



Mr. Toru Shiraishi and the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Japan, extraordinary and plenipotentiary, Mr. Turkistani, were fellow students. Their friendship made this tour materialize.

It is not easy to enter a country where tourist visas are not issued, and what is more, for women to be allowed to do so. Mrs. Miyuki Miyoshi of Miyoshi Fish Farm gives us a unique glimpse into a country veiled in mystery. From the standpoint of a woman, she tells us what she saw and how Nishiki-goji are received there by the people of the country.

(by editorial staff)

Miyuki Miyoshi Travels in Saudi Arabia First Part

The capital of the country, Riyadh

H.R.H. Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and his aides visited Japan in February this year. The Crown Prince and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made a joint statement about promoting mutual assistance for small and medium-sized businesses in both countries at that time.

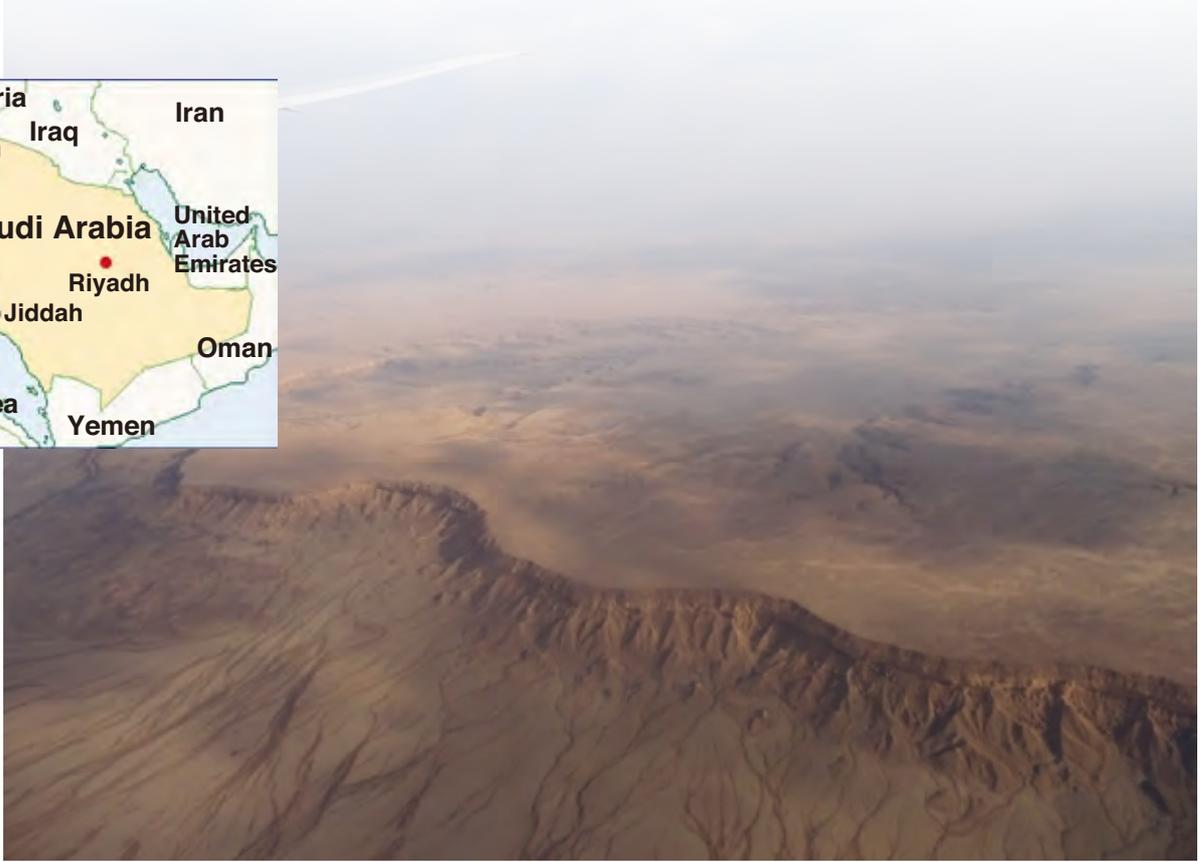
As the first step towards the embodiment of the statement, a tour of Saudi Arabia for the Japanese managers of small and medium-sized businesses, labeled as the 1st SME Saudi Arabia Business Matching Tour, was carried out.

