



# Sakura & Spice

A  
Pakistani's  
Journey  
Through  
Japan

Amir Bin Ali

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*Dedicated*

To

*Murteza Hussain*

*The Youngest in Japani family of Mian Channu*

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## *Preface*

*Japan; a place of rich and distinct culture, has always known existence. With estimates ranging between twenty thousand years and two thousand years, Japan has long been an independent country. Its first known written reference was recorded as early as the first century A.D. The Imperial Dynasty Established around the Same time which Continues till today. Since the Medieval Ages, and for about three centuries, Japan was closed to the world, and saw a time when no one was permitted to enter or leave the country. It was American pressure and other influences in 1854 that led to its reopening. Though foreign interests were factors in this change, perchance there were other reasons behind the closed border policy. Perhaps they had fear of being colonized by European Invaders, as were other Asian, African, and many more nations. From this, there began a notion that Japanese people dislike foreign influence. I simply do not agree. In any country or society, religion, language, and culture are considered to be the most integral subjects. Furthermore, with the leading Faith of Japan, based on population, being Buddhism from ancient India, and the Japanese language script being kanji from China, the Japanese people, rather, embrace international interconnectivity.*

*I am witness to this interconnectivity. I was born and raised in Pakistan and always considered myself fortunate to have the chance to travel throughout the world. I first came to Japan during my early twenties and fell in love with the country, its people, and culture. From my first year of tertiary studies, I was selected as Sub Editor of the College magazine. I began to write about my travels, which were published in "Eve's Dropper". Until now, I thoroughly enjoy writing both*

*poetry and prose regularly. The simple purpose or idea behind these works has always been the same: to share a unique perspective about various locations of the world in a joyful and informative way. My hope is that by sharing such experiences, positivity can spread to my country and to many other parts of the world.*

*With such a purpose, three of my travel guide books have been published to date. After overwhelmingly wonderful feedback, there have been several editions of each guide sold so far. While finalizing the fourth, some friends remarked that all of my books were in my native tongue of Urdu; a language that the most part of the world does not understand! They suggested that I write in English as well. I further came to discover that in Pakistan, there is a growing population of people more comfortable reading English rather than Urdu. Considering these factors, I determined to compile a book in the English language. This guide specifically, has some articles written originally in English, while others are translated. It is my belief that languages are simply a medium for communication. I do not believe that any one language is superior or inferior as compared to the other. Though I am privileged to speak many, even seven languages, I regard language as the means whereby people of all races and walks of life may connect. Nothing more, nothing less.*

*Until recent years, foreigners in Japan were issued identification cards called the 'Alien Card'. While others find it distasteful, I personally do not mind the label. "Sakura and spice": A Pakistani's Journey Through Japan', is a travel guide of an alien who visited a beautiful island and painted his experiences in the form of words. Though not all will agree with the impressions and opinions that I put forth, I would that this book might help those wishing to experience the distinct beauty and rich culture of the country that is Japan. And I must say, the things of Japan are so very Japanese!*

**Amir Bin Ali**  
January, 1, 2024.



## *Mannerism and Politeness*

*Every society is a combination of strengths and weaknesses, as good and bad are always present in every society, only their proportion is different from country to country. If there is no balance in any society, it will break down and will be replaced by a society which is balanced. In some places, the virtues outnumber, and the defects are less, while in other places, the imperfections are more, and the virtues are fewer, and the variance can only be the relative proportion of merits and demerits. Faults are a reality and the virtues are also there, no society does exist in this world, nor it has ever existed in human history which remained beyond this combination of good and evil.*

*A beautiful aspect of Japanese societies that it is in general very polite and humble, which can also be called orientalist, and this aspect is so important that without mentioning it in detail, the analysis would stand incomplete. The most interesting thing to me in any country stand its people and their lifestyle. It appears to me now that like natural landscapes, buildings and other material objects are starting to look analogous all over the world. May be it is due to globalization and information sharing trend in today's world. But people are still not homogenous, thus the diversity among the people around the globe turns the societies*

*unique. In this context, the evolution of Japanese society is such that people do not deny out rightly but talk about with allusions, gestures, impressions, understatements and body language. For example, instead of saying blunt "No", the word "A bit ...!" is used usually. Or in any another situation, where they wish to communicate, "It's a little difficult!", they only say "a little" generally.*

*Foreign teachers who have come here to teach English language at the schools, mention in their private meetings the difficulties of teaching children in Japan. Commonly, they have the impression that teaching English is very tough in this society due to cultural variances. For Example, when the children are taught to say 'No', the general reply is, 'Yes! But no'. They avoid saying "No" directly. Saying blunt 'No' is categorically hard task for English language teachers to teach the children here. Here is another beautiful example, the word used here to say Goodbye is "sayonara" which means 'If it has to be', or, can be translated as, 'That is it'. The phenomenon of separations so gloomy that the whole sentence is not even uttered, but it is communicated as, 'If this is fate'. And the word of separation is not even mentioned in conversation. You may be surprised that there is no word for sex in the Japanese language*

*A renowned writer and scholar, Khawaja Zakaria has been teaching Urdu language in different Universities of Japan for forty years. One day he was sharing the memories of his stay with me, and he mentioned an incident that befell with his friend, and his art of narration gave us a great help in understanding the DNA of Japanese society. Mr. Khawaja's foreign friend who had just arrived for work in Japan, moved to a multi-story building nearby, and the said friend was fond of music. It would happen that, usually at night, if he had*

*trouble of sleeplessness, he would start playing the violin. One night when he was playing the violin, there was a knock at the door. When he opened the door, a Japanese neighbor was found standing outside, who smiled and said, "You play the violin very well," and he left after saying this. This new comer fellow started playing the violin very next night to avoid the troublesome feelings of loneliness and nostalgia, and then the same Japanese neighbor knocked again while repeating his words again, he left. When this incident was repeated several times, Mr. Khawaja's that foreign friend narrated the whole incident to him. Upon which, Mr. Khawaja explained him that the Japanese was not making any complements, rather he was complaining him that he had been getting bothered because of him, and wanted him not to play violin any more.*

*By the way, the religion has also played a role historically in setting the morals of this society, but presently, in Japanese society, the country's law is considered moral touchstone, as is something special that abiding the law is considered to be a high moral quality. At the same time, violating the law of the land is measured as highly immoral. It may be the case that laws here have been refined from culture and civilization in such a way that law and morality go side by side in the society.*

*The criminal Acts are also considered as wrong and sinful from the social point of view, and whatever the law praises, the society also considers it correct and reward-worthy. It sounds that this society is unique in the sense that the law of the land also possesses a spiritual sanctity, the recent examples of which we have observed during the earthquakes when there was a crisis in power generation resulting from the tsunami disaster. To meet the shortage of electricity, the government asked all the big companies to reduce their*

*power consumption by 15%, otherwise the government had a load shedding plan. But after this announcement, people voluntarily reduced electricity consumption to a level that the electricity usage reduced by 20% in the whole country, and the lack of production was automatically filled which eliminated the danger of load shedding. By the way, it can be said about Pakistan, if people stop running air conditioners from tomorrow, there would be no load shedding from the day after tomorrow in the country. This could be a good idea but not feasible in our country.*

*Appreciating the oriental values of the Japanese, I am reminded of renowned author poet Ibn-e-Insha's letter of praise which he once wrote to his contemporary writer Mr. Qasmi, it was written in response to a newspaper column by him, stating, "I will not praise you further anymore because it is considered against the eastern etiquettes to praise someone behind his back." By the way, according to Ibn-e-Insha, the Urdu idiom, "Ess hamam main sab nangy" which means, "Everyone is naked in this bath, or everyone stands guilty" makes sense after seeing the Japanese "sauna and Onsen". The reason for all this articulation about Japanese as it is not out-and-out to be infatuated with Japanese society, but the same turns into a natural desire at heart and mind after sighting such a graceful society country. The same quality should be developed in Pakistani society as well. It is also because I do not agree with the perception of some of our self-proclaimed scholars that our society is just a collection of defects. Rather, I honestly believe that we have many valuable qualities which only need to be polished and promoted. I am a supporter of Pakistan's National Poet Iqbal's philosophy,*

*"The soil stands very rich; the only need is of slight moist."*

## *A Unique Country*

*My Pakistani American friend's query was very modest, rather of very vital importance; What stands diverse in Japan from the rest of the World? My instant response was that waiters in Japanese restaurants avoid tips. In a global context, it seems truly outlandish that there is no tips transaction with the meal bill whatsoever. As a minimum, I have not beheld in any other country in the world, where there is not a culture of paying tips. At this juncture, if you try to pay tips, they would refuse it. The waiters in Europe have grown so brazen that they, every now and then, cut the tip themselves along with the meal bill, as if it has become a straightforward right and part of the deal. Even after replying my friend's question, I kept discerning at length, as, what is unique about Japan? The list that rapidly evolved in the form of an answer in the mind stands predominantly thought-provoking.*

*The first thing any foreigner witnesses after arriving here is the astonishing sanitation; the houses, streets and markets are so clean as are unseen elsewhere. The cities, neighborhoods, roads aside, do visit from one corner to the*

*other in this country of 130 million, you will find nowhere a man with unclean clothes. The least standard of living of the people is idyllic here. The additional thing one notices upon coming here is the self-effacement and smooth-talking of the public. The strange thing is that there is almost no stealing here. A small number of large gangs of criminals, called "Yakuza", are usually the only ones guilty of theft and other crimes, but they not ever commit petty thefts or custodial crimes, but major crimes. Here gangsters, crooks and habitual criminals do not work as individuals but are members of some organization named yakuza-mafia member.*

*One of the exclusive things about Japan is that announcements here are made only in female voices. If the announcement is in a male's voice, it is not taken as a good sign. A man inside an ambulance can make an announcement only in an emergency, a police car can use a loudspeaker to stop you if you have violated a traffic law, or a male voice announcement can be heard in a matter of emergency; otherwise the announcement section is reserved for womenfolk. If we converse about the market, there is no practice of bargaining on prices, at all. We, the foreigners, keep on asking to reduce the price quite habitually, and sometimes we get successful in getting the reduced price, but the decent people do not dare to ask for a discount here. It is also odd that the people here look anything of cheap price with a suspicion.*

*The cashiers standing at the counter usually work in a mechanical style, never accepting a penny more or less than the required amount. Back in the days when I had just arrived here, I used to visit an internet cafe neighboring my house very frequently because of the free availability of drinks and ice-cream in the internet café. Accordingly, sometimes I liked*

*to use the computer and internet in the café for entertainment, instead of at home. Because of frequent visits to the internet cafe, the staff also came into my acquaintance. One evening as I came back from work and started changing my clothes, as I wanted to leave the house, I decided to sit in that internet café, instead of going somewhere else. As opposed to taking my wallet, I picked up the change, which I assessed would have been around five hundred rupees. When I approached the cafe, I handed the money to the cashier, and it turned out to be three rupees less than the required amount. "Give me a discount of three rupees, please", As I considered him to be my friend now. But he stared at me with that gentle and calm smile and replied, "Just...!", which means, "No" in a polite manner. Japanese never say rounded "No". Saying "No" is considered impolite and uncivilized.*

*There is another interesting thing about the market, the money is not exchanged manually while shopping here. Giving money directly into the hands of the salesperson is considered discourteous. A plate-like vessel is used for the transaction of the money. The unique thing about Japan is that there are no beggars here. The reason for this is not merely financial opulence. Even if someone raises a hand for help, or request for some charity, he stands denied of any such help. Occasionally, it happens so that a homeless one, outside the Tokyo underground railway station, may humbly ask you for help to feed him, since they are aware that charity is practiced abroad. Once my elder brother was passing outside the railway station with other staff members, when a middle-aged Japanese man requested for money for buying edibles, he gave him 1000 Yen. Walking along, a girl among our staff said, "Boss! You did not do well; this man would never work then." Here, not fate, tragedy and irony of circumstances, but idleness is considered to be the only reason for poverty.*

*A ten-year-old son of our Pakistani staff member in our company, married to a Japanese wife asked for expensive sports equipment. Our friend explained to the child in Pakistani style, "Son! Your father is a poor man, can't afford such expensive things". But the answer of this Japanese mother's Pakistani child was very thought-provoking, "Papa! If you are poor, you should work harder." It is also weird that no one requests anyone for a lift or free ride here, while the same is part of the global culture and it is taken as usual globally. I have met such tourists as have completed a round-the-world journey by taking lifts from the generous people. But take care as the ones who travel the world by volunteer rides don't have to come here to Japan while asking for a lift, otherwise it could turn out to be their last tourist destination.*

*I was thinking to narrate that the newly installed traffic signals could also be measured as unique, since they flash red and green lights based on traffic flow, but that would be a long story. In the concluding analysis, I would say that a book would have to be written to describe the strange things here, but if you want to put it precisely, you have to say that Japan is very Japanese. Even in this era of globalization, the impact of the outside world has not been overriding on the society here. I would call this country to be another world.*



## Golden Journey of Cracked Utensils

*A house-wife was engrossed in a conversation with a mystic on conjugal predicaments as she bore multiple complaints against her spouse, and was never apt for reconciliation at any rate. The old sage endeavored to persuade her, "Fluctuations stand as usual in conjugal relations. Utensils also dash against one another that lay beside. Don't dismantle thy happy running family and forgive thy poor husband. Let reconciliation prevail". But that lady was extremely resentful as the hubby had broken her heart and breached the trust. She said, "It can't be remedied once the glass is broken. Once a crack appears in the mirror, can't be cleared away". Upon this, the sage gave an example, "There is an art in Japan to repair cracked glasses. Cracked glasses and mirrors are mended with melting gold, silver and other precious metals, which rather reckons up to the value of these broken-mended utensils and they gain more value than ever before".*

*The conclusion to the story is a diverse topic, but after hearing it, I boggle whenever I watch a glass or ceramic utensils mended with gold, silver or Platinum in Japan. The simile of cracked utensils and human relations is majestic. The mending of cracked utensils and filling the cracks with precious metals is comprised in the fine arts here. The same is cleped as "khan sugi". A whole world is revealed by explaining this word. The appropriate annotations and connotations are:*

*golden future, silver approaching, golden mending, silver joint, even Golden Journey. Alchemy is also another word for this. This centuries old art is not merely a part of fine arts but rather holds a deep philosophy of life. It is also a metaphor while mentioning the reconciliation of relations and human qualities, and accepting them with all their infirmities: a courage and skill to live in spite of all slyness, fallacies and defects. The man is mortal and gets defeated. And it is a faculty and attraction to live while accepting the inefficacies of the personality in spite of all this. The subject possesses such a vast annotation and connotation that, without an exaggeration, a vast range of volume can be authored on it. With the deficient apprehension, we have received through Urdu poetry, which can be concluded thus;*

*Thou savest scraps in thy lap for no reason,  
No Messiah is for broken glasses,  
What hope is this?*

*The utensils that associate charming memories, their cracking also bring us face to face with the danger of dispossessing the dear ones, thus inflicting more pain on us. "khan sugi" is the process of Messiah for such cracked utensils. The ambition for re-utilizing and still keeping the broken utensils in endearment is a kind of fascination, so ancient among Japanese. Its roots reach deep into 'zen', a spiritual and religious school of thought which holds beauty and crudity both as impressive. Astonishingly, beauty can be explored in cracked utensils and these cracks can become a cause of elevating their value. An incident occurring five centuries back causing the ingenuity and beauty in this art is related as; erstwhile, 'shogan' sent his cracked tea goblet to China for repairing. When the goblet returned to Japan after being mended with strings of metals, it looked quite different*

*which proved a downer for 'shogan'. What 'shogan' is? It is a subject that can span over a thousand books. An internationally renowned novel has also adopted its name as well, but presently, I translate it as 'warrior Chief' and proceed. You better take them as the knights of the Crusade era. This incident enabled the Japanese artisans as how to turn the broken utensils into re-utilizing condition while filling their cracks in keeping view the aesthetics. We witness the pinnacle of this art after the evolution of five centuries. One after the other, there is a modern workshop that glorifies the cracked utensils with golden joints. In the present situation, even if a part of broken goblet or ewer is found, it is developed into a complete one with the help of modern techniques. These parts are welded by tin, adhesive and kasa.*

*The Punjabi folks must have heard this pronouncement, "Get your utensils cleansed". The persons who have heard this voice might also have experienced the rhythmic lyric on this subject sung by acclaimed singer, Mehdi Hassan. I do not mean to put you in weariness by just expressing the method as how to repair your cracked utensils with inestimable metals. It is, actually, a metaphor of reconstruction after ailment, affliction, agony or accident, and to save oneself from the infliction caused by getting disseminated. The Western journals have ventured to go ahead after compromising with the grief of the demise of loved ones after Corona pandemic. 'khan sugi' has been exemplified of times. When the mentally retarded ones start the journey of rehabilitation, the Western people symbolize the same with 'golden joint'. The same metaphor stands for taking initiative despite the impermanence of human life, kinship and the world. It is not merely a sublime art, but rather an allusion of craving for growth.*

## *Economic Evolution*

*Japan stands as an excellent illustration of how tradition and innovation can coexist in comprehensive harmony in a society. It is quite surprising that there has never been a mass revolution in the history of Japan, nor there has been any mass protest which resulted in any tangible political change that can be called a revolution. To put it more frankly, no public movement has ever existed here. The beginning of Japan's industrial development is also entirely diverse from the industrial revolution of the rest of the world, especially Europe. The transformation of an agricultural society into an industrial society is unquestionably a revolutionary transformation, but one vacillates to call it a revolution in the recognized sense. The reason for this may also be that in our politics, since "bloody revolution" is often mentioned, so this word gets a cause of fright or the faint of heart, every now and then.*

*Are revolution and blood inseparable? I don't think so at all. Ascribing the word "bloody" to the revolution is tantamount to an unsubstantiated accusation. If the preceding century is called the century of communist revolutions from a political point of view, it would not be*

wrong. Hence, the revolution that appeared in Russia was the first and the most important. Historians consider this revolution of October 1917 to be the most important event of the twentieth century. For some people, the two Great Wars are the furthestmost significant events of the last century, but no scholar repudiates the position of the Bolshevik Revolution. You may be astonished to learn that only nine people died during the Russian Revolution. People who use the term bloody revolution are usually ignorant of history or are calculatingly trying to scare people away from the revolution.

