Asia but also in the Middle East. The large manpower and natural resources such as copper and coal are also available. With these available resources and favorable conditions, Pakistan has a big potential for development in the future. Now 76 Japanese companies are operating in Pakistan and 49 are operating in Karachi. The areas of investment in Karachi are automobile industry, steel mills and fasteners.

There are possibilities of further expansion of economic relation between Japan and Pakistan. But I must point out that in order to gain new investment flows from Japan, the security situation, the infrastructure such as electricity, water and roads must be improved and the economic policies should be consistent and should not be changed so frequently. If these conditions are improved, I am sure that new investments are expected to expand in the future.

Finally, I would like to introduce the activities done by the Japan Information and Culture Center of the Consulate-General of Japan. The JICC has a library, an exhibition hall and a reading room for the Pakistani people to get to know about Japan.

We have Japanese language courses and flower arrangement courses and we organize various cultural events such as film shows, exhibitions, etc. at the Center. We also issue Information Bulletin twice a year. We have Niponica, a magazine about Japanese culture and other publications available at the Center. And you can borrow books and DVDs on Japan by just becoming a member of the Library of the Center. So I hope many of you will become the members of the Library of the Center and utilize the facilities and get to know more about Japan.

And also please visit the web-site of the Consulate-General of Japan, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and also there is a web-site called "Web Japan" where you can get information on Japan and the Japanese people.

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