In the past, only the managers of big Japanese companies were invited by Saudi Arabia. This is the first attempt for our delegation, including two female members, to enter the country. When I heard that the other female entrepreneur and I would be the first Japanese female business persons to Saudi Arabia, I felt honored and at the same time humbled.

We left Japan on September 5th, when the lingering heat of summer was still terrible, pinning the hopes of officials and the people on establishing better friendship with our counterparts.

The participants of the tour at Narita International Airport





Arrival at the capital city, Riyadh

As our plane's altitude gradually lowered, the vast desert spread out as far as the eye could reach. While gazing at the dark shapes dotting the landscape, which I guessed must be camels, my eyes suddenly caught a magnificent sight, King Khalid International Airport.

Saudi Arabia covers roughly 80 percent of the Arabian Peninsula, most of which is desert. Its capital, Riyadh, is an oasis city.

When we stepped out of the airport building, we were accosted by the stifling heat, which reached 45 degrees Celsius. The heat reminded me that I was in a foreign country known for its scorching climate.

Abaya & hijab

In Saudi Arabia, people obey strict Islamic precepts. Foreigners are no exception. Wearing an abaya is a legal duty for women. The ethnic costume, abaya, is like a black gown in which their skin can be protected from the direct rays of the sun. Women are further prohibited from exposing their face and hair in public, so they use a hijab to cover the face and head. Most of the women there are exposing only their eyes through an opening in the hijab.



A local woman in abaya and hijab



At the arrival at Riyadh Airport



Shozo Miyoshi and a Syrian tour guide. She says it is prohibited for the visitors to stare at women or to take a photo of them in Saudi Arabia, but she accepted our request with good grace.

The people bubble over with excitement about their vast economic growth

I enjoyed looking at the scenery from the bus window. The capital city is now under a rush to build modernized buildings, owing to abundant natural resources.



Kingdom Tower is the tallest building in Saudi Arabia. The 302 meter building was completed in 2002.



A beautiful mosque stands between new buildings under construction.



Visiting National Museum and Al Jazeera newspaper company building

We first visited the National Museum. In the spacious modern building, we saw a lot of archaeological and historical exhibits.

After that, we headed for the Al Jazeera building. We were interviewed in a gorgeous room. Mr. Toru Shiraishi, head of our group, is a member of the House of Representatives. He declared our determination, which was reported by Al Jazeera and the local newspaper the next day.

In the assembly room of Al Jazeera



One of the exhibits of the Museum, Roses in the Desert (above left) Crystallization of a certain substance in desert makes rose-shaped stone.



The tour participants listen to the enthusiastic explanation made by the curator of the museum.

Dinner at the Japanese embassy

We received a lavish welcome party at the Japanese embassy on the first evening. The embassy building is fenced off with barbed wire and guarded by armed men.

Passing through heavily-armed guards, we entered the embassy building, where we were in a different world. The rooms were elegantly furnished in a Japanese-style design. Dinner was served in the courtyard, where a mist of water was pouring from the top in order to temper the night-heat.



Ms. Akaba (right) runs an ultra-precision procession company, which manufactures the dust collection capsule loaded on the crewless Japanese space probe, Hayabusa.



The lady on the right is a Saudi Arabian entrepreneur. She was exceedingly pleased with this koi-printed towel gift.