Here the question also arises whether a revolution is unavoidable for the economic progress of nations, or can economic and social development be achieved through the evolutionary process without any revolution? The mechanism of the industrial revolution all over the world has virtually always been that a new class of primary industrialists and traders emerges in a feudal society. At that moment, the merchants, the industrialists and the idle people together separate themselves from the landlords and the agriculturists, and this parting is so strong that the society gets divided into two distinct classes: the agricultural and the industrial. And, these classes generally develop the feelings of rivalry between them. But nothing of the like occurred in Japan. You can likewise say that this society moved from agriculture to industry, but the "Industrial Revolution" did not transfer in that direction.

Compared to the rest of the world, industrialization started here very late and the circumstances under which it took place are also motivating. For three centuries, Japan was an entirely a closed country, during which nothing could leave the country nor anything could enter the country from the external world. One of the reasons for this may be the fear of

*being colonized, because from sixteenth to nineteenth century was the period when European countries were establishing their colonies in Asia, America, Africa and the rest of the world. The second reason is the "opium wars" fought in the neighboring country: China. Three centuries of seclusion changed when a four-ship US naval mission docked in a Japanese harbor in 1853 and made three demands. Among the first demands made by American Commodore Matthew Perry was that all Japanese ports be kept open to foreign trade. Second, foreign ships should be provided with food and fuel, and lastly, foreigners visiting Japan should be treated well.*

*American Commodore Gave any ear to Japanese Authorities to consider these demands, and on his arrival the following year asked to hoist a white flag to indicate that the demands had been acknowledged. Incongruously, he had also given white flags to Japanese Officials. What would have happened otherwise? It is not mentioned in the books, but the Japanese have been a wise nation since the very outset. The following year in 1854, when American ships arrived, they were hailed with white flags and open arms. Accordingly, a new era commenced. In 1868, the monarchy was restored and it should have started industrial development, rather it boosted industrialization. One of the potentials of these people is that they proximately adopt something related to a foreign country or system, only if they think it stands better than theirs. Don't resent the learning process and don't be cautious about imitating what's good. Both the Japanese script and the dominant religion i.e. Buddhism, were introduced from China in the 6th century. It was a time when young elite students went to China to learning. China was economically and socially superior to Japan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*

*No discussion on industrialization and technical expertise could be complete without mentioning the state. The state has played a very fundamental role in management and developing the economy. Captivatingly, from the outside, no role of the government is seen in the market. At the outset, the government and the samurai class that consisted of peasant organizations were the only ones interested in industrialization and the state itself had to set up industrial enterprises. In the 1870s, the government established cement, steel and glass factories in addition to investing in the railway sector. Simultaneously, NEC and Toshiba began to work together with the Americans, and later the Matsui and Sumitomo companies also joined the industrial progression, but the Japanese government was never ready to entrust the process of economic development to market forces. Even today, this situation is relatively established and the role of the state in the economy is still very fundamental. By the end of the 19th century, the share of agriculture was 42 percent of the gross national product, and a century later, industry and trade are the hallmarks of this country. Conceivably it is a revolution, but it would be more appropriate to call it economic evolution.*

*Since the subject of economics is under debate, it is not inappropriate to mention today's latest business situation including the shocking news that China has become Japan's largest trading partner for the first time in its history. By the end of last year, the volume of bilateral trade between the United States and Japan was the largest part of Japan's economy and this process has been going on for several decades, trading with 13.7 percent. Japan's third trade partner is South Korea, which accounts for 6 percent of Japan's total global trade, and business-related news is also important as Japan's largest automaker, Toyota, has*

*announced that it will increase its annual production. There will be a shortage of seven lakh vehicles. Toyota currently makes over 10 million vehicles a year. The current cut is due to the continued decline in global vehicle sales and the continued decline of the economy. Daihatsu is estimated to trade around 70 million vehicles this year, well short of production. Hence, it has decided to shut down several plants permanently along with numerous plants for repairs, besides the Derbyshire plant in the UK and the California plant in the US.*

*Not only the Toyota company has been affected by the current global economic crisis, but among the sectors that have been affected by the global economic crisis, the automotive sector stands at the top. The three major American automobile companies including General Motors have gone bankrupt which for the past 70 years was not only America's but also the world's largest manufacturer and seller of vehicles. General Motors and Toyota used to have a joint venture, but after General Motors went bankrupt, their joint plant in California was supposedly sold. In the intervening time, Chrysler and Japanese car maker Nissan have also decided to terminate the joint car manufacturing agreement. The 2008 deal, under which the companies were to build vehicles for each other and plan to build a joint venture, has been scrapped due to the insolvency of the American automaker.*



## Cherry Blossom

*A poet of revolution and romance, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, has avowed the coming of some Loved One to the rooftop as the declaration of the onset of Holy Spring, while in Japan, the flourishing of cherry tree is considered to be the proof of the blossoming season. This small flower of white and pink color is considered a symbol of Purity and Piousness has the honor of being the national flower of this country. Times of flowers bloom depends on weather conditions in each district, that varies at different places. These days, sighting of these blossoms is a consistent festival. Along with the blossoming of the branches, the festival of seeing them begins, which is called "Hanami" in the local language, which literally means "observing flowers". It would be no exaggeration to call it the most prominent festival in Japanese society, although it is not cited in the calendar.*

*The question may also arise in the minds of the readers; what is the affiliation between the national flower of Japan, which is called "sakura" in the local language, with Pakistan? Remarkably, the cherry tree and the origin of the flower is historically credited to the Himalayan mountain range, not far-flung from Islamabad. Over time, this tree spread to*

*Europe, Siberia, America, Canada, including China, Korea and Japan in addition to India. The Japanese are famous throughout the world for their horticultural art. They discovered cherry varieties with fruits. It does not seem different from regular tree, but the flowers come in abundance on it. At the present time, these demonstration types are more widespread, on which, despite the absence of leaves and fruits, only flowers grow and, the cherry tree feels like a tree of heaven when it is with flowers. The cherry blossom is called the soul of Japan as it is one of the most distinguished cultural and social symbols, which is considered the face of this country, like bullet train, green tea, modern electronics, layer of raw fish on boiled rice called "sushi", Mount Fuji, cornish floor greetings, or practice of taking off shoes at the entrance of the house, etc. Cherry blossom trees are frequently found along the rivers, streams, canals and parks as well as gardens adjacent to ancient Buddhist and Shinto shrines. I met a Buddhist monk while watching them. In addition, the foremost purpose of this monk's conversation with me appeared to be to practice his English language, but I took benefit of the opportunity to ask him about the place of worship.*

*Taking off your shoes outdoors is comprehensible, but why do Japanese people take off their shoes before entering the house? The young Buddhist monk's answer was that one characteristic was cleanliness. Different types of dust and germs are also attached to them, hence walking around in the house with the same shoes was contrary to the rules of sanitation. The second reason, he explained very strangely, was to take off the shoes outside the house to keep thoughts and problems from the outer world out of the house. My friend Sindhi Brahmin Ravi Kavalani, the pandit of the temple in the capital city of Santiago de Chile, says that as per the*

*view of Hindu thoughts, it is unfortunate to wear leather inside the house. The reason for this is that the skin of a dead animal is usual stuff for shoes. The ancient tradition of taking off shoes while entering the houses and temples is found in all Asian religions, but the logic presented by Buddhist monks is entirely diverse.*

*The pink and white cherry blossoms are supposed to be the soul of Japan because of their purity, but I contemplate the reason for their devoutness is probably more than just their looks. Their life is also very short, which usually spans over two to four days. This is the reason that when there is blossom on the flowers, people take a seat near these trees on the banks of rivers and gardens with mats, amusing their hearts with food, wine and music. You see somewhere the officials of a factory sitting in a circle, and somewhere students get busy in chattering. Under a tree laden with flowers, the old ladies of the neighborhood are having a party, and somewhere the staff of an office is seen celebrating spring.*

*Wherever and wherever these flowers bloom, they change the schedule of life in the city for a few days. The spectacle of happy smiling faces sitting under the cherry blossoms also changes the mood. It also stands interesting to see the cherry tree deprived of a single flower throughout the year, and that too merely for two or four days. When the branches of the tree bloom with flowers, they indeed complement to the gorgeousness of the land.*

## *The God of Light*

*A scientist's greatest invention or discovery is generally rewarded in the form of awards and honors at the official and unofficial levels. Acknowledgment of greatness can also be done in the form of conferment of office and official position. What at length can a scientist and inventor collect greater than the Nobel Prize? Thomas Edison, an American scientist and inventor, who invented the electric bulb, was a bit more fortunate in the sense that he was considered by many as a deity and God incarnate. He is worshiped at some places in Kyoto city and some temples have also named after him. These shrines in bamboo groves in which Edison has the status of a deity, are principally associated with Shintoism, the ancient and official religion of Japan, and the priests of Edison are taken a sect of this religion.*

*Decorated stalls outside the shrines that sell various religious paraphernalia have a small bamboo plaque depicting Edison as God. When firstly I saw, I was stunned to see God dressed in a suit and tie, but when you ask people who have been officially recognized as a sect since 1949, about a scientist who was not even your own religion: what is*

*the reason to rank him as God? Their answer is frequently, "Since he discovered the light bulb that lights up our dark nights, it is logical to rank of him as the god of electricity". In actual fact, the association between Edison and those temples is not so unassuming and superficial. How and when did Edison's relationship with these places of worship in the city of Kyoto, surrounded by thick bamboo groves, commenced? It seems like a mysterious topic, but it is not undisclosed, it is an attractive coincidence.*

*During the invention of the electric bulb, Edison sent many students, volunteers and assistants from his laboratory in New Jersey to the different parts of the world to research different materials to determine which material would work finest as a bulb filament? The main criterion was the extent of filament burning duration, and the material that was capable of burning for the longest time was considered the most suitable filament. To accomplish their goal, Edison's team experimented with more than six thousand plants and used them as the material needed for the filament of the bulb. A small number of members of the same team also arrived in the city of Kyoto, which has been the capital of Japan for many centuries. He also researched the bamboo plants in the same city where Edison's followers now worship him. God knows what the bamboo has the connection with spirituality, but many Sufis also contemplate it to be a consecrated tree.*

*The first poem of "Masnavi" by Maulana Rumi invites us to listen wisely to the sound of the flute to see what story it tells as its voice is so painful. Maybe, it is painful because it has been cut and separated from the stalk and it indicates the agony and anguish of parting with bamboo which is emanating from the sound of flute. To put along story in short is that Edison's volunteers found their required material from*

*these bamboo groves, that is, the required material to be used as filament in electric bulbs was discovered to be the most suitable. This substance found in these bamboo trees was capable of burning for 2450 hours or more or less three and a half months as a filament. This duration was extended than any filament made of any material in the world.*

*This discovery demonstrated to be the beginning of a revolution in the world of electricity. It is not known whether bamboo should technically be called a tree since according to botanists it belongs to the grass family. I have also done my graduation in botany, but here the matter is composition more technical, so there is a bit of misperception. Edison then founded his famous Edison Electric Company, which later became the General Electric Company, and began manufacturing electric bulbs on an industrial scale using Kyoto bamboo as a filament. Formerly, the main use of this bamboo was in the construction sector or baskets, hand fans, umbrellas and hats etc. were woven from it. At the present time, pizza is also made from bamboo, which is a popular food here, but I don't like its taste at all. This is the advice for you not to try and eat it, otherwise you may also face disappointment and displeasure.*

*It stands astonishing to witness other stunning combinations of nature and human ingenuity in bamboo substance. While I was researching on the matter, I found that not only Thomas Edison has the status of a god here, but the German scientist Hertz is also considered an incarnation of God. This not only shows us the dimensions of spirituality here, but also shows how plentiful importance science and technology have in people's minds. Apart from this, one also gets a responsiveness of the respect and sanctity with which scientists are perceived here.*

## *Japanese Reference of Iqbal*

*Festivities go on around the world regarding the 150th birth anniversary of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, the poet of the East. The existence of Pakistan is the prime proof of Allama Iqbal's farsightedness. A fascinating reference to the futurism of this philosopher-poet and Darveish politician is interrelated to Japan. In his article "National Life" written in 1906, Allama Iqbal described Japan as the Rising Star of Asia. Let me communicate you here that the universities of three big cities of Japan i.e. Tokyo University, Osaka University and Daito Bunka University, have Urdu department and a good number of Japanese students are studying Urdu language. A lot of work has been done on Iqbal in these universities. The in-charges of the Urdu department in these universities have full command of the Urdu language and have deciphered all the Urdu poetry of Allama Iqbal into Japanese and sporadically organize Iqbal Day here. Urdu language is neither outlandish nor new in Japan.*

*According to an article "Urdu in Japan" by Dr. Tabbasum Kashmiri, the history of Urdu initiated here with the*

*groundwork of an Urdu dictionary in 1796. Dr. Kashmiri has been teaching Urdu in Osaka University for many years, now Dr. Anwaar Ahmed was taking this responsibility in his place who has lately returned to Pakistan and has been appointed as the Chairman of the National Language Authority. Mr. Kagaya stands as a significant name in Japan regarding Iqbal, who besides organizing Iqbal Day in Japan numerous times, contributed in the meetings regarding Iqbal held in Cordova, Spain in 1989 and discussed the topic of "Allama Iqbal's Thoughts". I invite you all to read the article. The historical significance of this meeting is also due to Allama Iqbal's association with this city and his poem about the Mosque of Cordova. In 1904, the poet of the East wrote an essay on Japan, which, when read, seems to be completely fresh and one does not even think that more than a century has passed since it was written, so fresh it is. An excerpt from this article follows. "Look at the Japanese! At what an incredible speed they are developing."*

*It has been thirty or forty years since this nation was almost dead. In a brief period of 36 years, this assiduous nation of the Far East, which was a disciple of India from a religious point of view, imitated the countries of the West from a worldly point of view and developed and showed the essence that today it is considered as one of the largest civilized nations in the world. And researchers in the West are astonished to see the speed of its advancement. The keen eye of the Japanese saw the genuineness of this great revolution and took the route that was obligatory for their national persistence. People's hearts and minds rehabilitated hastily, and educational and civilization reform turned the whole nation into something different, and because among the other nations of Asia, Japan has understood the values of life the most, this country stands as the best instance. We must*



*consider the grounds of the crucial change of this nation and benefit from the imitation of this island as far as it stands conceivable and appropriate for the conditions of our country. Reading Allama Iqbal's comments about Japan, it feels as if he is talking about today's state of affairs, although more than a century has passed since this writing, at a time when the Japanese nation was not known as it is today.*

*We have witnessed revolutions. The war with Russia in 1915 in which Japan stood victorious and then two great wars especially World War II in which Japan was nuked and defeated by America, and then the monarchy was substituted by the British-style parliamentary system. Subsequently, aftereffects of the war, a long period of reconstruction had to go through, but this nation demonstrated true to Iqbal's theory that "the destiny of nations is in the hands of individuals" an interesting revelation for me in the poetry of Iqbal that Japan is also mentioned. These poems were written in the context of the industrial situation of the common India at that time, but they stand pertinent to our topic. Original poem is in Urdu language. Here is the translation.*

*The termination also belongs to him,  
Umbrellas, handkerchiefs, mufflers, aprons from Japan  
If this state of carelessness continues,  
To wash dead bodies, people will come from Kabul  
And shroud from Japan.*

*The news of Allama Iqbal's death was written by Professor Gamo, the first Japanese Urdu scholar here, which is also the first note about Allama's personality in Japan. This condolence note published in a magazine in August 1938 has a historical significance due to which I would like to present its translation for your kind selves. Prof. Gamo wrote this condolence note*

entitled "Death of Dr. Muhammad Iqbal" in which he writes, "The greatest of the Muslims of India, celebrated not only as a philosopher but also as a poet. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal accomplished his brilliant life at last on April 21 in Lahore city of Punjab province. Not only the Muslims but also the Hindu intellectuals were profoundly dismayed by the news of his death. Muhammad Iqbal was a great scholar who studied in Germany and England and adopted the spirit of East and West.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal was a Pan-Islamist as well as a nationalist poet who wrote abundantly in the Iranian language as an interpreter of the spirit of all Muslims. The titles of his significant works are "Bang-e-Dara" "Israr-e-Khodi" "Rumuz-e-Khodi" "Bal Gabriel" and "Pyam-e-Mashriq" Six Lectures on the "Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam." etc. are included. Presently, I wish to express my heartache on the occasion of his death by offering a few poems from "Payam-e- Mashriq". Also, some of Iqbal's poems have been translated into Japanese. Among the people who have played a vital and significant role in the cultivation of Urdu in Japan is Prof. Gamo, who spent most of his life teaching Urdu at the University of Tokyo and he is also the Japanese editor of Urdu books like "Qissa Chahar Darvaish". He continued to accomplish translation works of Iqbal. Maulana Abdul Majeed Salik has written in his book "Zikr-e-Iqbal" that around 1912 Allama Iqbal was planning to visit Japan, which was recommended by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. Iqbal's plan to visit Japan did not come to fruition, but the fragrance of his attachment to Japan continues even today, after a century, and will continue for aye.

