



*The exotically beautiful moon on its sixteenth night in Jeddah makes me realize that I am in the very scene which I dreamed of while singing snatches of a nursery rhyme “Tsuki-no-sabaku (Moon in a Desert)” in my childhood. The melody always sounded plaintive and made me feel heartrendingly sorrowful, but tonight’s moon is majestic and brilliantly shining as if one could meet some heroic characters from Arabian Nights, such as Aladdin or Sinbad.*



At Old Jeddah  
Photo taken on September 9, 2014  
by Hiroshi Ishimura

## Miyuki Miyoshi Travels in Saudi Arabia

Last Volume: *City by the sea, Jeddah*





## Arrival at Jeddah

Facing the Red Sea, Jeddah is the second largest city of Saudi Arabia next to the capital, Riyadh. Compared with Riyadh, the air in Jeddah is a little more humid and feels colder than the actual temperature.

We were provided a newly completed five star hotel, Bay La Sun Hotel. When we arrived at the hotel in the middle of the night, dead silence loomed around us. The sound of the waves and the sea breeze were pleasant to the ear and the skin.

On stepping into the entrance hall built in wellhole-style, a shower of frankincense poured over us.



At the entrance of Bay La Sun Hotel



Frankincense is a resin secreted by trees of the genus *Boswellia*. It used to be bartered with the same weight as gold. Dried frankincense is burned in an incense burner. It is said to be effective in making people feel relaxed and sleepy.



The guest room with ocean view



Stepping out of the guesthouse, there was a huge pond with many fountains as far as the eye could reach. A pond filled to the brim with water is a symbol of wealth in Saudi Arabia, where water is more expensive than crude oil.

### *Tour of King Abdullah Economic City*

Saudi Arabia can be cited as “a sleeping giant”. Among the six nations surrounding the Persian Gulf, it has the largest territory, economy and population, yet it has impressed us as a country that hasn’t displayed its true strength.

It seems that the time is approaching for the giant to awake. In the economic city, the economic development project has been carried in solemn silence. The new harbor attached to the economic city is expected to function as the hub connecting the European and Asian countries, when the work is completed.



Miyoshi strenuously tries to impress a business representative with Nishikigoi



A view of Economic City from the roof of the guesthouse

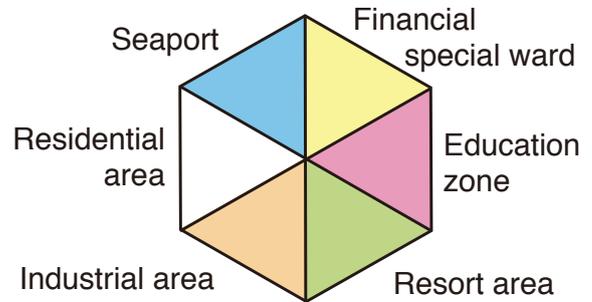


## Visit to the *Economic City International School*

The hexagonal economic city is equally divided into six zones; Financial special ward, Education zone, Resort area, Industrial area, Residential area, and Seaport. The reception into the business and resident related areas have started. At the international school, children from various countries were studying.



Almost all of the girls have "Hello Kitty" lunch boxes. I was surprised at the reach of Japanese culture.



## Visit to the *seaport area of the Economic City*

The port area has the vast premises where 20,000,000 containers can be stored and the most advanced crane in the world is already in operation. About half of this gigantic project has been completed. The day when this economic city replaces Dubai as the hub of the Middle East is drawing near.



A pond with fountains in the seaport area. Tosai of various colors could entertain people working at the harbor.



A model of the finished seaport, which will become the eighth largest port in the world





## *Business matching meeting*

In the afternoon of the same day, we had another business matching meeting with a large group of people.



We give an enthusiastic explanation of Nishikigoi to one of the prominent persons of the country. The man standing by them is a member of JETRO who has been working in the Middle East for 13 years. He helps us as an interpreter.



Conversations with enthusiasm are heard here and there in the room.





## *Dinner at the guesthouse of Jameel Company*

In the first evening in Jeddah, we were received with great enthusiasm at the guesthouse of the big company, Jameel, which manages a wide range of businesses, including the agency of Toyota Motor Corp in Saudi Arabia.



The guesthouse of Jameel Corp.



Sushi is well received in Saudi Arabia.



Saudi Arabian sweets create mellow taste without using any liqueur.



The presentation of management strategies by Jameel Corp. The walls of the guesthouse are so beautiful that one may easily mistake it for those of a mosque. The works of great artists, such as Salvador Dali and Taro Okamoto, are adorning the walls. The mosaic work on the high ceiling is beautiful enough for the viewers to heave a deep sigh.



Beautifully put up desserts in front of the beautiful mosaic tiles on the wall. The skirt of the huge hall is mosaic-tiled. The elaborate design of the structure overwhelms us.



The posters of a life-sized Nishikigoï did the speaking.



The executive vice-president of Jameel Corp. Mr. Faisal's speech from a global standpoint is very interesting.



An executive of Jameel Corp. looked pleased with Nishikigoï.