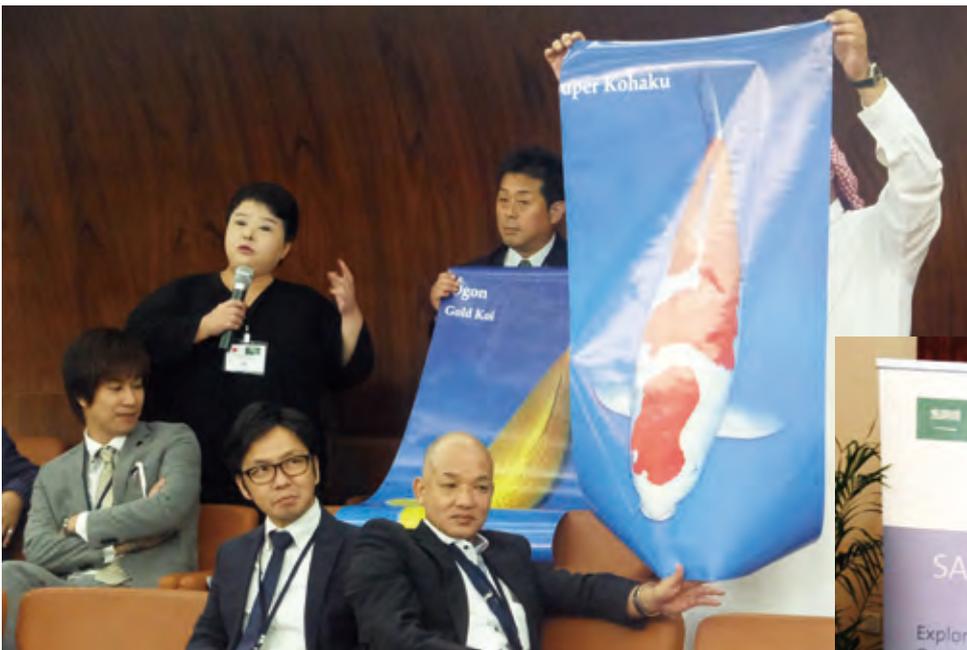
Visiting Saudi Arabia General Investment Assembly (SAGIA)

On the second day, we proceeded to SAGIA, which issues investment licenses to investors who are planning to establish their business footholds in Saudi Arabia. We received a precise explanation of the SAGIA system and, after that, had a question-and-answer session at the headquarters.

I tried to make discreet advertisements for Nishikigoi between questions. As soon as we spread a few life-sized posters of Nishikigoi, I felt a sudden change of the atmosphere in the room.

Their replies to my question if they know Nishikigoi were “Is it delicious?” or “Do you eat it with wasabi?” They seem to have no knowledge about Nishikigoi. I tried to impress them with the beauty of Nishikigoi, but felt ashamed that I was so helpless.

After the session, when I was leaving the room looking disheartened, one of the representatives of SAGIA called to me to stop and asked for the posters. I presented him a king-sized calendar, sponsored by RINKO magazine, instead of the posters. He said, “Thank you very much. Now I can show these beautiful fish to my family.” His words gave me confidence.



A banner, prepared by people at SAGIA, for the event



The head of Small and Medium-sized Businesses Agency, Mr. Shinsuke Kitagawa. He helped me when I was at a loss for words during my presentation about Nishikigoi.



A trip to observe the MODON industrial complex

On the afternoon of the second day, we visited two factories in the complex. The first factory manufactures outer wall materials by striking iron plates until they are thin.

The other factory produces a high-ranking chocolate, which is filled with sweet fragrance. Fine-shaped chocolate bars came out one after another. We enjoyed a tasting to recover from the fatigue of our tour.



In this spacious factory, many employees are foreigners.



Japanese tour participants received a welcome sword dance performance.



Mr. Najib

An invitation from the agent of Nissan and Isuzu automobile dealership

In the evening, we were invited by Mr. Shiraishi's friend, Mr. Najib, who is the CEO of the Nissan & Isuzu automobile dealership in Saudi Arabia. We first visited the Nissan showroom and then his villa. We were astonished by the magnificent feast.



A roasted lamb

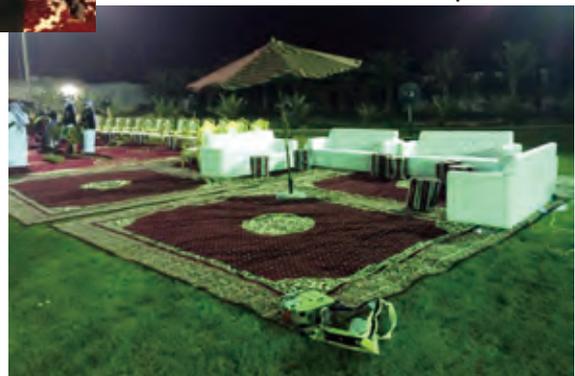


Shozo Miyoshi holds a real falcon on his hand in a desert-race's tent set up on the banquet ground.