### *Halal .... It's Nail Polish this time*

*This may be good news for Muslim women that now halal nail polish is also obtainable. This nail polish made in Japan, can be washed away repetitively. All the constituents included in its preparation are halal, and water can pass through it and get access to the nails. This invention, the beauty of this nail polish, lately launched, is has enduring effects as it maintains beauty and attractiveness. Some may think that such products have been available in the market since a long time? What news is this? Even religiously-oriented girls in our family use henna extract as nail polish. It is said by Hitomi Goto, the C.E.O of Halal Nail Company based in Tokyo, before the aforementioned invention, all the types of halal nail polish available in the market lasted for a few hours on the nails.*

*Although some companies in Canada and Malaysia had their own halal nail polish which were sold globally, but all of them had this common problem, that no one would be applied even on the next day. What is the variance between polish and halal nail polish? Such is very straightforward and unpretentious. After applying normal nail polish, water cannot reach till nails, which renders the ablution invalid.*

*A renowned religious scholar Javed Ahmad Ghamdi's opinion is a little diverse about this. When he visited the*

*United States a few years ago, the women there asked him if she could have ablution with nail polish. He replied that if nail polish was applied after performing ablution, then it was not necessary to remove the nail polish to have ablution another time. Rather, the next ablution and for the next prayer were permissible. His suggestion is similar to wearing socks, then there is no need to wash feet every time during ablution. Perchance, they did not consider the ingredients of nail polish. Alcohol is an essential ingredient in every nail polish. In general, Muslims' concept of halal and haram is limited to edibles. But for me, it was an eye-opening incident, when while buying a leather jacket, my friend asked the salesman of this shopping mall in Latin America, what kind of leather it was made of? When I inquired about the reason of such a question, the young salesman got confused. The elderly friend of mine explained me that jackets made of pig skin were commonly sold there, which stood unholy in Islam. In other words, it had been mentioned that pork was forbidden to eat, so was its skin. How did these shoes and jackets made of skin become forbidden? My elderly friend's argument was also precise that you could pray while wearing a pig skin jacket, right? Indubitably. This is piety. The same thing is true about nail polish, that it may not be permissible to perform prayers by prettifying the body with something made of forbidden ingredients.*

*The story of a Buddhist woman's invention of halal nail polish is also touching. Hitomi Go to presently volunteers at a Tokyo based hospital to beautify women suffering from cancer, clean their nails and apply nail polish, so that they could receive chemotherapy. This story started with her mother suffering from cancer and her death back in 2010. The real test of this sympathetic lady was yet to come. Two years later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer herself. By the*

*grace of God, recovered from cancer and she regained her health, but this disease taught her many lessons. She decided to become a "cancer artist". It sounds strange, but people suffering from this disease and their loved ones can realize it. When patients are undergoing chemotherapy, they become very de motivated, even people with great morale give up at one stage. In such a situation, personal care gets very imperative. As mental health is also a problem during the side effects of chemotherapy. Therefore, female patients According to Guto, cleaning the fingernails and applying nail polish on them is like changing the world of the patient. This process can become the cause the desire to live as cancer patients are very sensitive to chemicals when they have chemotherapy. The problem is that nail polish contains chemicals that cause allergic reactions sometimes, they are harmful every so often. Correspondingly, removing this nail polish is a big problem, which is a painful process for cancer patients.*

*This young cancer artist lady explained that it was not an easy task to find varnish without alcohol. This research and pursuit led her to the discovery of halal nail polish. Available Halal nail polish was better for cancer patients as it wore off quickly. In order to make Halal nail polish last longer, this Japanese woman found the varnish in a Tokyo hospital. This innovative long-lasting Halal nail polish was invented. Since her motivation was to improve the mental health of female patients, so Muslim women also became her customers. The halal nail polish she invented is now sold all over the world. It seems, she is making good money now.*

### *The science of Love*

*There stood a folk wisdom for centuries that love is something beyond logic, but what can be done about Waseda University of Japan, which has started teaching love and behaviors to love under the title of 'love study'. In the relevant department of this University, Romanticism is analyzed in a logical and scientific manner and this analysis is taught to students as a systematic academic subject. The reason for the cumulative popularity of this field of education is also that it not only is the students are taught how to interact with the opposite sex, but they are also accomplished to expand their communication skills. In this regard, the summary of the misinformation that reached us through the mediation of Urdu poets was as follows,*

*'The school of love holds an odd practice,  
One did not get leave who learned the lesson'  
But here, Adam stands strangely.*

*After learning the trickeries of falling in love, students are also graduating in droves. The latest news has come that in this field called "Science of Love" the number of women has increased up to 80%, while only 20% boys have been qualified for admission. It has become a favorite topic of conversation*

*in the gatherings of friends due to this news. Let us take you on a short tour of the art of love and introduce you to a love mentor. While giving a lecture on "Mate Selection Theory", Professor Tomonuri of Waseda University throws light on anticipated methods of matchmaking, saying that when the beloved, rather the proposed beloved, is invited to a meal, the style should be generally positive. Explaining this, he says that, for example, would it be better to eat at such and such a French restaurant or such and such an Italian restaurant?*

*One should not seek in affirmative or negative during invitations, while in both the cases, one of the choices should be kept as "yes". The professor says that if one is invited to dine in this manner, it becomes more difficult for a person to refuse. The purpose of going into this detail is so that you too can get an idea of the course and find out what myths are being taught in the name of love. Our concerned professor, who likes to be called a freak, has been teaching the same inversion in the university since 2008. The astounding thing is that their students are increasing rapidly. This year, 1,000 students applied for admission, while only 250 were admitted, the majority of whom, as stated earlier, were ladies. Contrasting boys, failure in many associations for girls is also considered a handicap. Possibly for this reason, they are more interested in having a perfect understanding of love affairs, so that the chances of failure remain nominal.*

*The said professor is serving the nation; he says that the population of the country is reducing uninterruptedly. There is a mounting tendency among people to remain celibate all their lives. In such a world, by analyzing the quality of people's liking, it is a decent thing to combine the aspects of biology, psychology and economics to attract the present young generation towards love. I try to teach students the crucial*

*ways to flourish in love; what better way there is to do it than that?*

*If the matter had remained here, perhaps there would have been no prerequisite to write this column, the irony is that this program has received the blessing and patronage of the government, the local government of Osaka city at the expense of the government, including our beloved professor, as we have mentioned earlier, has prearranged numerous lectures by all other professors associated with the field of "Science of Love". The local government invites men and women from all walks of life to participate in these discourses, with special publicity campaigns focusing on young people. The ever-declining population trend has been a constant annoyance for the government.*

*It is the position of the spokesperson of the district government that the young peer group does not have a durable aptitude to chat and discuss with strangers and unknown ones. That is why, it is not plentiful to give them an opportunity to interact and leave the rest to them to fall in love and take matters into their own hands. The government spokesperson believes that the said program will help the youth to improve their communication skills and capability to appreciate the opposite sex in a better way, as well as, help the youth to be more self-confident and nice-looking. In my estimation, all this being taught in the name of love is purely worldliness, it is not love at all. Worldliness can only be taught in educational institutions, but desires cannot be imparted. Even if love is done in accordance with the educational curriculum and book principles of other sciences, it does not deserve to be called love.*



Nevertheless, my main objection is the name of the field, in which love is called a science, while, the most popular and famed book on this subject is, "Art of Loving" by the German author Erich Fromm. All the blessed writers who have written on the subject, have considered love to be an art and not a science. Anyway, as Pakistanis, we are a bit averse to science, even if it is in the name of love. Hearing the name of science, our nation feels a little parched. For my part, even after graduating in Biochemistry from Government College, Lahore, I could not get rid of this dry feeling and still did not develop the earnestness towards science.

The second objection-like apprehension arises from Ibn-e-Insha's first-rated statement that the writing which is intended to repulsion and abhorrence, an entire generation should be comprised in the curriculum. Accordingly, in the light of this discernment, there is also a fear that after studying the science of love, students may not give up on the passion of love. From these reports, the assumption arises that now love has also become so commercialized, but the heart is not equipped to believe that the passion of love can be nurtured through such university courses. It is a fact that the Japanese are unsurprisingly shy and unsociable, yet teaching love as a subject seems unusual. Nevertheless, it is a matter of gratification that the science of love is being imparted and the study of hate is being avoided.

## Smiling Face

*The Shinto life-force smiles eternally. This argument is comprised in the basic religious beliefs of Shinto Dharma. Shintoism, as Japan's official religion stands, the majority of the population is Buddhist and Shinto, this religious principle is probably the main reason when you walk into any office, to a shop or reception here. You will be received with an immense smile. Addressing a customer with a disgusted, spotty or depressed face is considered impolite here. I don't recollect a reception here being addressed without a smile in the past several years, but sometimes it feels like the policy of the company behind those smiles, more than the incitement of Shinto spirits to always smile and exhibit natural emotion. Indubitably, there is a world of difference between the smile of a Buddha and a bank manager.*

*It also stands fascinating to note that Buddhism and Shintoism in Japan are so intertwined to the extent that it seems very difficult to separate them. Half of the members of the same household believe in Shinto Dharma and the other half believes in Buddhism. Although Shintoism has*

*traditionally worshiped the king of Japan as an incarnation of God, the Japanese royal family is believed to be the offspring of the sun goddess, while Buddhism is based on Siddhartha Gautama Buddha. And there are some evident theories. Ostensibly, these two religions seem to be based on entirely dissimilar ideas, but the ground reality is that the evolutionary process has highlighted the commonalities of the two religions by mixing them, while the controversial issues have diminished due to which they are now among harmonious religion. There is a celebrated proverb here that "Customer is God". In our Indian sub-continent, customer is called as God but he is the God in Japan. That's why, he is welcomed with a smiling face.*

*The newest revelation for me is that the employees who are spreading full of life smiles are spreading their calves all day at receptions, offices and shops, get a calf massage from the massage parlor when they get exhausted. These days, especially in Tokyo, massage parlors with smiling faces are becoming very popular and their number is increasing swiftly. Seeing such a situation, one doubts that maybe the smile of these smiling faces is artificial and not natural. As I mentioned previously, there is a big variance between the smile of a mystic and of a merchant. A monk named Hasan was staying with Rabia Basri Qalandar. After the Fajr prayer, he was standing outside the tent observing the sunrise. Amazed by the sight, he called out to Rabia Basri, "Rabia! Come out and see what a beautiful day it has turned out." After listening to Hasan, Rabia Basri Qalandar smiled and replied, "Come in! Here sits the One Who brings out the day."*

*The smile of the mystics, which is a proverb, is the practice of the Sunnah of Muhammad (PBUH). There is a tradition about Holy Prophet (PBUH) that he used to smile every so*

*often. I don't know why most of our religious leaders refrain from smiling. Cannot the effects of the British neo-colonial rule on the Indian subcontinent be a reason to avoid smiling? The impression less faces of our bureaucracy are a remnant of the British era. I strongly dislike this habit of the British that they did not let their emotions and expressions be expressed from their faces, whether they be cheerfulness, grief, likes and dislikes, smiles, annoyance; the lifeless faces.*

*A British-born classmate of mine says that things are shifting now and the new generation seems to ignore the advice of the elders to "always keep your face free of expression". But the emotionless spot face, called "sober face" in English and "stone face" in Punjabi, is still the dominant culture of Tory Party, Britain's ruling party. Sitting in London's underground train and observing the expressions on the faces of English passengers, it is felt that the theory of my British-born friend is blemished, if not invalid. For us, the message about this is very strong and beautiful. The meaning of a saying of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) goes thus, "Meeting people with a smile is also a charity."*

## *Respect for the Work*

*An old Japanese man approached to a friend of mine in the afternoon. He was old but very clean, freshly shaven face, and well-combed hair. The said friend is also dealing in the business of re-conditioning cars and Their Export to Overseas, like me. Old man, after having a bird's-eye view of the cars parked in the showroom and cautiously examining a couple of cars, he said to my Nepalese friend sitting inside the office, "I want an old truck with a box on the back. The truck should neither be too big nor too expensive." Generally, our foreign dealers are pleased to see Japanese customers, because they often buy carat a higher price than the normal price; and when they want to sell it, they sell it at a much cheaper price as compared to a foreigner customer.*

*With the similar optimistic note for the future, my friend warmly welcomed the old Japanese. Getting details of the requirements; customer inquiry is the first step of our business. Generally, people enter a showroom with a map of the vehicle they want what they bear in their minds. This old man had a very soft stance on this issue. The answer of the*

Japanese elderly was, "Whatever it is, it will work." The variance between automatic gear and manual gear is also considered important, but he did not make any specific conditions for this, and the difference between diesel and petrol was not part of his conditions either.

The small truck box is generally of two types, one with a freezer and the other simple. When He asked the Japanese about the details of this box, he replied, "Any of the two that you can find easily will do." My friend further asked that if the truck was fitted with a tarpaulin box instead of an aluminum box, then he would buy that too? The old chap answered, "If it goes a little cheaper, I can buy it too." Generally, the people who buy a car are not so soft about their choice. Maybe that's why my friend asked the customer with a little effort and politeness, "Friend, for what purpose do you want a truck? What is to be done with this vehicle?" To this question, the old Japanese replied somewhat confidentially, "The truth is that I have nothing to do with it. Not for any work. The only wish is that when I take the truck out of the parking lot of my house in the morning, as my neighborhood will think that I am going to work. When I return to home they will think I am coming back from work. Let no one think that I am no longer of any use. I am just sitting idle and am good for nothing." The purpose of narrating this true story is to draw your attention to the great fact that nations do not make progress without following a reason.

Great nations recognize the greatness of those who work. The attitude of the society is that the one who works hard is respected in the neighborhood. It is the right of the people to expect good constructive works and decent policies from the government. Even if the Government is of your political

*opponents, it is not bad to expect charisma from the government. But some errands and responsibilities are of society and individuals. There are some certain steps that take the countries to the path of development and greatness are not supposed to be done at the state level. Honoring the hard work is the obligation of the people, as the hardworking worker should be valued.*

*It stands the responsibility of the society to pay respect to the persons who work hard: a cobbler, washer man, barber, mechanic, electrician, cleaner. You may find it strange, but in Japan, a man associated with any profession is called with suffix "Mr. or Mrs." If you remove the suffix "Mr. or Mrs." and call someone with his bare name, it will be considered very discourteous and offensive. Likewise, when you want to address him/her, you should say Barber San, Mechanic San, Fisher San etc. even in his absence, connected with a profession. A person's name is taken by adding San to it. This is not a law enforced by the government, rather it is an adopted attitude of the society that if someone says that he is a minister or the son of the prime minister, you will get a response from the person you are talking to same as if you tell that you are a son of a cleaner. It would be tough to notice the difference even in the tone of this answer. Unemployment is considered a curse. A person out of work will not be welcomed anywhere, and his life will be in a deep trouble as his friends and relatives will start avoiding him.*

## *Soul of Japanese Society and Geisha*

*It is very Difficult to comprehend the inner Self and actual Soul of Japan. This analysis is from Professor Tabassum Kashmiri, who has been teaching Urdu for a quarter of a century in Osaka University, Japan, and in my understanding, such is true to the letter. At the outset, tourists get the impression that the Japanese are very naive, this is true to some extent, but occasionally people on this Island make-believe to be oblivious. Despite knowing everything, they act like they don't know anything. Hearing the same incident for the tenth time, they show it as if it is the first time in their life. People here do not disapprove at all. You will not listen the word "No" around here, positive "yes" and "yes" in negation are mixed.*

*Let's say, if you say that the weather is very pleasant today, there is a 99% chance that the response will be that the weather is really nice at the moment. Then you say to another person in the same place at the same time that the weather is really bad today, and the 99% likely answer will be. "Yes! Yes!! The weather is really bad today." Disagreement is*



not normally practiced here. One of my Nepali friend, who owns quite a few restaurants here for ethic cuisine, was chatting about his business. My stance was, "We South East Asian people complain a lot, i.e. the food is not enough, it is too much, it has a problem, it is not that tasty." Japanese customers, on the contrary, are good in that as they do not complain, they just eat gently.

Vishnu Saran Nepali's analysis and reasoning was entirely different. He started saying, "Brother! Our people are still good. If they find a fault in the food, the same helps us to improve food quality and to remove the deficiency, if any. The Japanese customers eat the food and their comments are "Tasty, delicious!!" They leave, even if the food is bad and tasteless, but rather they don't come back another time. This trend is more dangerous for us. Principally, Japanese people are very cautious. You can conjecture that there is no word for sexual act in Japanese language. In normal houses there are separate beds for husband and wife.

Neelma Naheed Durrani, our poet friend was a senior police officer in Punjab Police Department. During her career, she did some study course in Japan. When she got training, she preserved the memories of her stay in the form of a Punjabi travelogue, "Chadde Suraj Di Dharti (Land of Rising sun)" is a very beautiful travelogue. She possesses a high writing capability because of her understanding of the literature. Her inquisitive look and spirit added to the enjoyment of this travelogue. She has written a chapter about the "geisha" of Kyoto city. In a few words, the author has described the translation of "geisha" as "prostitution". The actual phenomenon is a little diverse. If I pronounce it in the modest words, it is not the same. There is a variance between a prostitute and a professional Geisha. "geisha" are not

*prostitutes in General Terms, but a historical metaphor of Japanese civilization. Dressed in traditional dress, these women are decidedly trained, with a command of language and expression and a complete awareness of cultural nuances. At no point in history have there been any relations with these comrades and ordinary people. Geishas have always charmed men of the elite class with their words, movements and gestures and have been rewarded plentifully.*

*There used to be regular schools for the training of such women. As time has changed, the whole system has also gone under an alteration. Though these geishas were trained, there are still sparks in the ashes somewhere. Basically, "geishas" are traditional artistic women who are interested in performing arts. Besides dancing and music, they are taught the art of conversation. These women are now part of the feasts of the very rich and are sometimes seen on stage, with their heavy make-up and traditional Japanese dress, but these women do not engage in prostitution. It would suffice to say that the literal translation of geisha is an artist and the first geisha was a male four centuries ago, and the first female geisha was three centuries ago.*

*Moreover, calligraphy and flower decoration are also acquired through proper training. The number of women involved in this field is assessed to be between one and five thousand, but it is important to know that just a century ago, this number was more than one hundred thousand in Japan. At the present time, geishas are only found in expensive bars, specialty restaurants, and a few specialty tea houses that serve tea ever for \$1,200. We are talking about the essence of Japanese society, its true spirit, cultural and human expression.*

*Since Japanese use a lesser number of words expression in terms of expressing their feelings, it is even tougher to understand their innermost feelings. Japanese people don not touch each other in the least. Incidentally, there was a law and principle in many kingdoms since ancient times that the king was not allowed to be touched, and this produced the rule of no touching. The same has been adopted as a style. Shaking hands was not customary in Japan even before the corona epidemic, the courtesy boys greeting has been practiced here since ancient time, but sometimes this same situation grows painful. I witnessed a distressing scene in a hospital that the mother of a ten-twelve-year-old girl died, and her grandmother, father and some other relatives were also there. The girl was crying, but everyone forbade her from crying and yelling. If she would try to hug some loved one, they would not allow her, she was rather advised be patient. They were rather suppressing their feelings. I find this scene to be very poignant. People from every region have their own customs and traditions which they follow and it would not be suitable to divide them into good and bad cultural values. Traditions and lifestyles are neither good nor bad, they are just different from each other. The exquisiteness of this colorful and cultural world is its multiplicity. Social diversity makes our world more stunning. The beauty of this society and culture is enhanced by the comprehensive of mystery around Japanese society.*