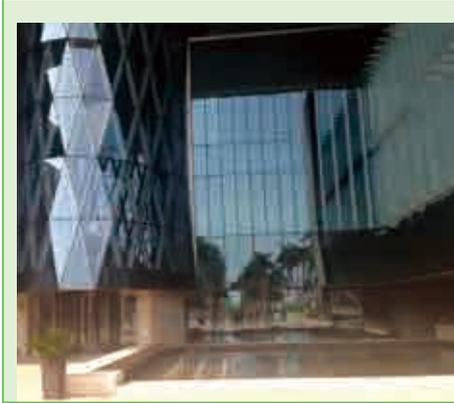


Deep-fried shrimp, the first sea food in Saudi Arabia, taste superb.

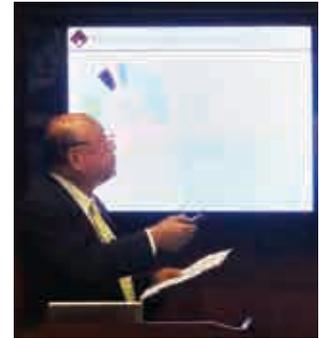


## Visit to King Abdullah Royal University

King Abdullah built the science and engineering college at his own expense of one billion yen. With ample funds, some of the best doctors of science and engineering of our day are on the list of the faculty. The coeducation school is designated as a special district where no religious doctrine is appropriated.



A beautiful pond on the campus  
Miyuki imagined how beautiful Nishikigoi in the pond would have been when their figures reflect on the black glass of the surrounding building.



Yasuro Mori,  
Professor at  
Waseda University,  
who accompanied  
the Japanese group,  
gives a lecture on  
nanotechnology  
in science and  
engineering.



At the school cafeteria Students can enjoy a full-course lunch for JPY 400.



Another big pond on the campus  
The ponds of the university are filled with fresh water. The country has a water treatment plant which can convert seawater to fresh water.





## Welcome reception at the Japanese Consulate General in Jeddah

The guard of the consulate is the same as in Riyadh. Contrary to the heavy guard, inside of the building is unexpectedly compact and cozy. The wife of the consul warmly welcomed us with Japanese dishes, such as sashimi, karaage and rice. The first Japanese dishes in Saudi Arabia made us feel refreshed.



Wife of the  
Japanese consul



Sashimi from fish caught in Jeddah

Cutlery and tableware of the consulate bore the arms of the Japanese government, Gozan-no-kiri



Hearty welcome with a variety of  
Japanese dishes





## At a late hour of the night in Old Jeddah



Old Jeddah is located in the former city area of Jeddah, where old shops have remained unchanged for 100 years. It was registered on UNESCO's World Cultural Heritage List this year. I think the true charm of these rows of old shops is a human face created by chaotic, squalid alleys.



Having been an open-air market where many caravans stopped by, the area still gives off an oriental atmosphere of Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures.



Scarf shop



Dates shop



Small knives and accessories shop



Mutton



Some sponge gourds in front of a spice shop



They sell various nuts by measure



Chocolate is loved by Saudi Arabian people.



## Farewell to Saudi Arabia



Our last mission is visiting the Japan Automobile Technology Advanced Training Institute. The joint project by the officials and the people of Japan and Saudi Arabia is to nurture Saudi Arabian automobile maintenance men.

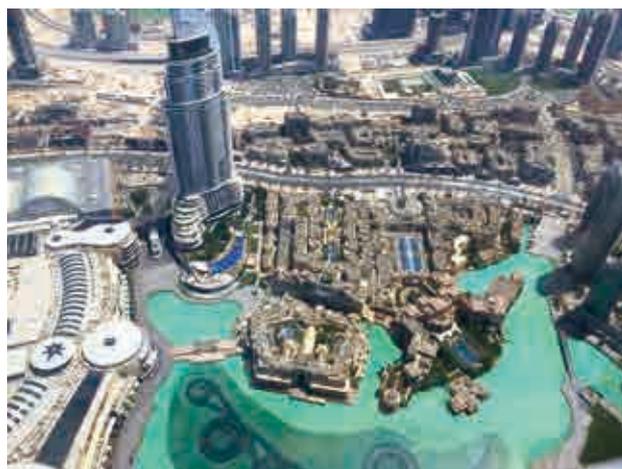
Trainees at the institute

## To Dubai for transit

On our way back to Japan, we stayed overnight in Dubai to transfer flights. The country with less oil reserves than Saudi Arabia has been transformed into a leading tourist city in the world.



A school of Nishikigoi in a pond of a famous hotel in Dubai



We fully enjoyed our short stay in Dubai.

## Afterword

*Oddly enough, I visited Saudi Arabia as the first female Japanese proprietor. The great honor of receiving their cordial reception and precious experiences is far more than I deserve. After the pleasant culture shock, I am still agitated with Arabic fever.*

*Grabbed by the evil term "Oil money", I am dreaming of fastening the eyes of Arabian ladies and gentlemen with the dazzling beauty of Nishikigoi in a mosaic-work pond.*

*Miyuki Miyoshi*