The banquet ground was spread all over with Persian carpet.



The dishes and art objects filling the floor of the banquet ground



سيده أعمال يابانية تعرض أسماكاً للبيع بليون ريال في غرفة الرياض.. وتقول للمندeshين: أنتم تشترون الجمال بالمال



إيهاب عبيد



تعد «سيدة الأعمال اليابانية» من أهم الشخصيات في سوق الأسماك في الرياض، حيث تعرض أسماكاً للبيع بليون ريال في غرفة الرياض. وتقول للمندeshين: أنتم تشترون الجمال بالمال.

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نسبة مبيعات مرتفعة الأفيون ٦ في الأسواق



تعد نسبة مبيعات الأفيون ٦ في الأسواق مرتفعة، وذلك نتيجة ارتفاع الطلب عليه في ظل ارتفاع أسعاره.



أشهر الصنف تقفز باستهلاك الكهرباء في الملكة إلى مستويات غير مسبقة

تعد استهلاك الكهرباء في الملكة قد ارتفع بشكل كبير، وذلك نتيجة ارتفاع الطلب على الكهرباء في ظل ارتفاع أسعارها.

Business matching at Riyadh Chamber of Commerce

On the third day, we had our first business matching. Owing to attentive advertisement by the newspapers and the online news, it was a great success. Before the start of the matching, we were interviewed by the local newspaper.

During the matching session, our Nishikigoi booth was visited by many people, but they have no knowledge of Nishikigoi. We made full use of the iPad and Nishikigoi calendar in order to explain about Nishikigoi. My heart leaped to hear people shout, “How beautiful Nishikigoi are!”

Visitors at the Nishikigoi booth waiting for their turn

الملكة تحتل الرتبة الأولى بين الدول المستقبلة للصادرات المصرية

تعد المملكة العربية السعودية من أهم الدول المستقبلة للصادرات المصرية، وذلك نتيجة ارتفاع الطلب على المنتجات المصرية في ظل ارتفاع أسعارها.

٢٥ أسرة سعودية منتجة في مهرجان رفحاء للتسوق



تعد مهرجان رفحاء للتسوق من أهم المهرجانات السياحية في المنطقة، وذلك نتيجة ارتفاع الطلب على المنتجات السياحية في ظل ارتفاع أسعارها.

| المرتبة | الدولة | القيمة |
|---------|----------|-----------------|
| 1 | السعودية | 1.2 مليار دولار |
| 2 | البحرين | 0.8 مليار دولار |
| 3 | قطر | 0.6 مليار دولار |
| 4 | الكويت | 0.5 مليار دولار |
| 5 | عمان | 0.4 مليار دولار |

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The local newspaper articles



A hearty welcome in Saudi Arabian the way

They treated us with dried dates. I heard the fruit has been grown since 4,000 B.C. Because the fruit easily grows in arid regions and becomes perishable when it is dried, it must have been precious food for the people living in oases.

Dates are usually served with Arabian coffee. Around the end of the 15th century, Muslims were prohibited from drinking alcohol, so they drank coffee as a luxury. Later, coffee was introduced to north and south America.



Dates

Today we use roasted coffee beans to make coffee, but in Saudi Arabia, they use raw beans. I was told that drinking three small-sized cups of amber-colored Arabian coffee is etiquette towards the host.



A cup of Arabian coffee



Local newspapers and on-line news reported about our tour day after day.



Saudi Arabian people have enormous confidence in Japanese products. Part of Unicharm's products sold in Saudi Arabia

Departure for the next destination

After the business matching session, we made an inspection at the factory for Japanese daily necessities company, Unicharm, and left Riyadh for King Abdulaziz International Airport.



At Riyadh Airport before leaving for Jeddah