## *Islam and Ramadhan in Japan*

*The Muslim community living in Japan celebrates Ramadhan with traditional religious enthusiasm. At this juncture, the month of Ramadhan is exceptional from other countries in the sense that it holds the status of a festival. Iftar is prearranged in all the mosques of the country and most people choose to open fast in the mosque itself, which is also a significant source of interaction and connection for the Muslim community living here. There are mosques in virtually all major cities in Japan, and universities or colleges where Muslim students are studying necessarily have a mosque or prayer room. In relation to Ramadan, Hafiz scholars from Pakistan and numerous other countries approach here during Ramadhan to lead Taraweeh Prayer. It is also worth mentioning that most of the mosques are managed and maintained by Pakistanis. It is an exciting fact that more than half of the mosques have been built by Pakistanis.*

*The oldest mosque here is the Jamia Masjid in the city of Kobe, which was constructed in 1935 by traders from United India. The largest mosque in Japan is the Turkish Mosque in Tokyo, which is managed by the Turkish government. This mosque also has a history. Among the Muslim countries, Japan's relations with Turkey have traditionally been the strongest. Both the countries were allies in the First World War and the reason for their geographical partnership has attracted the enmity of their common enemy, Russia. It should be reminisced that Japan and Turkey have fought many wars against Russia and four islands of Japan are still in*

*the possession of Russia. The first indigenous Muslims in Japan were those who were among the Japanese diplomatic staff in Turkey. These people converted to Islam during the last decade of the nineteenth century.*

*The land of the Turkish mosque in Tokyo was also gifted to Turkey by the Japanese emperor. An interesting research has also come to the fore that the first mosque was built here in 1905 by Russian prisoners of war during their imprisonment, as in 1905, during the war between Russia and Japan, about thirty thousand Russian soldiers were taken as prisoners of war, out of which nearly one thousand were Muslims. They remained imprisoned in Japan for about a year and some prisoners of war died during their captivity, and their graves are still present in the suburbs of Osaka city, with Quranic verses on their tombstones and embellished with a sign of crescent, demonstrating them to be Muslims. There is also a commemorative minaret near these graves on which Christian and Jewish prayers as well as Quranic verses and prayers are carved.*

*The proof of the presence of the above-mentioned mosques is also in the letter written by the Japanese Emperor to the Russian Emperor in 1905, in which the Tsar of Russia is guaranteed that 28,000 soldiers either Christians and Muslims imprisoned in Japan enjoy complete religious freedom. Synagogues have been built for the Jewish prisoners and they perform their religious rituals in their synagogues with complete self-determination. In addition, Yashin Sanh, the former governor of Russia's semi-autonomous state of Tatarstan, has also written an article in which details about this first mosque in Japan have been described. Regrettably, this mosque disappeared and have no traces are left.*

## Colors of Autumn

*The earth has been dressed in the colors of autumn. The leaves of the trees are losing their greenness, some look yellow, yellowish-orange and some turning red. After a few days, these leaves will be supposed to be sprinkling a yellow carpet in the gardens after falling from the trees. One of my beloved sounds in this world stands the sound of parched leaves munching under my feet while I would be walking on the trails in the dried leaves. I don't distinguish why this season stands so ostracized among my poet friends. The initiation of autumn in Japan is enormously popular with children. The reason behind this admiration is the children-related festivals celebrated during this season. At the commencement of November, the festival of sound health and growth of newborns is celebrated, with prayer ceremonies for the new generation. The leading splendor of this festival is hidden in children playing traditional and cultural games together, cultural games that have been played on the occasion of this festival for hundreds if not thousands of years.*

*Seven, five, three, fairs are held in mid-November each year. This year 7-5-3 Festival is also celebrated with*

*traditional enthusiasm on 15th November. As the name suggests, three-year-old girls, five-year-old boys and seven-year-old girls are the focus of this festival. At this juncture, girls between the ages of three and seven and boys between the ages of five dress up in traditional Japanese clothing and attend shrines with their parents.*

*After reciting definite mantras, the priests present a special type of candy to the children for a long life, which is commonly called "long-life Toffee ". These candies are truly related to the occasion of this festival. This Toffee Really increases age or is simply a "pill" stands a mystery. The priests do not ask for money, but to avoid bad omens, people do not return to homes from the temple without offering a prayer. On the way back from the places of worship, a holy relic wrapped in small velvet pots for good luck are bought from the stalls set up in the temple premises. Inside this, pouch tied with a silk thread, there is a conditional solution to virtually every problem including good health, success in love, marriage and in school exams. But inaugural of it is considered prohibited and offensive. With great reverence, this Holy Relic is installed at a significant and clean place. Since our business is associated to the export of reconditioned vehicles, such allowances are often seen in older vehicles. Once, over powered by curiosity, I opened a Holy Relic enfolded in a purple cocoon, and inside there were prayers written on small pieces of wood and pieces of paper.*

*Very like the leaves falling from the trees in autumn, similar is the season of hair loss from our heads. A healthy and energetic man has from one hundred thousand to one hundred and forty thousand hairs on his head. In the rest of the three seasons of the year, the average rate of hair loss is around 100 per day, but during the autumn, this rate reaches*

*up to per day, i.e. it doubles. According to experts of the relevant field, the reason behind doubling the rate of hair loss stands the ultraviolet rays on the head during summer. Some experts accept as true that even more important than the severe effects of the sun's rays on the hair during the summer season is that this time of year, old hair naturally make way for new hair. In other words, it is the production of new hair that appears as the old hair falls out, actually making room for new hair, just like trees, plants have new leaves.*

*This unfolds as a miracle of nature that autumn marks trees and humans alike, so similarly. The trouble is that trees are undisputable to grow new leaves after autumn has passed, while belief in the theory of re-growing of hair on the head is shaky. A friend of mine undergoing the same hazardous situation, alarmed by the speed of hair loss, took me to a waxing center a few days ago. Although I explained a lot to this friend of mine that even if the hair falls, then what? New ones will be transplanted. If so is impossible, what is the harm if one has to spend the rest of one's life as a bald or semi-bald person? Which calamity will it break? Even with examples from Lenin to Mao Zedong, and from Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto to Churchill. As this friend of mine was not convinced, I gave up and resigned. The doctor who runs the Hair Degenerative Clinic charged such a heavy fee that four people in Pakistan could with no trouble have their appendix operated at a Private Hospital, but what he said was very accommodating. For one thing, he explicated that hair loss is not just caused by autumn, blood Flow, stress and lack of sleep are also among the main causes.*

*If I be allowed, I would explain you some of the instructions to prevent hair loss during the hot season, I am not a doctor, as it will work, if not for you, then for a friend of*



*yours. The first thing is that while taking a bath, do not use chemical-based shampoo and soap. Apply only organic and least chemicals on your head. The less force you use while washing your hair, the better it is for your hair. Do not either use shampoo every day. The doctor has done a lot of propaganda but I will only let you be able to stand moderate in its use. Before applying shampoo and soap on the head, massage the head for three minutes in such a way as to shake the scalp, but do not try too hard because its only purpose is to circulate the blood in the roots of the hair.*

*The proportion of hair loss in people who get less than five hours of sleep has been recorded to be several times higher than that of those who get good amount of sleep. Hence, maintain sleep duration more than five hours. Use your fingertips to wash your hair, avoid using a hair dryer after washing your hair, or use a low heat setting for short periods of time. Regardless of these precautions, if there is no hair left on the head, it should be accepted as fate. The autumn can also be blamed for this.*

*Each day in the garden, in Parks and on the street, the children of the neighborhood gather and collect dry leaves together, make piles of them, and fling the same leaves on top of each other and try to stick them on clothes, sometimes mounds of leaves. They make and jump on these mounds, at the end they set fire to these leaves and roast yams and plums in this fire. The fire burns for a long time and the children gather new leaves and burn it. At the end of the commotion, which is more like a celebration, a yam is plucked from the burning fire, which eventually turns into coal, which is peeled, and the roasted yam is shared by the children. Children are seen celebrating in many gardens in this season, specially, in countryside this sight is ore shared.*

*The graceful autumn shares a beautiful name in Urdu and Hindi Language i.e. "Pat Jhar" which means 'leaf fall', which is a befitting word to me as, also, being the name of the season, it also designates the natural conditions and events that take place during this season. Since approximately 80% of Japan's area consists of mountains and forests, it is astonishing that the mountains are also green and enclosed with trees. Hence, the color of Japan changes with the knock of autumn. Wherever you look, yellow and orange color prevails, instead of green. Here in spring, when the branches of the cherry trees blossom, to see the elegance of cherry blossom, people with their families and friends lay mats under the trees laden with flowers, sit with edibles and the same festival is called Hanami. Equally, in autumn, when the leaves of the trees turn yellow, orange, and red, and the leaves begin to fall in the wind, many Japanese contemplate it as a festive occasion. People leave their homes one by one, and take shelter somewhere adjacent to nature. Every so often, they camp on a hill in the form of groups. It is a popular place to see the changing colors. Captivatingly, the popular word for the cherry blossom festival in spring, "Hanami", literally translated as "blossom watching." Going to see the changing colors and falling leaves of autumn is called "playing yellow leaf hunt". Let's say that when people go out of their homes to see the dried leaves during the season of Pat Jhar, they name it as, "Moomi Jagari".*

*Such are the mentions of this festival in poetry as is more than a thousand years old. Eighth century AD, which is called "Nara" oath here, is the beloved subject of the poetry of that era. Prominent poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz also called Pakistan "Jungle of yellow leaves" in a well-known poem written on this season. Since the symbolic weather here is everlasting. They used to see the reign of autumn. And in terms of law*

*enforcement, they considered that Pakistan was a jungle. That is why, they also wrote it as an association of pain. Therefore, Faiz's words occupy a very prominent place in the poetry among prison poems. The colorful and attractive scenery of autumn is not only the charisma of nature; these landscapes rather have been cultivated by many good-hearted people. An example of this is the name as of the Toyota company in the city of the same name as the car manufacturer.*

*It is noteworthy to mention here that the reason for this is the 4,000 maple trees planted in the 17th century AD by the hands of a Buddhist follower and the Grand Priest of the temple. The leaves of the trees planted by the priest in the area around the Buddha shrine spread like a yellow-orange blanket on the ground in autumn. If you walk on these half-curved, yellow, dry, orange leaves in that part of the scene, you experience the same. It's like stepping on a spotted carpet. The choice symbol of autumn here is the maple leaf-like for the rest of the world. Maple is called "Afra" in Urdu and Persian. But I reflect that the majority of readers will be more familiar with Maple than "Afra" even though nowadays. Afra is a popular name for girls in many countries of the Middle East, including Pakistan.*

*I used to ponder on Parveen Shakir's poetry that she uses the metaphors of these flowers and trees. At least, I have never seen the reference of fragrance or the flowers on the amlatas tree. That's why, I was more excited and understood the same when I got a hand on Shivkmar Batalvi's poetry collection called "Sharin Da Phul". But something happened on a gorgeous evening while I was sitting in a garden. When an immense hearty aroma hit my nostrils, someone told him that it was the scent of the queen of the night flower. I was*

*strolling with my family in a residential area of Lahore last year. I asked about the trees, on which laden, snared, yellow flowers were being dazzled by their beauty. It was found out that these are Amlatas trees, which are decorated with yellow-colored flowers. For the Japanese people who go far into the mountain forests, they watch red and half-turned yellow leaves with the coming lonely and long winter days. I remember that due to severe cold and snow, where the movement is limited in most areas here. Mountains stretch and It is not possible to know well about the jungles. This is a celebration of the few days of freedom before cold winter's imprisonment. The colors of grief and sadness can be undoubtedly perceived, and special prayers were organized. But now the religious color has faded in this festival, and the cultural and social colors seems to prevail.*

## *Decreasing Population of Japan*

*Japan is growing into nation of grey-haired people. Irrespective of the fact that the majority of the population uses dyes, but aging has its own wide assortment of expressions and manifestations. According to the up-to-the-minute census, Japan's total national population is lessening. There has been a decrease of one million people during five years. This news has caused an upsurge of concern in the serious circles of the country, as this is the recorded reduction in population during the time of peace. In the last five years, the state had neither a war and if we ignore the few thousand people who expired in the earthquake and flood a few years ago, nor major natural disaster has caused a reduction in the population. The average age has neither increased with the development, nor decreased. If we consider the official statistics, despite all the natural disasters and unexpected events, the chances of survival of the country's inhabitants are uninterruptedly increasing. Although the site is reliable, in my country i.e. Pakistan, there is a famed saying, "There are three types of lies, first come the simple lies, second is blatant lies and third is official statistics, which is also regarded falls in*

*the category of a lie. Here the situation is quite the opposite in Japan. Official statistics and information are more credible in public." They are believed to be, and indeed are, more unswerving.*

*The most important and obvious cause of population decline is the low birth-rate. As per the census conducted five years ago, 126 million people lived in Japan, while figures published this month show that one million people. After the decline, the number of inhabitants of this country is now close to 125 million. In terms of population, Japan stands as the eleventh largest country in the world and about two percent of the total number of people breathing in the present world inhabit here. The nerve-wracking thing is that if this rate of population decline continues. According to United Nations approximations, Japan's population will be lessened down to 100 million people by 2050. It is worth-mentioning that in 1955, the population of this country was consisted of 90 million souls.*

*Pondering the reasons for the low birth-rate helps us to comprehend the problem of declining population. I think the most important reason stands the inflation. Just appreciate at the records of the last two decades, every year comes to the fore as more expensive than the previous year. Two or three out of ten most expensive cities in the whole world are in Japan. Tokyo and Osaka have generally been among the five most expensive cities in this list. Raising children in such an expensive country is certainly very hard, so people often fall victim to the fear of inflation after one or two children, while ideal peace and security of life and property is a great blessing. It is universally recognized that birth-rate increases in war-torn areas and during war i.e. Palestine and Afghanistan. Just look at the recent examples, we witness a*

*large amount of migration from these areas due to war, but the population is constantly increasing and not decreasing. The feeling of insecurity is the reason for the increase in the birth-rate and security becomes the reason for the decrease in such a rate.*

*With the influx of population in big cities, people are moving from small towns and villages to cities in search of a better future. Six percent of Japan's total population lives in villages now, while ninety-four percent of people are part of town life. The facilities of life in big cities are certainly more here, but life is also busier and expensive, and the general size of residences in cities is so small and compact that it is not possible to accommodate a large family. Urban life with costly residences, and burdened occupations are also a major cause of population decline.*

*My observation is that the more religious a country and society is, the faster its population growth will be. Europe, Russia, and China are great examples of secularization, and their population growth rates are very low, as well. Trust, sacrifice and mercy are things attributed virtuously to the religious society. These feelings of beneficence and sacrifice towards other people fade away if religion is lost, and selfishness takes their place. There is a beautiful saying, the meaning of which is, "The food that can fill one person's stomach is enough to fill two people's gluttony". The effects of spirituality in this society are very profound, but the people here are far away from creed and religiosity. The reason for the falling population is also that the society is turning away from religion. The country has the highest number of people over the age of twenty years as younger and more energetic people are getting relatively lesser in the labor market.*

*The average age is here is forty-seven years. The trend of population decline and its effects can be seen most conspicuously in the agricultural sector. For the first time in the history of the country's agriculture, the number of people involved in this sector has gone below two million. Consequently, agriculture has gone below in Japan in years. The sector is in the hands of old people, but according to the Ministry of Agriculture, there were not many elderly people. That is, sixty-seven percent of farmers are over sixty-seven years old. The total cultivated area in the country is continuously decreasing. In the last five years, speaking about livelihood from agriculture, bread-earning hands depend on this sector, but they have decreased by fourteen percent. Present day, the number of people related to the agricultural sector is just over 1.7 million. In Pakistan, there is talk about family planning and population control, but this point of view has not come out that a large population is a manifestation of a large workforce and a step to development. According to statistics, we witness a population surge in our country, and control is also recommended. But the case is opposite in Japan as lessening population is seen as impending danger.*



## Stone Garden

### *And Memories of World War*

*While walking along the river bank in front of my house in the evening, the sound of drum beating tickled the ears. It accompanied the mesmerizing sound of some song. The quiet of the evening in this far-flung town of Japan turned these sounds more prominent. It stands with us, the Punjabis, that wherever we overhear the beat of the drum, we are driven towards it. Saturday evening still gives us a feeling of more leisure and relaxation than the normal. Hence, I was tracing for the source of the humming sounds. I walked in till the center of the arrangement, there was an ancient Buddhist temple, the place of worship called 'Jinja' in the local language, was a moderately crowded. A large number of devotees were sitting on stool-like chairs in the main hall. There was a traditional Japanese religious performance on stage in front of them.*

*The priests dressed in robes were engrossed in their prayers, while from one corner came the sound of flutes. The religious songs were being sung in the chorus. There are generally no doors in the traditional Buddhist and Shinto shrines here, which are built of wood. Locks are also impossible to imagine as they are not installed in traditional houses either, let alone the locking of the temple. Erected on wooden pillars due to the lack of walls and pillars, the temple*

*presents a sense of spaciousness and openness. Stepping out of this main building, I was infatuated by the burning lanterns on the side of the stone garden. There were white charts along with the bright rows of yellow lanterns and lamps. The names of the dead ones were inscribed with a black brush. These were the names of those people who died on the first night of the month of August in the last days of the Second World War i.e. in 1945 when the American Air Force fighter planes bombed so aggressively that the sun of the next morning stood invisible.*

*About twenty-seven thousand people died on the night of August 1<sup>st</sup>, while the number of victims was more than one hundred thousand. It should be kept in remembrance that the total population of this city was almost the same at that time. In front of the main building of the temple, people stood on the side of the stone garden. They were looking for the names of their loved ones. The reason for the large number of attendees was also that the city had no house that was safe and intact from the effects of this terrible disaster. A middle-aged woman dressed in traditional Japanese clothes was very impatiently reading the names on these paper lanterns. When I inquired what name she was looking for? She started telling me that her grandfather was murdered that night. These names were included in the list. During the Conversation, she said that light was a metaphor for hope, that's why these mugs were radiant.*

*After observing the hand-made pictures there, a question started popping up in my mind as there was nothing special about them. There was either a picture of a mountain, or there was a picture of an animal or a bird somewhere. The paddy crops are visible in the painting, but the moon stood visible there. I informed the woman about my muddle, "Oh,*

