

Excellencies, Distinguished guests, Dear Friends, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for joining our farewell reception out of your busy schedule.

After finishing three years of my tenure in Egypt, my wife Rieko, and I will return to Japan on November 2. My tenure has been extremely fruitful and rewarding, thanks to the warm friendship you have kindly extended to us, for which we are sincerely thankful to you all.

Since the day one of our arrival in Cairo, we have always thought how fortunate we are to be assigned to be in Egypt.

For me, this is the second time to be in Egypt and I was impressed by the enormous progress Egypt had achieved in my absence of 40 years. In fact, I had never expected to start commuting to New Administrative Capital while I am in Egypt.

It also gave me great pleasure to find many footprints of cooperation between Japan and Egypt, including Opera House, Cairo University Pediatric Hospital, Peace Bridge over Suez Canal.

I was impressed by the strong interest in Japanese language, culture and martial arts among the younger generations of Egyptians. I myself was excited in person to meet Judo legend Captain Rashwan, the Silver medalist at Los Angeles Olympic, and also Karate heroine, Ms. Ferreal, the Gold medalist at Tokyo Olympic.

For my wife Rieko, this was her first time to be in Egypt, the country she had admired most since childhood and she lost no time to go out for many of the archeological sites. She was overwhelmed by her first encounter with the grandeur of the Giza Pyramids and spent many hours enjoying the lively wall reliefs of Saqqara and trying to decipher the complicated hieroglyph.

Three years have brought the relations between Japan and Egypt to a new height.

In April last year, then Prime Minister Kishida and President El Sisi agreed to elevate our relations to strategic partnership.

President also stated his eagerness to advance cooperation based on the vision of FOIP, Free and Open Indo Pacific. We highly appreciate our partnership with Ministry of Defense and CCCPA for peace and stability in the region including contribution to PKO.

Aida 4, the beautiful training vessel provided by Japan to Arab Academy of Maritime Transport, has been training 1900 seafarers from 37 countries in Africa and the Middle East to contribute to safety of navigation in the region for more than 30 years.

President was particularly keen to promote educational partnership.

E-JUST, Egypt Japan University of Science and Technology, founded by the agreement of the two countries at Borg el Arab in 2010, has been remarkably successful. It

was ranked as No 1 university in Egypt two years in a row by the Times global university ranking 2023 and 2024. By inviting brightest students from Africa through providing scholarship, E-JUST aspires to be the Center of Excellence in Africa.

Japanese style education, named Tokkatsu in Japanese, is now incorporated into Egyptian syllabus and 350,000 Egyptian students are now learning and practicing Tokkatsu at 500 public schools throughout Egypt.

Good quality of Tokkatsu education is well received and the number of public schools teaching Tokkatsu is expected to reach 1,700, one tenth of the entire public schools in Egypt, in four years.

On October 16, we were at the entrance of GEM, Grand Egyptian Museum, on the very first day of its experimental opening.

I was moved to see the outcome of the marvelous work the Japanese and Egyptian experts have done side by side to preserve and restore these precious Pharaonic artifacts, which will make GEM the new symbol of friendship between the two countries.

New Foreign Minister Dr. Abdelatty kindly visited Japan in August to attend the ministerial meeting of TICAD, Japan and Africa Development Forum.

New diplomatic initiative of three foreign ministers meetings, Japan, Egypt and Jordan, was launched newly to contribute to the peace and stability in the region.

There would be good reasons for our successful partnership, which is the solid basis of mutual trust that our preceding generations as well as our friends and colleagues on both sides have been cultivating since the Samurai delegation visited Egypt 160 years ago.

We are deeply grateful to their contributions, and I sincerely hope that you will kindly continue to lend your valuable support for our future generations, so that our friendship will continue to prosper for 100 years to come.

After reaching Japan, we will start our new chapters of life. Rieko will return to her life of medical profession, while I will need some time to contemplate which way to go, my childhood dream was to learn how to play violin.

one thing is certain, which is that we will return to Egypt again to meet our dear friends here, as warm hospitality and friendship of the Egyptians have not changed at all after 40 years of my absence.

We will always have Egypt in our hearts. In fact, we have adopted four Balady cats, as memory of our happy days in Egypt, and we will take them with us to Japan.

Instead of “Goodbye”, let us say “Thank you and see you”.

Today, we have special guests: Mr. Tomosugi, a Japanese opera singer (bass) who is based in Bologna, Ms.

Safaa and Ms. Amira, both from the Cairo Symphony Orchestra. Ms. Safaa is principal flutist and Ms. Amira is principal harpist. They will play two songs, "You raise me up" and "Time to say good-bye" on this occasion.

Please enjoy your evening.