*baby! Did this happen?" The middle-aged woman elucidated that these were scenes before the disaster. The purpose of the painting was to demonstrate that the people who are laughing, fighting, and playing had turned into blood and dust. "He was with me before the destruction. Say what he did. What the enemy destroyed?". That painful night that was when 99% of Toyama city was destroyed. People are aware that millions of guiltless people of two cities i.e. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were annihilated on the 6th and 9th of August. But in other cities of Japan, especially in the last days of the Second World War, the barbarity and apocalypse was undergone by the innocent people. It is no less than bringing a bloody and dark deed into limelight. Today, when Japanese people speak against war and in favor of peace, the same is the main motivation. These were the horrific scenes that they experienced. The dropping of the atomic bomb was the climax of it all. Apart from that, the destruction seems to touch the perplexing bounds.*

*I and the fore-mentioned lady were employed in the conversation alongside the Stone Garden, while the priest of the temple approached us and joined our conversation. He started asking the Japanese woman about who had died in her family? After hearing her grandfather's words, the priest asked about the woman the name of her grandfather. The woman revealed the name of her grandfather. It was so surprising when the priest described all the incidents of her grandfather's life in one breath. I guessed that perhaps the grandfather of that lady must have been a celebrated man, or that priest memorized the details of all the people who died in the bombing. They were performing duties in the army. In this evening, there was a wonderful tranquility in the deep dejection of the stone garden.*

*It would not be impertinent to describe the stone garden or "rock garden" here. It is also significant because such gardens decorated with white and black stones are found only in Japan. There is no example of them anywhere else in the world. imagine a green garden, now replace the green grass of this garden with white gravel. And the stone garden is known to the whole world as "a unique feature of Japanese culture", in the simplest description. A great care is taken and they are drawn in such lines as the plowing in the fields. If we look at the history of these stone gardens, it is a centuries-old tradition, even thousands of years old. I was questioned by a world celebrated author and poet. After being advised to read the Japanese novel "Shogun", he asked if there still existed "Stone Gardens" in Japan? This was the first time that my attention was drawn towards the same.*

*It stands a stimulating thing is that in the yard and surroundings of any traditional place of worship, whether you see a green garden or not, this plot would definitely be visible. The patch of stones in the premises of temples is considered mandatory. It is only a manifestation of traditionalism and beauty, which shows a very close relationship with spirituality. Let me communicate you here that generally when priests and monks enter these gardens, they come barefooted. Just imagine the experience of walking barefoot on rocky pointed gravel? It is spiritual parentage? Some critics interpret it as torment and call it a sadism. According to behaviorists, walking on stones with bare-footed is well thought-out as worship and the ladder of spirituality and knowledge is considered a necessary part of the journey of truth. If I give you a shield and walk on the same stones, Buddhist monks stare at the stones of the "Stone Garden" with empty eyes for many hours, and such a noble experience taken no less than a pilgrimage.*

## Memories of Atomic Bombardment

*In Japan, the month of August is dedicated to the remembrance of the dead just as, we Muslims traditionally go to clean and cover the graves of our loved ones during month of Muharram. It is routine here that all and sundry in the month of August go back to his native area where apart from visiting the graves of their loved ones, people also take care and repair the grave of Stones. The Japanese cemeteries consist of stone-hewn tombs, and on a concrete floor, there is a stone-hewn tomb of a human height covering an area of one square meter. It would be more apt to call the tomb a Hindu Style 'samadhi', because it hosts the ashes and remains of the dead after cremation. They are protected in a small pot and kept in the grave. The average price of this small tomb type grave stone structure is around million rupees in Pakistani currency, and such expensive types of graves are constructed which range up to several millions of Rupees. However, each family possess one tomb only, in which the clay vassal of each deceased is placed.*

*So, the school children have a whole month off, while there is no holiday in the calendar in the offices, but each organization celebrates four, six days or week-long holidays as per its convenience. Young people dressed in traditional clothes with drum and knowledge-bearers take out a demonstration, and the color of these processions that come out from every village, town and village is similar to our Sufi's Urs, and not of mourning. The reason for this difference is the religious concept of life and death. But the excitement has fallen victim to the precautionary rules of social distancing for two years but now the life is getting on track again. The reason for celebrating this festival called "Obon" in the month*

*of August is probably because during the Second World War, the United States dropped nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki during the same month, which caused millions of deaths. As a result of the US atomic bombs, the word 'tragedy' seems too small for the calamity that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki faced. Millions of people died in the blink of an eye, and among the survivors of the radiation, millions of people were permanently crippled. Many children born years later were born with disabilities due to the effects of nuclear radiation. Most of the people who observed this mass annihilation, did not speak a word for decades out of the horror, and kept silence, such was the terror. And the effects can still be seen and felt among the survivors, even after seventy-five years. As a result of the nuclear bombing, the Japanese watched two joyful and prosperous cities turning to ashes. Such a destruction, the precedent of which is not found anywhere in the world before in the human history, nor later when the life re-took a new blooming here.*

*This nation did not lick its wounds for years on the ashes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and shed the tears. Astonishingly, it started a dynamic campaign of reconstruction with rehabilitated eagerness that continues to this day. It was not case that the Japanese completely overlooked the past. Such a beautiful combination of traditionalism and modernity can hardly be perceived in any other society in the world as in Japan. The good thing is that these two colors are realized in complete harmony. It is moderately tough to precisely approximate the total number of nuclear weapons in the world at the moment, but ten thousand nuclear weapons are in a high alert position according to experts, which can be fired at any time. 93% of the total global stockpile of nuclear weapons is with the United States and Russia.*

*According to the opinion of experts published in the international media, the number of nuclear weapons in Pakistan is estimated to be between 120 and 140, while India has a stockpile of nuclear weapons around 110. World experts are of the opinion that Pakistan's nuclear reserves are more than India's, while China's existing number of nuclear weapons is estimated to be around 250. It can also be said that China's nuclear weapons reserves are equal to the total reserves of Pakistan and India. These days, there is a lot of apprehensions on the global level due to the increasing border tension between Russia and NATO, the reason being that both sides possess nuclear weapons. In the event of a war, strategic experts believe that it would not be possible for other countries to remain neutral, and a major proportion of the world's total population living in these countries would be directly affected by nuclear bombardment, which of course would be a dreadful situation.*

*As a result of the atomic bombing, the residents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki went through the agony and suffering. May God not let the residents of any other town in the world undergo such devastation.*

*I do not know the meticulous circumstances of the event before the Second World War, during its last days, it was the sixth of August, 1945, when the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. Seventy thousand people died in a matter of seconds and one hundred and forty thousand people died in a few days as a result of such nukes. No one could be safe from the effects of nuclear radiation in this city with a population of three hundred thousand, and even after many decades, many children were born disabled due to its radiation. The whole city was burnt to the ground. As a sign of this mass death, a half-burnt building has been preserved and turned into a peace museum there. It is a nuclear dome. After a gap*

*of three days, the second atomic bomb was dropped on the industrial city of Nagasaki on the orders of the US President Harry Truman and one hundred thousand citizens lost their lives in the blink of an eye. The number of dead in both cities may never be estimated, but without exaggeration, the number stands in millions. One reason of US targeting these two cities for nukes was that these were the only two cities in Japan where there were no US prisoners of war, which caused millions of deaths. As a result of the US atomic bombs, the word tragedy appears too insignificant for the disaster that the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki faced. Even the ones who survived the radiation, millions among them were permanently crippled. Many children born were born with disabilities years later due to the effects of nuclear radioactivity.*

*Most of the people who witnessed this mass killing did not speak a word for decades out of the horror and remained silent. Fear, terror! And the effects of the curb can still be seen and felt among the survivors even seventy-five years later. Nuclear weapons, which the U.S. establishment at that time named "Super Weapon". The atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima on August 6 was named "Little Boy", which created a mushroom-shaped nuclear cloud and initiated the race for nuclear weapons in the world. The atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki on August 9 was given the name, "Fat Man". These names indicate the sense of humor and arrogance of Americans, as well as indifference and the Japanese army surrendered on August 15, 1945.*

*Military experts believe that Japan would have surrendered even if the United States had not used the atomic bomb, as its ally Germany in Europe had been defeated in the month of May, and the end was somewhere near. The nuclear bombing was probably intended to avenge the Japanese*



*attack on the American port of Pearl Harbor in 1941 as this attack led to America's involvement in World War II. Before that, the opinion of the American people and the establishment was divided about joining the war. American President Truman is criticized that it was a mistake to drop atomic bombs on thickly populated cities. Rather, Japanese Islands could have been blockaded. If the use of nuclear weapons was unavoidable, they could have used them in an uninhabited or sporadically populated areas. Analysts say that one of the purposes of the American nuclear bombing was to warn the Soviet Union as how far the United States had gone militarily. It was also intended to dishearten Stalin. The spirit of the Soviet Union and Joseph Stalin could not be broken, but an interminable and hazardous race to acquire nuclear weapons between the states on the planet got in progress.*

*On August 6, 1945, at 8:45 in the morning, an atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima and changed to concept of war eternally in the world. The same process stood repetitive three days later at Nagasaki. How much was the fault of the ruler in the Second World War? And how much was the state guilty? It is very hard to resolve, or such may be impossible, since in warfare, the death stands the only friend. It is alleged that Japan was guilty of aggression in the far East then. She was establishing colonies and was also involved in many other issues that cannot be elucidated.*

*The burning of millions of innocent people by the United States in nuclear flames is such an act as history will never pardon. The historian will not remember it by any other name less than cruelty. We pray that the people of any town may never experience such a tragedy as the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki saw in the preceding century.*

## *Total Quality Management In Japanese Way*

*During past few decades, product quality assurance systems in the economy sector have turned out to be very popular throughout the world. This perception of standard production has gained prodigious popularity especially in industrial establishments. It is comprehensible and logical that this system, known as Total Quality Management or T.Q.M., is gaining importance at the global level as many institutions and organizations are doing this. Pakistanis involved in the export sector recognize that if they want to send Pakistani products to Europe, America or to any rich country, the first question comes to the fore, whether your company has production standards? Have you obtained any relevant certificate? If not from one organization, then from another? Importers are very contented to confirm before any quality control organization produced by the manufacturing organization. After ensuring the quality of the goods, the procurement stage arises.*

*Numerous international industrial and commercial awards have also been established in this regard. Along with the advertisement of the industry in the media, the*

*indications of such awards would assuredly have caught your attention. The concept of ensuring production quality in Japan is fairly unlike from the rest of the world. This system of ensuring the standardization of aggregate production is so important that it is imparted as a subject to economics and commerce students in universities across the world, including Pakistan. In the days when I did Master in Business Administration, the students of our university also had to study this information as a distinct Course subject, which is called" Total Quality Management in Japanese Way" The Japanese concept of total quality production of goods or T.Q.M is very motivating and exclusive. As mentioned at the outset, there are many trustworthy organizations around the world that work to measure quality in the industry and craft sector. In Japan, there is a comprehensive system of testing and maintaining quality, not only in industry, but in all areas of production.*

*It has always been a practice all over the world that goods in the industrial sector are divided into good and bad quality after production. Somewhere the products are divided into A, B category and then rejected goods. Sometimes they are divided into quality, semi-quality, sub-standard, defective, inferior and unsalable goods with more attractive names. The Japanese concept is somewhat different. The description in brief is that here the quality control of the material is not deferred at the last stage of production, but quality assurance is ensured at every stage during production and non-standard parts, parts or the piece is immediately separated.*

*For example, when making a TV, each button, screen, switch, bulb, and total are tested separately at each stage of production, and also when the TV gets assembled with the components of these certified parts, the chances of it being*

*defective or damaged get very less. When a TV set is checked before it is presented for sale in the market, every part involved in its formation has to be already met the standard criteria, many times. Hence, it is impossible for the thing made from them to be substandard.*

*Leave aside the hype and acceptance of the Japanese concept of mass production throughout the world, now many of Pakistan's industrial establishments have adopted this concept. However, there are those who are thinking of adopting it. The reason for this is very modest and understandable, if a business organization checks the quality of production at every level, its rejection at the final stage is very less. This concept is not only about love and protection of quality, but also about profit, which is its logical result. A refrigerator and air-conditioner manufacturer in Pakistan adopted the above system a few years ago. The owner of the company says that over the years, his rejects have been Reduced by Eighty Percent, while twenty percent remained. which means that earlier, if 1000 refrigerators were made, an average of Fifty refrigerators were Rejected. Present day, after adopting the Japanese style of T.Q.M. scarcely ten refrigerators out of a thousand are substandard. This is Happening because the bad parts are already separated on the production stage.*

*Arriving Japan, I realized that the Japanese concept of production, that we read as a subject about total quality in the classroom, is not only limited to the production sector. Rather, it is a guide in all areas of life. To be honest, the underlying motivation behind this method of standard production is not profit, but rather the way of life of the Japanese, which coincidentally is being manifested in the industrial and economic sector. The sale and purchase of a*

*stained or defective item is socially considered depraved here. Cheapness of an item is an after-thought, the first requirement is that it should not be of low quality.*

*My friends from China say that the sugar sold in Japan, and other products from their Country, are of high quality, not even available to Chinese inside China. In the background of the Japanese concept of standard production, this social consciousness and social thinking is seen that the possibility of error in the execution of one's work should not be zero. One aspect of this society is that there is no room for error. It is a country with zero error.*

*The concept of compassion and forgiveness is Very Different here. In the olden days when the feudal system was prevalent in Japan under the patronage of the king, "samurai" did rule the length of the country, if someone made a mistake, he would commit suicide by stabbing his stomach with a sword or dagger, which is called "Hara Keri" meaning 'stomach stabbing'. Even now, members of the mafia, known as "yakuza", have to chop off a finger, or the Tip of a finger, if someone makes a mistake. In order to eliminate the possibility of error, quality is checked at every stage in every sphere of life.*

*We perceive the same cautious inclination of co-operation in the production sector as well. Otherwise, it would not even be in the knowledge of the general public that the world is constantly reading, researching and imitating their production method as a lesson.*

## *A Strange Spring*

*Even though these Bethel last days of spring,  
Who can stop the flowers from blooming?*

*It is in the selfsame nature of the flowers. The loveliness of the spring season lies in its brevity. In Japan, the season of spring is considered at its best when the cherry flowers blossom. The people who came in great numbers to see whether cherry blossom, are missing this time. The list of atrocities inflicted on the global level by the corona virus is very elongated. One of them is the cherry blossom viewing festival on the very eve of spring which stands missing, gone. The cherry blossom viewing festival, which is called "Hanami" in the local language is translated as "flower watching". It is also called the most significant festival of the year in the Japanese calendar.*

*The date of cherry blossoming varies in each city and district, depending on the seasonal temperature. In every*

*small and large city of Japan, there must be a cherry tree lawn, in addition, wherein the people may lay mats and sit in the shade of these trees to perceive the cherry blossoms on the banks of rivers, canals and rivers. They eat, drink and have fun. The tulip festival is held in the first week of May. This festival is held in a small town called "Tonami". This century-old tradition continues this year, also. In anticipation, the tulip display festival has also been canceled, towards which people have been drawn from all corners of Japan for decades. The story of the import of the tulip from Holland and its spread throughout the world is preserved in a museum-like lawn in the town of Tonami. It has been a routine, and it was opened for tourists in spring days. But the same stands missing this year.*

*The connotation of the destruction of gardens due to the noxious virus Corona has changed. It is felt now that the motive for the devastation of lawns is not only the destruction of flowers, trees and greenery as there are no people left to come for a walk in the gardens and appreciate the beauty of flowers. However, the gardens also give the impression to be deserted. The lawns seem to be inhabited by the people that walk in it. It is felt that the trampling of the flowers is not the only reason for the lamentation of orchids. They have come swinging on the arrival of spring. However, those who appreciate the beauty of flowers have been restrained to their homes. The florists not going out for a walk this time as they have been at isolated places to quarantine.*

*It may be of interest to the booklovers that the word "Corantina" or, the origin of "quarantine" is attributed to the Muslim scientist, Abu Ali Sina. The reason for the name Quarantine is that this epoch-making Muslim physician and chemist believed that patients suffering from some serious*

*diseases have infectious germs that can be transmitted to healthy people. Therefore, he used to separate people suffering from certain diseases for forty days so that the germs of the disease are not transferred to healthy people and they remain safe. One of the goals is to treat the patient uniformly. It is said, "When Venetian merchants saw the effectiveness of this method of treatment, they took it to Italy and it was adopted. In Italian, 'Forty' is called "corinta" or "corinte". Hence, the term "quarantina" came into existence. The prevalent reason for its popularity was that in Spanish and Portuguese 'forty' is also called "quarantha". Hence, the word "quarantina" became popular with the treatment method of spending time in perfect isolation until one recovers. Even though today's "quarantine" is effective, there are happy souls.*

*May God! Make us free from corona virus and quarantine presently. This spring has passed, such a miserable and isolated spring never come again the future.*



## *Beginning of a New Era*

*The modern railway system has been a distinguishing feature of Japan around the world. The bullet train running here is still the fastest train in the world in terms of speed. When we hear that the rail system in Japan is the unsurpassed and the latest, it does not mean only high-speed trains, but rather it connotes that there is much more about it which is worth-mentioning. The Osaka Metro Company, which operates underground trains, has lately ushered in a new era of technology. It has entered an era of the coming days that would have profound and far-reaching effects on the entire world. It is only a new milestone to say that automatic gates were installed for entry to platforms like ticket-checkers, where you pass through a hole. Insert the ticket and take out the authenticated ticket from the second slot, which is electronically validated, and with that the door opens and you can proceed to the platform.*

*The same process is repeated while exiting the platform. The ticket is inserted through one hole in the electric gate and taken out through the other, and the gate opens. If there is a defect in the ticket or a ticket inserted stands of less than the required price, the gate not only refuses to open, but sirens and bells also start ringing. Furthermore, the gates installed on the platform of the railway station for entry and exit were connected to the computer. If you put the IC card on the electric gate, it will be opened as "khul ja sim sim" like Magic. The condition is that you have deposited money in the IC card. It functions like easy-loading in mobile, the same card can be loaded from anywhere, or can also be recharged. You may call it a type of credit card used for shopping in markets and shops. The new invention is Amazing, which is a very simple process that the electric gates installed on the railway station platform for entry and exit have been replaced by the latest electric gates.*

*The cameras on the new electric gate recognize your face, will, verify your information on the computer and then the door will open automatically. The century-old tradition of stopping to show your passenger-ticket dies here. And the people walk straight through the door as if you were going through a security gate. The Idea is that by seeing the face of the daily commuters, the ticket amount will be deposited in their bill and the monthly other items like electricity, water, gas and telephone bills will also be brought through the rail-bill to your home. In the presence of hundreds of people, a day, this new discovery was inaugurated at an underground railway station in Osaka. A large number of media cameras watch the test movements of the railway men through the doors of this "face recognition" system, whose data is inserted into the computer of the electric gate. What happens here? For the passengers whose face card will be inside the electric*

*automatic gate, will easily pass through it and catch their trains, but the passengers with unknown appearance will be treated like undesirable ones.*

*The cameras and computers installed for facial recognition attached to these electric gates stands unquestionably be of very high quality. A few years back, some Japanese guests came to see our family, and after having introduced to my niece Fatima, the impression of the innocent girl was that all Japanese people keep the same face. Women and men, old and young people all look alike, such a facial similarity. This aspect is also being taken into consideration while designing these doors. Let us mention here that these latest doors that open on the basis of facial recognition are not the invention of individuals. As a result of the collaboration of four innovative technology companies, they have succeeded in bringing this latest invention to the public. The Osaka Underground Railway Company has announced that all entry and exit gates will be replaced with new electronic facial recognition gates on the platform by 2024, and visitors to the 2025 Expo in Osaka will see a reformed system.*

*A spokesman for the private rail company said that they wanted to improve the railway station working environment through new technology. The contract for manufacturing modern electric gates has been given to four companies separately, and they will demonstrate their skills at four different railway stations. The company that makes the best gates can later be awarded the contract to make similar electric gates at railway stations across the country in the city of Osaka. Meet. These are not commonplace companies, as Toshiba, Omron Social Solutions, Nippon Signal and Thakami are considered to be the best companies in the world in the*

*field of technology. These four companies have been given time to complete their own railway station project by September next year. 1,200 people will go through this chapter to inaugurate the project practically. Imagine what changes will come to the fore when this technology is installed in airports after railway stations? Thanks to these automatic electric gates, the facial recognition system will be so advanced that the need for passports will be eliminated. The immigration officials will put all the passengers' information into the computer installed inside the automatic electric gates and the gates will open automatically by recognizing people's faces. Your passport scan and re-entry visa are automatically opened after viewing.*

*In many countries of Eastern Europe, the experience of running a paper-free government is continuing with great success. In the approaching days, if you imagine the working scenario, every office and place where you have to go through the identification process for entry, this face-recognizing gate will allow entry, or deny it. A person's face will become his passport and ID card. It may take a long time in Pakistan, but there is no way to stop the technology. All the issues and resources are discussed, but in New York and Kabul, the iPhone' New model arrived on the same day. The latest computer models are available in the same number in Lahore and Karachi as well, which are in use in London and Paris.*

## *An Eyewitness Account of a Pandemic*

*An official at the Santiago airport asked me in a friendly manner, "Why are you going to Japan right now? Japan has been infected with a dangerous new virus at the Moment called corona virus." It was the first time I heard the name of corona at the international airport in Chile. In all the countries of Latin America, all the people with small flat noses and half-opened eyes are called "Chino", I'm not a racist at all but I am only trying to explain a general phenomenon. And when the local official at the Santiago airport gave a friendly warning, I ignored it thinking that this poor guy didn't know the difference between China and Japan. It was the last week of January when I was walking around in Mexico City. Corona was not even known; the halls in the cinema were packed. Stage plays are an important part of Mexican life. All the stage drama halls were also packed. There was a crowd of people in the middle of the city, It was a phenomenal rush of locals and tourists. just like in walled city of Lahore and its surroundings in Pakistan. There are also small restaurants where you have to wait in queues for delicious Mexican food and those long lines were as usual.*

*On my Arrival in Japan, there was a rush of routine life at the Tokyo International Airport. Although the Corona virus started in the middle of December, the whole*

*world did not even pay any attention to it at first, thinking it was a Chinese problem. Instead of helping China, the United States and European countries began to adopt of the measures to prevent the epidemic. They were taking measures for cancelling goods from China. During the early days, the American President Donald Trump and the British Prime Minister were regularly seen making fun of this epidemic. President Trump called it the Chinese virus. In the month of February, Japanese were adopting the formula of, 'Work, work and work'. The reason for this was that being the host of the 2020 Olympics, They had very little time left to finalize the venues and arrangements for all the sports events. It took two weeks finally in convincing the whole world that the corona virus was not only a problem of China as it had spread to the neighboring countries. For the first time, a Chinese from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spoke about this virus sprang from Wuhan City to the whole world. The Chinese official accused the United States of being involved in the spread of the disease, which was politically motivated rhetoric from both sides, I believe.*

*After China, the worst affected country by this epidemic was Iran. My friend Ali Murteza from Tehran was saying that if ten people die from the corona virus in Iran, the government was announcing one. In the second week of the March, my Iranian friend was said that their government could not stop Corona because the rest of the world had imposed Economic sanctions and other restrictions on them. It was strange that West Had only conflict was*

*with China, where normal business was going on as usual. Consequently, we were forced to do this despite the confirmation of the corona virus. Yesterday's tragedy is not the same as the family members of the deceased were not being allowed to participate in the funeral and burial of the dead, even they could not bathe the dead bodied of their loved one and only the government officials were allowed for shroud and burial.*

*Even in the third week of March, all life in Japan went on as usual. Although the disease had reached here and was still spreading, the attitude of the government was just to be cautious and there was no need to panic. The reason for this behavior was probably the 2020 Olympics. For this reason, the entire population, including me, was not too concerned about this and people were mistaking it for the alien world. By the third week, the government was assured that the Tokyo Olympics 2020 would be held in the month of July. The truth is that I myself wasn't worried about it until the third week of March. So ignorant of a high level. On the other hand, the same was the government's attempt to make everything appear normal so that the Olympic Games would not be postponed as she would have to suffer an expected loss of five to six billion dollars in case of delay in games. The first time I took this corona virus seriously was when I stopped for the night at a hotel adjacent to Tokyo Airport for the next day's flight.*

*That night when I opened an English newspaper, without any exaggeration, there was only one news in*

*the newspaper and that was of Corona. When I turned on CNN and BBC TV, Covid-19 was the only news there. The next morning, when I boarded the plane's ground staff for the flight to Bangkok, there were very few people at the immigration counter. There were half of the people compared to the Normal days. The plane I boarded to go to Thailand. More than half of the seats were empty. Bangkok airport was Not crowded at all as it Usually used to be. Only one business lounge was open, the rest were closed. The duty free shops were open but the customers were barely visible. Although six or seven o'clock in the evening is the busiest time of the day in terms of works at the airports. The flight from Bangkok to Lahore was full and many passengers were wearing masks. Majority of them I will say, which tends very unusual for Pakistan's perceptive. At Lahore airport, our forehead temperature was checked with a thermal gun. Besides all the Facts and figures about the international spread of the coronavirus and panic, I realized after reaching home in Pakistan the same disease was not the main topic of conversation there. It was rather a secondary topic. There were no faces to express fear, but they were rather confined to the four walls of the house. And the next few days also passed in the same carelessness.*

*China fought the corona virus with great courage, prowess and intelligence. It happened that in the last ten days of that March, this disease started to intensify in Europe. Italy, Spain were the worst victims of this disease. France, England and The whole of Europe, including Germany, was*



*engulfed by it. The disease in Russia had not reached the intensity that it has led to the birth of many conspiracy theories. Theatrically, USA became the new victim of Corona. They had more patients affected by Corona than any other country. And due to the number of deaths, the world began to take this disease more seriously. Lockdown began all over the world, including Pakistan. All shops, except pharmacies and grocery stores were closed, and all flights were canceled. The whole world was relieved and sat at home.*

*This disease seemed completely new and unbelievable Phenomenon for the seven and a half billion people living on the planet. When it went on its peak, people were thinking that the end of the world may have reached. I have never witnessed so helpless in the eyes of mankind all through my life. There were more than one million patients, but the cure for the Covid-19 was yet to be discovered. It was a relief, to some extent, to know that Russia prepared Sputnik Vaccine and England had invented Astra Zenica Vaccine for this, while Phyzer Company of USA invented the most popular vaccine to prevent this disease. Chinese also came up with effective vaccines and all these vaccines changed the atmosphere of fear and terror into a hopeful one. The change brought about by these vaccines were a hope that Coronavirus was not a death sentence anymore. Although the time of misery has passed and everything is getting back to normal, our concept regarding the value and future of humanity has been changed altogether.*

## *My Bag Challenge*

*Since the commencement of this month, a new law has been implemented in Japan. As per this new law, no plastic bag would be provided free of cost whilst buying the essential goods. Like other countries, the Japanese government continues to take measures to diminish environmental pollution. The latest move, which has been implemented in the country since July 1, at the shops and stores it is now specifically asked at the cash counters after you make the purchase that whether you need a plastic shopping bag? And also, you are communicated that you will separately have to pay for that bag. Perceptibly the purpose of this dialogue is not to highlight the importance of the money that you have to pay separately but in fact it is meant to make you feel that plastic shopping bags are a depraved habit. The Idea behind this question is that it will be far better if you go for the alternate of a plastic shopper. The payment*

*counters are available to sell bags made from clothe and other eco-friendly materials, which can be reused yet again.*

*A Dear writer-friend from my Home Town, who has been performing his teaching duties in the Urdu department of the University of Osaka for a quarter century in Japan, believes that it is very difficult to understand the inner and soul of the Japanese society. Through a personal experience, I may elucidate the importance of gestures in this society. The story initiates as my elder brother who was in Japan, arranged my residence before my arrival. This house was very huge and away from Tokyo. It was situated near my office. There was a small garden in front of that house, with a few trees and different kinds of plants. I got busy with my business as I had just arrived in the country. In the meanwhile, the plants kept growing and gradually until the whole lawn was covered by them. One day, when I returned from the office, I saw an amazing view, all the plants of my garden were hewed in a very good way. I thought that maybe some municipality or local government here that would be working on gardening and trimming the plants.*

*Since the days when I was new-comer in Japan and my house was in a state of confusion, I loved sighting of the plants but could not take their care appropriately. The days and the time passed and spring had set in. One evening, I witnessed the plants and trees growing again in a stunning scenery, all in order, such a pleasing view it was! I was appreciating the scene of the beauty and my neighbor showed up. I bowed down in a Japanese traditional way and*

*saluted him, but without going in any detail, she said that she had cut my lawn for a second time and fixed it, and I had to do that by myself next time.*

*The pollution caused by plastic bags in the oceans, rivers and forests is not only injuring the natural landscape which is a source of beauty, but also endangering the lives of aquatic life. Although nationally the share of these plastic bags is very less i.e. the 90 tons of total annual waste, but the reality is that it is used only once but spreads pollution beyond its weight. Somewhere it is creating resistance in the flow of water and somewhere fish are dying due to it.*

*Till now, we have discussed the government's action and its functioning. Let us look at the reaction of the society and media on this move now. As far it is about buying the plastic bags separately, people are forced to buy it as they are bound to abide by whatever the law is. The public reaction that came through the media is very interesting. Nowadays, on radio, television and social media people have launched an influential series called "My Bag Challenge"*

*The detail of "My Bag Challenge" is that people are now using clothe bags or any other bag which is made from an eco-friendly material, which may be recycled again and again. The purpose of "my bag challenge" is that everyone may show his bag which he or she is using to bring the essential goods to their household, so that such type of bags may get popular in the society. Hours long marathon transmission on TV and Radio are dedicated to a quote 'My*

*Bag Challenge' and celebrities and prominent personalities are showing their own bags in which they carry their essential goods. Some are promoting their own hand-made bags. Hence, they are highlighting the importance of eco-friendly bags to get rid of the plastic bags for the protection of environment. During the days when I was graduating from Government College Lahore, there was a dynamic Environment Protection Society for Environmental Protection, I was its secretary, and I am possibly writing present column today because of my affiliation with that organization. Such organizations should be formed in all educational institutions to encourage students to be aware of environmental pollution issues. So that they may take this stuff seriously in future life.*

*Apart from the state, keeping in view the future of society media also has a moral obligation to start a campaign to encourage public awareness. I think we should not wait for the day when it becomes impossible for humans to breathe in pure air due to pollution, before a major disaster and impending tragedy to the earth and not cause any further damage to our soil. There is also an African Proverb; "Treat the earth well: it was not given to you by your parents, it was advanced to you for your children, and we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors, rather we borrow it from our Children."*

## *Back Packer Journalist*

*It is not customary to ask for a lift in Japan at all. During my stay of over a decade, I have only perceived someone ask for a lift twice. The first time was at the side of a motorway service area at the foot hills of a mountain range when a person standing with a lift request signboard in his hand, since I was in a hurry that day, I ignored the Request. Next time, I stopped to see a young man with a backpack on his back asking for a lift. The boy was shivering despite his snowy long coat. The truth is that I was overwhelmed by the spirit of human compassion. He was a student, his request was not to reach at some certain point, but to have a conversation with the driver. While, my main motivation was probably to search out the story of this rare creature.*

*It was being exceptionally rare example, asking for a lift in Japan where the majority may not even be familiar with the meaning of such a request, how is it possible that a man may reach his destination without the ticket money in his pocket? On the other hand, in the western world, requesting for a lift is very common phenomenon, and backpackers can still be seen asking for a lift on the side of the road with a thumbs-up every day. Due to oriental traditions and shyness, Japanese people don't usually ask for a free ride, so I thought*

*this guy would be a special one. For a purpose of experience and mental health exposure, he had approached there from the farthest corner of Japan by taking lifts from various people by road.*

*As soon as he took a seat in my car, he thanked me and turned on the tape recorder and said, "I want to record this conversation with your permission, if you don't mind." Before he could ask me any questions, I asked him as the car started moving, where he came from? What was he doing there? How did he get there? After reception of the shower of my questions, the young man said in a very polite tone, "I am coming from Hokkaido, which is the last edge of Japan and the coldest region." He had taken a free-ride lift from twenty people to reach here, which was, according to our Punjabi proverb, "Khajal Kharab", meaning "after a serious quest."*

*Nevertheless, I was surprised to know the reason for the trip since it was discovered that he had been interviewing different people during this trip for the past three days, I was his twenty-first driver whom he was asking questions and recording the feedback. He would broadcast these interviews on radio. I was even more astounded to know that It was not his university assignment but he was making this arduous journey because just out of personal passion. In Urdu, Persian, Arabic and some other languages, the word "Sahafi" is used for a journalist, which has exactly the same origin and meanings. Journalism, journal and journalist also have the same meaning in many other languages of the world.*

*While appreciating the spirit of this young journalist, I put the same question in a friendly manner in front of him, "Does radio podcast is considered journalism here?" He replied that a lot of things have been messed up with the arrival of electronic media and especially the Internet. Mr. Yoshida, the young man I'm talking about, further added that journalism was considered synonymous with media around the world. He had traveled widely to gain a better understanding of the field. I questioned him about the trouble of the route and the harshness of the weather, he replied that the people there were very kind and nice and he did not have to wait long for a free-fide lift.*

*We kept on debating on the Issue, either the social media posts and contents are journalism or not? My protestation on this platform was, in that case, there was no role of an editorial. For my part, I considered the editor to be an institution and the material published or broadcast without it did not fall under the category of journalism. But Yoshida's case and challenges were entirely unlike. He argued that in ordinary daily life, no one was willing to speak to him freely, and such was a general culture of Japanese society, it was even harder to get someone to talk as when the people heard the name of radio Interview, they would simply have slipped away like a fish slips from a wet hand. It became easy to talk to them only if someone created an acquaintance with them. He asked me such questions about Pakistani journalism and society, customs and traditions, that none had ever asked me in my entire life.*



*At the end of the three-hour conversation, he asked me to take a selfie with him on his mobile phone camera. Then, he sought for my permission if he could broadcast that interview on his internet radio Podcast channel. So careful he was! And, I gladly gave my consent.*

*Just as suitability is the basic condition in poetry i.e. objective, rhyming, lyrics, poet learns with time. In the same way, the basic condition of being a journalist is journalistic attitude, the rest of the vocabulary and rules and regulations keep on improving with the passage of time, but not according to Mr. Yoshida as he disagreed on this point, as he believed that when he will enter the practical field, He should be fully prepared and know the half-wise risk. Hearing his ideas and watching his enthusiasm, I guaranteed his bright future. Listening to my words, he informed that at present, he worked as a part-time staff member of a musical group as Well, and he pledged to invites me at some of his concert. He was taking morning classes in some university.*

*At the end of the journey, I dropped him off in front of an inexpensive hostel, which he had already booked during the trip as he intended to interview some other passengers here. Picking up his backpack from the back seat of my car, he commented, "I had heard very bizarre things about Pakistan, but you people are very moderate, sympathetic and kind-hearted." And, such words for my homeland from that young Japanese blessed my sense of hearing with a joy that turned my whole evening so charming.*

## *Christmas in Japan*

*Christmas is meant for sharing love and joys with family. Christmas dinner is the most important and fundamental part of this festival, especially in Europe and America and generally the countries with majority Christian population, and is celebrated by all people with their families. As the birth day of Jesus Christ, religion-oriented families visit churches on Christmas morning where a special prayer ceremony is held.*

*On this day, priests talk about different aspects of Christ's birth and miracles associated with it, in their own way. Although Christmas has become more of a social festival around the world than a religious one, but still its identity and sanctification is of a spiritual nature. New Year's case is fairly different, when we talk about arrival of a New Year, its image in our minds is of twelve o'clock at midnight, outside on the*

*streets people waiting for the hour and minute hands to come together on the top of the clock. Such a special moment!*

*Along with this, fireworks and fire crackers start, people dance thankfully in the center of the city and yell slogans, thus the name of the New Year is celebrated. It would be more apt to say that Christmas is for indoors, while the advent of New Year is an outdoor festival. In Japan, the number of people who follow the Christian faith make not even one percent of the total population, but one may see decorated Christmas trees everywhere. All hotels, shopping malls, shops, markets twinkle with Christmas lights. The people exhibit exactly the same spirit that is seen in countries with a predominantly Christian population. A river of lights and colors starts flowing in the evening. Although the lighting starts at the end of November and continues until the end of January, it reaches its peaks near Christmas and New Year. Statues of Santa Claus are seen decorated along with the Christmas tree. Santa Claus, dressed in traditional red and white, with a white beard and spectacles, a kind old man, rides in, laden with gifts for the children. These gift-laden Carriages and models of Reindeers pulling it are seen illuminated with colors and lights everywhere. During days with cold winds passing through the market and melodious songs attributed to the New Year hit the ears from near and far. Decorative gifts hanging on the Christmas trees, wrapped in colorful ribbons, packed in red and green boxes, scattered around the Christmas tree are many delicious gifts that children look at with tempting eyes. Without mentioning the*

*Christmas and New Year Lottery Sale, the discussion on this subject will remain incomplete. The capitalist financial system of our world has associated festivals and even spiritual days, of religious nature with business, in such a way that people wait for special sale offer of Christmas and New Year all year round. To be honest, in a predominantly Buddhist country like Japan, the main reason for celebrating Christmas is purely business and economic, but that is just my opinion. According to a credible newspaper report, sales records on Christmas and New Year celebrations in Japan, will seem to beat most of the Christian majority countries. These days' lottery is famous all over the world.*

*It may also be of curiosity to the readers to remark here that, apart from Eastern Europe and Russia, people of the Orthodox Christian religion celebrate Christmas on the 7th of January. Their argument in favor of this, is the calendar that was in usage at the time when Jesus Christ was born and Lived. In their opinion, this day falls on the 7th of January in the modern calendar. The basic difference is that Orthodox Christians celebrate Christmas on the 7th day after the New Year, Roman Catholics and Protestants believe that 7th Day before the New Year is the birthday of Jesus Christ i.e. December 25. while the Russian, Greek Orthodox celebrate it on January 7th as per the Gregorian calendar. Remarkably, the place in Palestine where Jesus was born and the Church of Nativity is established, Christmas is celebrated on January 7th as Well. In Latin America, Christmas processions start from the first week of December as a contrast.*

*These convoys of vehicles are in the form of a rally, with people dressed as Santa Claus in them and numerous other characters related to the Christmas distribute sweets, candles, toffees, and chocolates to the children and sing along to the tunes of Christmas and New Year. People wave to each other when they meet along the way and distribute Christmas gifts. The participants in these processions and caravans put balloons on their cars with the letters of 'Happy Christmas' over them. Some people walk with these caravans while waving to children. People dressed as Santa Claus distribute sweets to the children by ringing the bells of the houses coming on the way of the procession. These daily processions peak on December 25 and the gifts of New Year calendars and diaries are received daily in offices. The friends also exchange these gifts.*

*As these days arrive, the ones who are in love are seen renewing their commitment. If it snows during Christmas, it is called "White Christmas". Even though the snowfall turns the environment cold, yet young people enjoy this cold and snowfall. There is a holiday-like atmosphere between Christmas and New Year. Officially, December 25th is not a holiday in Japan and offices function as normal.*

## *Ministry of Solitude*

*It is extremely alarming to see that the annual number of suicides in Japan is the highest in the world. This issue is not new as this tradition has been going on for years. The largest mass suicide event in human history also occurred on an island in Japan. When the American army dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki near the end of the Second World War, the Japanese soldiers who had come to the bitter end and fell out of options, preferred to commit suicide, as 6500 people surrounded by the U.S. army surrendered their lives in a blink of an eye.*

*The worry and concern of the current government is that the number of suicides this year in Japan has broken the record of the previous decade. Regrettably, this negative trend continues to accelerate as the readers may also be staggered to learn that the number of people who died at the peak of COVID-19 pandemic in the year due to the Corona epidemic in Japan were almost half of the number of people*

*who committed suicide. Japan is among the countries that have been severely affected by Covid-19. Basic reason for breaking the 11-year record of suicides stands the economic and social problems. But Officially, isolation is considered to be the main cause of all this trouble.*

*Considering these conditions, the government has established a special ministry to encourage the Japanese to overcome loneliness and increase social interaction. This ministry is named the Ministry of Solitude. Mr. Sakamoto has been appointed as the first Minister for Loneliness as part of efforts to tackle the continuing rise in suicide ratio. The Ministry of Loneliness has been given the task of reducing the tendency of loneliness and isolation among citizens through government policies. While giving charge of the new ministry, Prime Minister told the Minister of Loneliness that there was a rise in tendency of suicide among women compared to men these days. He said that more women suffered from loneliness than men. And perhaps that stood as the main reason, in this whole miserable matter. It is important to mention here that the Minister of Isolation also possessed the portfolio of the Ministry to deal with the decrease in the birth of children.*

*Every country has its own problems; Japan is a country suffering from population decline. In the future, it will become a country of the majority of white-haired people. This trend seems to be continued at the pace of decrease by one million people in the next forty years. This decreasing birth rate is becoming a serious threat for the government. A ministry is already working specially to deal with this*

*challenge, and the Minister of Loneliness, is the man who is in-charge of that ministry, as well.*

*The importance of the Ministry of Solitude stands intact at its place, but the fact is that there are many other important factors responsible for the higher suicide rate in this country than the rest of the world. Those are of religious, political, social and historical nature. Some theories and traditions are also at work. First of all, we have to understand the fact that in this society, suicide is considered a symbol of bravery and honor as well as an atonement for sins, and the same has been a tradition here for centuries, which is called "hara-kiri" or 'stabbing one's stomach with a dagger'. When an important official, dignitary or government official commits a mistake, he would generally ask for the Last Favor, to be given a chance to die with honor. Thus, "harakiri" be allowed to prevail.*

*In some cases, kings, samurai and high-ranking officials would provide the guilty person with a sword or a dagger, which meant that if he killed himself with honor, the rest of his family would not be killed or harassed. Hara Kiri, itself, is a topic requiring a debate that there is a place in the human body i.e. the stomach if that is pierced with a sword or a dagger point, the feeling of pain ceases bringing a peaceful death. But at this point, it is not possible to go into further details.*

*One of the other reasons for committing suicide is the general lack of concept of giving charity in the society. Hence, the*



*victims of economic crisis do not ask for help from anyone, as there is no concept of asking for help and giving charity in the whole country in general. Even if someone accepts help as a sign of honor, most of the social members look reluctant in giving alms. Perhaps, this may be the reason that you will not find any beggars in the whole country. As hope for survival is also broken in case you are financially broken, in such a situation, the hope of improvement also perishes.*

*Despite the problematic economic conditions in Pakistan, the suicide rate is comparatively very low, and the reason for this virtuous fortune is our religion Islam, which declares this act as a deadly sin, or else, the number of people committing suicide would be very high due to various factors i.e. depression, worries, financial crisis and confusions. Another important reason is our joint family system, which protects us from being lonely. Therefore, a special ministry has to be formed and billions of rupees have been spent so far on this issue.*

*The third reason may be the lack of purpose in life which causes this fatality. In Pakistani case, the purpose of life is not only one's own self, but parents. We also keep in account the problems of siblings, spouses, children and other friends to let the life run smoothly, and helping others in the achievement of their goals. So, least space is left for aimlessness in the life of Pakistanis. The major voluntary organizations that works in Japan are setting up helplines. But in Pakistan, every man is someone's helpline and we don't even consider it a 'favor', but a 'right'.*

## Green Roses

*A young daughter of a Japanese farmer had a weird dream one night. Strange in the sense that the focal point of this flower-filled dream was a green rose. There are hundreds of varieties of roses all over the world and twenty different colors beautify this creature of nature, but the green rose has not been born in this world yet. The interesting part of the girl's dream was that this green flower was being sold in the market for 10000 yen Each. When the girl woke up from the dream, she narrated her dream to her farmer father, and such was related to the cultivation of flowers. The amazing thing is that this farmer made this dream of his daughter come true together with his four farmer friends. After going through the experiments, this five-member team of farmers has succeeded in producing a green rose. This month, the green rose 'Kona' which will be presented for exhibition, produced on the commercial scale and its marketing has started already.*

*Virtually, every color of rose is associated with a fantasy around the world, and as many stories, assumptions,*

*significances and expressions are associated with this flower, are hardly associated with any other flower. Yellow, The color rose can also be an expression of desire for separation. Red rose is considered to be the color of love and happiness in every country, while pink and white roses are for good wishes, pure emotions and spirituality. In Urdu classical literature, the freshness of the lips of the beloved has been attributed to rose petals. I regard the green rose may be said to be a symbol of nobility, happiness and progress.*

*It is also a traditional practice in Europe that roses are always given as an odd number, they should be presented as gifts in either one, three, five, or seven etc. Even number of roses are usually not presented as a gift. An even number of rose flowers are always offered while attending funerals. The flowers can be cultivated in any country in the world and they look charming as well, but there is a problem with the Japanese and overseas flower in general, as they do not possess any fragrance. If you smell the leaves of trees and vegetables, you won't even know the difference between them and flowers abroad. They have same odor; you better call them to be odorless. I have never found fragrant flowers like Pakistan anywhere in the whole world. Ironically, while presented in the temples, artificial perfumes are sprayed on these flowers to give of fragrance. Same is the case with the flowers in the graveyard. In my opinion, this is not reasonable in the most possible soft criticism. But at least, I have to admit that flowers are still flowers.*

*History shows that even a cruel person like Adolf Hitler loved flowers and children so dearly. Vladimir Lenin, the founder president of Soviet Union was always decorated with a flower on his coat. Later, this wild flower became an essential part of the uniforms of the members of the Communist Party around the world. I have also noticed that anti-communist people of Russian origins are often irritated by this flower, and socialist-minded people still wear it on their coats.*

*Famous writer and scholar George Bernard Shaw had his own logic about this phenomenon. He was very fond of flowers, but he did not pluck them to put them inside his house or study, and in the house where he lived, flowers grew in the lawn only. One day, one of his friends visited his house. Bernard Shaw came to the door to pick him up and showed his whole house from inside. When they were sitting in the study room taking tea, the dear friend said to Bernard Shaw, "I was very surprised to see one thing, your house is full of flowers, but there is not a single flower in any vase in your house." Bernard Shaw replied, "I also like the kids, but I can't put a Child's Head on the table and decorate it, I don't like this way of decoration." Let me tell you again that while I'm talking about Bernard Shaw, I am talking about the well-known British intellectual, writer and philosopher. The necessity of this clarification has arisen as according to our friend Adnan Shah Shirazi, a distinguished professor of English in Sialkot City College once asked a question to his students, "Who was Bernard Shaw?" One student answered*

*confidently, Well, Bernard Shaw must be Someone from the "Sadat family" of Ali Pur Sayedan". Ali Pur, which is also the native town of our friend. It is Important to mention that decedents of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are also called Shah.*

*While, speaking of dreams, the green rose that the aforementioned young farmer's daughter saw in her dream had a name "Ko Niko Sare" which was sold in the market for one thousand rupees. It's a fairy-tale news that the girl's father, along with four other farmers, turned the green rose from a dream into a reality. An application has been filed in the Ministry of Agriculture, Japan, to register this flower under the same name of "Ko Niko Sa Ray" her dream is going to become a reality word by word. This is, better called to be, a rose born wearing green clothes. This variety is called "Spray rose" in which a bunch of flowers appear on the tip of the branch instead of a single flower like our native roses.*

*According to the father of the girl, "My Daughter saw the dream, the thought immediately came to my mind that if I succeeded in producing it, this flower would be sold like hot cakes, I also had never seen green rose in my entire life." Currently, this green rose has become a reality and is available at flower shops in many cities including Tokyo, and it is being sold at twice the price of ordinary roses. Only the men of Aichi District are cultivating it on commercial basis till now. But dejectedly enough, my only objection to this flower is that this is devoid of fragrance like other flowers in Japan.*

## Coronation

*The emperor is revered spiritually and religiously in Japan. He is not considered by the general public as a worldly ruler. Conventionally, the term for the emperor is used here, which translates as 'incarnation of God', 'the Representative of God' and 'the Caliph', or the word "Thin-no" meaning 'Sitting on the Throne of God'. Few years ago, Emperor Akihito surprised the people of Japan and other scholars by announcing his abdication. One of the reasons for this surprise was that in the previous few centuries, it never happened that the king gave up the crown while bring alive. The royal decree cited health problems as the reason for the abdication. Nevertheless, the royal order was carried out. Almost two years were spent in planning arrangements for the succession of Crown Prince Naruhito. The coronation ceremony of the new emperor went*

*gracefully. The heads of state of 180 countries of the world or their special representatives participated.*

*The President of Pakistan also came to Japan on a special four-day official visit to participate in this coronation ceremony. A special hall was decorated for the heads of 180 countries or special representatives, including our President, where these guests watched the ceremony live on the screen and despite being present in the royal palace, while only a few people were allowed to enter the ceremony room. In a simple ceremony, the new king announced his assuming of power. After that, the prime minister there, firstly, read out the message of congratulation to the king on assuming the throne, and secondly, the guests raised the chant of "Long live the King". Prayers were extended for the long life of the new crown prince.*

*The majority of Japanese believe that the king is a direct descendant of the sun goddess, in Hindi language the same is called, 'Suryamata'. It is interesting to know that the current royal family has been ruling for more than two and a half thousand years. This occurred in 600 BC, when the first person of this family ascended the throne. The interesting thing is that even after so long people are still in love with the royal succession. There may be people who believe that the emperor is not an incarnation of God, but still there is no word uttered in criticism from any part of the society. At least, I never heard a single word of criticism when it comes to the king. In Great Britain, after a long struggle, the powers of the royal family have been gradually gained by the parliament, which begins with the "Magna Carta" in the twelfth century, but in Japan, such is not the case.*

*After the defeat in the Second World War, the king said in a radio address to the nation, 'From today, I am a common man.' He is no longer an incarnation of God. After this short announcement, the royal powers were transferred to the parliament. American pressure in this process also stands like a historical fact. Japan's calendar changes with the coronation of a new king, when a new era begins, as each era has a name. Just as the AD calendar has been around for the past 2,000 years and the Islamic or Hijri calendar has been moving forward a thousand and a half years after the Prophet's (PBUH)migration from Mecca to Medina. Here in Japan, With the accession of a new king to the throne, years and eras change suddenly, and the name of this new era has been named "Rewa". The date of the month and day is also the same as in other calendar, but the year here became "Rewa 1". Prior to that, we witnessed thirty-two years of "Heise" era and fifty-eight years of "Showa", which was the reign of Emperor Hirohito.*

*Naruhito took over the throne in May and the new era, the calendar has also started from May this year, but the formal ceremony of crowning has been held six months later. The last time the enthronement ceremony was held two years after Akihito took the throne.*

*The former emperor Akihito has been a great innovator and unconventional person. In addition to saying goodbye to power before dying for the first time in two centuries, he also made an unconventional and unexpected will. Instead of burying him in the ground, he has made a will to be cremated him like an ordinary Japanese person. In Buddhism and Shinto religions, the dead are cremated like Hindus, but the king is*



*buried in the ground after his death. As it is customary in Hindus as well that any great man like Mahatma or any extraordinary person who has served the humanity dies, is buried in the ground. They are not cremated as per the tradition.*

*A military parade in honor of the new emperor had been postponed for a month in view of the hundreds of deaths caused by the typhoon during Coronation Days. In the last sixty years, such a strong typhoon has never hit Japan. It is said that there was a strong typhoon in 1958 that caused ten times more deaths than the present storm. The coronation ceremony was not postponed due to the typhoon outbreak because heads of state were invited from all over the world and obviously every state has its own busy schedule. After ascending to the throne, the new king pardoned the punishment of five and a half lakh prisoners and ordered their immediate release. Ironically, rulers in our state of Pakistan start thinking that they are Gods once they assume power. Reverse is the case in Japan wherein the king declares that he is a common man, but there are still a large number of people believe him to be God. Twenty-three billion Yen were spent on the organization of this coronation ceremony and the arrangements related to this historic ritual.*

## *Russo Japan Territorial dispute*

*Japan is a cluster of islands, which does not have a land border with any other country. Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met in the city of Vladivostok in the Far East of Russia. Among other things, the main agenda of the meeting was the return of the Japanese islands that were occupied by Russia during the Second World War, numbering four. According to the Japanese media, this meeting remained unsuccessful or a failure, as per some media outlets. The bitter reality is that what we call the modern world is not the world based on justice in many respects. Even today, the global system is running on the centuries old principle of 'Might is right'.*

*Present day, which of the organizations may be regarded as more reliable than the United Nations? The five permanent members of this organization have veto power. I have a very unpretentious and straightforward question, "Who are they?" Why do they have veto powers while other 195 countries have not? Answer is understandable, these are the victorious countries of the Second World War. These countries have determined the new World Order, and its rules and regulations. If these five countries declare a blazing, hot and bright day as a night, the rest of the 195 countries will have to endorse that it is night. If any of the countries with veto power declares to oppose any good deed or universal truth, the whole world will have to give in to their obduracy.*

*This was the 27th meeting of Japanese Prime Minister with the President Putin, and the purpose of attending the meeting was the possible return of the Japanese Islands in the Far Eastern region. It Included in the agenda of the Eastern*

*Economic Forum meeting. Russia and Japan were close to settlement during the President Yeltsin's era, as Boris Yeltsin was the first president of modern Russia and a very weak ruler. It is widely believed that He had agreed to give three out of four islands to Japan, but at that time the United States put it into disarray. Allegedly, USA threatened Japan that Okinawa Island will be declared as America's part if Japan signs a peace treaty with Russia, it is noteworthy that even now twenty-six thousand American soldiers are deployed in Japan's Okinawa Island, and the same has been the largest American base here after Japan's defeat in World War II. After Vladimir Putin came to power, Russia changed the course of world politics gradually. At first, he absolutely denied that any islands could be returned. Later, he agreed to start negotiations in the light of the 1956 Soviet-Japan Agreement, in which the Soviet Union agreed to return the two islands.*

*A beautiful historical aspect of the conflict between Russia and Japan is the arrival of Islam in Japan and the construction of the first mosque. During the Czarist regime, Russia fought a war with Japan in 1905 and again in 1915. In the war of 1905, about thirty thousand Russian soldiers were taken as prisoners of war. Among them, there were also one thousand Muslim soldiers in addition to Christians and Jews. These prisoners built a mosque near the city of Osaka. The proof of this first mosque in Japan is the letter of the Japanese emperor to Russian Czar, in which the emperor of Japan wrote that churches, synagogues and mosques have been built for Christians, Jews and followers of Islam, mentioning the good treatment of prisoners. Additionally, it is mentioned that followers of each faith may worship at liberty. In addition, the former governor of Russia's semi-autonomous state of Tatarstan, Yashin Sanh, has written an article about this first*

*mosque in Japan. In this article, all the details of this mosque are listed. Inappropriately, this mosque is now extinct, but the inscriptions and Quranic verses on the graves of the Muslim prisoners can still be seen. A memorial minaret has also been built near the graves, on which the holy verses of the Holy Quran are also engraved in addition to the Bible and the Torah verses. It is to be reminisced that on the occasion of Japan's victory over Russia, Iqbal, the national poet of Pakistan wrote a historical article in which Japan was called the rising star of Asia and wrote it as a worthy example for the followers of Islam.*

*After World War II, the United States and Japan signed a peace treaty, but Russia and Japan are still officially at war. Although Shinzo Abe was the longest-reigning prime minister in Japan's history, and Putin has been in power for the past almost twenty-five years, and the chemistry between the two was shared, I would rather say it was excellent. But it is a pity that they failed to resolve this territorial dispute. I personally don't see this issue being resolved in our lifetime, as the reason is Vladimir Putin's military background, his record shows that he will not give even an inch to Japan. Russia is negotiating, on the other hand, it is increasing its military influence in these islands. If we look to the ground reality, he is taking steps to strengthen his occupation. The Japanese Prime Minister had presented the idea of joint development projects, but Russia's conditions for this stood difficult to fulfill. The importance of these islands for Japan is not only of military or economic interest, but also a matter of national dignity and pride. It is a country consisting of more than 8000 islands, so, what difference does it make if four islands are added or deducted? But, the real issue here is of national identity.*

### *Honesty policy*

*Japanese society was the topic of our discussion yesterday at a restaurant on a remote beach in Latin America. Japan's Image is of an Alien's Land to my friends who grew up in South America. A Chilean national friend from the mining industry asked me to confirm whether was it true what he heard about a common phenomenon and practice in rural japan, fruits and vegetables were placed at the corner of fields and gardens, and usually on the roadside, a price board was affixed near them with a cash box is placed nearby for money. People come, buy fruits or vegetables and leave the required price money in the box. Although there is no shopkeeper, people steal nothing and there is no sign of dishonest. Is that true? My answer was in affirmative as that was an absolutely correct depiction and the whole story was true in the truest sense of the word. After listening my answer, Latino friend of mine said, "Believe me, if there was a fruit and vegetable stall here in Chile, both the fruit and the*

*money box would disappear immediately. "It's not just the case with Chile,*

*Most probably, you might not see such a scene in any corner of the world except in Japan. It's not because the rest of the world is full of thieves, but it seems that the Japanese are probably more honest than the rest of the nations. In Japan, the daily wage of a laborer is twelve thousand Yen, so no man desires to sit all day long to sell some fruits and vegetables, rather, a farmer sets up his stall, decorates the fruits and vegetables and advertises the price. While doing so, he is sure that when he returns in the evening, the bag of money and leftover fruits will definitely be there. It is also being certainty that no one would have picked up the vegetables for free. The commission of theft in Japanese society is almost non-existent. In traditional houses, even the latch is not attached to the door, there is no concept for the lock in the traditional houses.*

*It is motivating that the language of the world's oldest civilization Inca which had the capital "Macho Peecho" situated in today's Peru, is still spoken in South America, which is called "Quechua". Peru was the center of an 8,000-year-old civilization and this language is still prevalent in most parts of Bolivia. The salutation is very interesting in this language. It can be translated as, "We do not laze around, and we are not thieves. We are not cowards". Nevertheless, the critics insist that this local "Choloo race" which is commonly called Red Indians, has all three defects which they denounce in their greetings. It is exactly as our 'Salam' has the meaning and demands of "Peace be upon you", but the critics says that we are cutting people's throats and chopping off*

*heads around the world. The history of mutual relations between nations determines their perceptions and prejudices about each other. So, when I look at the Latin society through the eyes of a Pakistani, I find all its colors beautiful, charming like a rainbow, as beautiful traditions and humanistic, loving people. It is a different debate that the standards of integrity here in Japan are very different from ours.*

*If you consider the reasons for honesty and integrity in Japanese society, it is not only because of history, law and culture, but also because of training. Children are taught from the beginning in school that if they find something valuable abandoned on the street or anywhere else, not to pick that up and put it in your pocket, but the same should be deposited in the nearest police station. A Pakistani friend's son living in Japan, who is studying in third grade, was telling me about his experiences in the mosque one day. Once he went to the police station and deposited a 100 Yen coin that he found lying on the road. Then as one day his classmates and he were going home from school when they found five hundred Yen lying on the road, astonishingly enough, all of the young students picked up that money and went straight to the nearest police station. After registering and collecting small money from the students and depositing it in the government treasury, the duty Police Officer thanked all the students. Let me explain here that 100 or 500 is a very small amount in Japan, it doesn't even have currency bills, only coins. Fundamentally, it seems more a matter of training for the young kids as these children are the future of the country and the nation. It is probably the effect of childhood education that the highest rate of recovery of Lost goods and possessions in the world is in Japan. Let me tell you a daily life*

*phenomenon that if your wallet or purse is lost somewhere, it is most likely that you will find it.*

*An acquaintance of mine migrated from Pakistan to Japan and often used to point out the flaws of Japanese society with his friends. Then one day his wallet went missing. Apart from many valuable and important documents, a significant amount of cash was also in his lost wallet. Now there was no other option but to be patient and accept the reality. He Was trying to overcome his grief. Around 7:00 pm at that day, the house bell rang and two police officers were standing at the door. The atmosphere changed instantly when the police officers took out the wallet and asked if it was his? Some citizen had brought it to the police station and submitted it to them, explained the policeman. After receiving his lost wallet, for which he had lost all the hopes, so happily he started asking questions from his Pakistani friends, "Dude! Will these people go to hell?" We should keep asking the same question from ourselves without getting into the debate of faith and disbelief. A dishonest person is called faithless by the people of my motherland and an honest person is called person with faith.*

*A personal experience in this regard was that one usual evening, while leaving a restaurant after dinner, I found a wallet lying on the ground. It was raining lightly, when I opened the wallet, I saw a girl's driving license and some money inside. I looked around, but there was no one. Instead of going to the police as it seemed that some customer from the present restaurant might have dropped it, I returned back it to the restaurant reception. The receptionist took it from me and put that inside the counter saying that it must be*



*from among their customer, and she hoped that the customer would come back there to collect the lost item, otherwise, I would have to go to the police station myself and deposit it there as found item. The purpose of this inscription is to clarify your minds how trivial this occurrence it was.*

*Not long before that in a remote coastal town of Japan, I saw an old man near the harbor, worried and circling around his boat in the center of the strong wind, he was muttering, I asked that gentleman, "What is the matter?" He started saying, "I don't understand anything! When I left my boat in the morning, it was absolutely alright. I just came back and saw that its engine is missing. Where did it go?" I tried to explain him that it was obvious that, in my understanding, some crew of a foreign ship might have taken off that engine, as foreign ships were anchored nearby. After listening to my words, the old man expressed his surprise. He started saying, "How could it happen? How it is possible?" Nodding his head again and again. The reason for his surprise was that this elderly man had probably come in contact with a thief for the first time in his entire life. There was a trouble for him in understanding and accepting the phenomenon of stealing.*

## Oyashirazu: A world Heritage Site

*The parents have no idea, that this declaration can also be the name of a city. Additionally, the city is not an ordinary town, I am referring to the city of Oyashirazu: A world heritage site. United Nations organization's UNESCO has declared it as a world heritage due to its uniqueness in so many ways. Oyashirazu is located in the middle of Japan. This region, rich in natural beauty, seems to belong to heavens. It does not look at all the part of our planet. It feels like you have come to another universe. Keeping in View the uniqueness of This city, a park was built on a peak. As well as, between high peaks of the mountains and the sea Almost fifty years ago. You better call it "Observatory Garden", as standing in a small park and watching around this masterpiece of nature is a breathtaking experience.*

*The tallest rock cliff and ridges in Japan stand high here with all glory. How Such a Strange Name Was Given to So Beautiful Place? I Had no idea and was Completely Clueless That The parents gave this name to it. This is a historical event and a painful story. The story dates back to the twelfth century AD, but it still exists today despite the passage of almost a thousand of years. The tribe of a Samurai, the*

*aforementioned warrior, was defeated. He and his wife managed to escape with great difficulty. Escaping from the battlefield, Sarmurai arrived at the exact place with his wife and small child which is the subject of our conversation. On one side there was the raging sea with furious waves, while on the other side, there were high and rocky cliffs. You can count this beach as one of the most treacherous beaches in the world.*

*When the defeated warlord and his wife were passing through this place with their child, the baby got lost in high waves. Troubled by the disappearance of her young child being washed away in the waves, the mother wrote a short poem, and the poem became the name of this city.*

*Parents don't imagine anything,  
A child on the waves of this city,  
Disappears in the foam,  
By the roadsides of Kushanji.*

*In memory of this miserable story and poem, at the beginning of the last century, a famous carver engraved a statue depicting the spirit of mother hood. A human-sized woman holds a child in her arms, while her other child stands holding the mother's leg. The eyes of the mother and the child are raised towards the rocks. This sculpture is installed in the Observatory Garden.*

*Japan is a cluster of islands. Among the largest are four. These four islands account for 97% of the total area of the country. This is the general landscape of Japan. 73% of the country's area consists of mountains, forests or such areas where agriculture, industries or population is impossible and the population of this country lives on the remaining 27% of the area. It has been famous due to the danger of the rocks*

*and the steepness of the beaches. After the construction of modern roads, this route is no longer as dangerous one as it used to be in past. Wider roads have been constructed, and the dangers of craggy cliffs and deep gorges have been replaced by tunnels that pass through mountains and rocks.*

*What inspired me the most to travel through this beautiful region was the allusion of this place in the poetry and prose of the legendary Japanese Mystic poet and travel-writer, Matsu Basho, his reference of the city "Parents Don't Know" and translation of the travelogue is available all over the world. It has been translated in almost all major languages. It has also received recognition around the globe. In my view, Basho is a poet comparable to the caliber of Rumi and Omar Khayyam. In terms of imagination, artistic maturity and depth, he occupies a prominent place in the list of great poets of the world. For some time, I have been doing the work of translation of Matsu Basho's poetry into Punjabi language. I find the place of Mysticism quite dominant in his works.*

*If you want to find an example of such poetry in the Indian subcontinent, read Sachal Sarmast. The color of Sachal and Basho's poetry is largely the same. In his famous travelogue, Basho has mentioned this area in great detail. He stayed here in an inn. Here, he wrote an immortal haiku poem, which is considered to be a valuable piece of international literature. You should also read how such great work of art can be confounding in a few words. It is noteworthy that Basho was staying in an inn, and under one same roof, some prostitutes also sleeping, 'Wild grass and the moon'. In the Japanese language, "Oyashirazu" is also called the back molar, but that stands as a very unromantic comparison, in my opinion.*

## QR code Invention

*One of the important reasons behind the Great Economic development of the European Nations is to honor the new inventions, as well as to award every important inventor with social and state awards. The establishment of the European Inventor Award is a manifestation of the West's commitment to the new inventions. Recently, Masa Hiro Hara and his team from Japan were awarded the European Inventor Award. This Japanese engineer and his team have designed QR Code. Let me mention here that the 56-year-old man designed QR in 1994 but it was not that popular in the beginning. Since the invention of the smart phone, its use has grown exponentially, much to the surprise of its inventor. Nowadays, QR code is very popular all around the world.*

*The truth is that I have not come across any research paper regarding the understanding of QR code, which can tell whether it is QR code or what is it called? When I came across the news of awarding the popular award to the founder and his team by the European creative organization, I thought that this award should have been given to him long time ago,*

*but still believe that it's never too late. Let me mention here that the European Patent Office is basically an institution working to protect all rights of new inventions. This office receives applications for new inventions and examines them, then accepts the selected applications and assigns all rights to them. Which is called the European patent all over the world. Apart from that, this institution has also launched the annual awards to encourage the inventors of the world.*

*The QR code developed by Japanese award winning engineer and his team is superior to the previously used bar code in many ways. Although this is also a type of bar code. It is important to know a few things about barcodes. The problem with barcodes is that a camera or a scanner is necessary to read the code. This camera and scanner has to be connected to a computer, mobile or other machine, in which the data is stored. The second thing is the connection of the said machine to the Internet, although it is not necessary to be connected to the Internet, the data that was initially downloaded is the information inside the machine. It used to work on scanning, for example, what is the selling price of the items available in a superstore? How much of something is kept in stock and where it is kept, etc., but as the Internet became common in the world, new types of codes were invented, which were immediately connected to the Internet.*

*Q.R code is considered to be one of the most popular, fast and reliable all over the world today. It stands for Quick Response Code. As the name suggests, the QR code indicated for immediate information delivery. Looking like dots in black square boxes on a white background, one of the features of this code is that it has double square marks on three nines which give it They make it easier to read by comparing it with the surrounding content. This feature of Q.R code is also the*

*main reason for its popularity according to its inventor. A QR code is a machine-readable label that contains complete information about the item on which it is affixed. Initially, this code was developed for use in the automotive parts industry. It should be noted that its inventor has been working in a company that manufactures car accessories and spare parts for the past thirty-six years. In simple words, this invention of the inventor is owed to a corporation, which hired the said engineer for his work*

*I am also personally interested in reconditioning cars and associated with the same business, so I understand the problem of identifying waste parts very well. This barcode was successful in its initial field and later proved to be successful due to its speed, ease of use and scalability when tested in other fields, especially in the field of marketing, it has revolutionized the world. Just now, from the two-inch-wide and eight-inch-long hole in the Entrance Door made for the post of my residence, which is an indispensable part of every flat in Japan. A while ago, I was reviewing the post of the day that I found a small tossup-pamphlet, along with other mails. A new barber shop has opened in our Neighborhood. The same pamphlet also has a QR code on it.*

*As soon as I focused the mobile phone camera on the code, not only the website of the company, but also the map, photos, price list, pictures of the ideals, the important qualities and the barber with his young assistant barber immediately appeared on the screen of my mobile phone. I have mentioned my flat by the way, not the house, because traditional Japanese houses do not have latches and locks on the doors, which also shows that in this society there was no tradition of stealing at any point of time in her history. The inventor of this Award Winning QR Code explained how this*

*bright idea had come into his mind. He almost commutes every day to and from work in a local train, while living in Tokyo. Once in a while going to his office on the train, he passed through such a busy area where high and tall buildings were standing in the middle of densely populated traditional houses. In reality, this scene was the inspiration for his invention. Perhaps, this is the reason why even now, if you look at Q.R. Code. While receiving the European Award for his invention, the Japanese engineer said that he wanted to further develop the QR Code. We need to improve it and spread it all over the world so that we can bring some ease in other people's lives.*



## Media Culture

*Just imagine that a prominent journalist of a reputable newspaper of our country is kidnapped while performing journalistic duties in a war-torn area. The abductors keep him in prison for many years. After years of torture, he is released from a terrorist organization like ISIS, and if he returns to Pakistan, what will be our impressions about such a journalist? How will our media broadcast this incident? What will be the narrative of this journalist and his family? I think that our general impression about such a journalist presented in the example will be that he is very oppressed. Moreover, he has made a great sacrifice for journalism under the detention of terrorists. We will salute the courage and bravery of this person. Such a newspaper reporter will be presented as a hero in the national media, who took the responsibility of reporting on the battlefield.*

*The journalist of this example himself will probably warm our hearts by referring to the high journalistic values of this achievement and by saying other good things. His loved ones and relatives will be proud of such a hero-journalist. What if the incident happened for real here as I have given a hypothetical example, but the response to this incident in*

*Japan has been seen as the opposite of our example? The same happened to a famous Japanese journalist Yasuda who arrived in Japan after being released from Syria last week. Three years ago, he was abducted by the terrorist organization ISIS near Aleppo during an operation. The aforementioned journalist is the author of several books on the subject of Syria and Iraq, his analyses and commentaries were regularly published in national newspapers and his reports were often broadcast on national television. Upon arrival in Tokyo, he was welcomed by his parents and wife. Here is the surprise for me that the journalist while talking to the media said that the last three years he spent in the jail were worse than hell. At the same time, he said, "I apologize to the nation that I have created a problem. But thanks to all of you, I have returned home safely." This is the only statement of the above-mentioned journalist that was published in the media and national newspapers. The news of the release and return to the country has been published on the inside pages and comments on it. This apology was also a cause of surprise for me because before this the wife of the same journalist has also apologized to the media, some time ago. It is when she apologized for the trouble caused in the country because of her husband. The next surprise for me was that the Japanese Prime Minister flatly refused to give the said journalist and his family time to meet, and the PM office also declined to comment on this issue.*

*The journalist who reached after his release from Syria is being mercilessly criticized on social media. His behavior is being described as irresponsible, impolite and unprofessional. He is being accused of harming the society and violating journalistic values. For me, this situation is problematic to understand. The reason for this is probably that I was born and raised in Pakistan. I argued with an educated friend on*

*this topic, as what was the mistake on part of the above-mentioned journalist, why did apologize, why is the society expressing anger on him, while he had not violated any law, but was rather performing his professional duties? My learned associate said that the first mistake he made was that he went to the area where the Japanese government had forbidden its citizens to go. He ignored the instructions. It would be out of place to mention that no class or profession in Japanese society deserves any special treatment, these are not mere words, but the most important ground reality of the country.*

*No one is exempt, in any situation. Another important thing that my dear friend from the communication department told is very important, that is to say that the journalist in any case, one should not become a news by himself as the job of a journalist is to find news, and to publish news, while becoming news himself is an attitude against journalistic values. These are the two main reasons why the recently released Japanese journalist was not welcomed warmly in his country. "There is a social code of conduct he has violated. Although he has not committed anything wrong legally, yet still he had to implore for forgiveness. It does not matter even though he has not committed any breach of law. In General, it is the mentality of the Japanese society that such journalists are harming the society." Secondly, what foreign journalists must learn from this incident is that, journalists should not become news by themselves.*

## *Drone Delivery of Newspapers*

*A hawker's knock on the door, or the sound of a newspaper falling on the floor with the sound of a door bell early in the morning, indicates the delivery of a new day's newspaper in our homes. Since the past century, it feels as if the time has come to change the tradition. Just imagine a drone landing on the roof of your house and dropping a bundle of fresh newspapers in the yard and returning. It seems like a myth, but in the future, this method of newspaper delivery may become common in our world. Even now this is not a myth, but a reality.*

*Here in Japan, drones have started working as newspaper hawkers. A newspaper in Hokkaido, in coordination with a distribution company, has successfully been tested newspaper deliveries by drones this week and the picture of drones flying in the air with the newspaper has become a favorite topic of the media here. Inappropriately, when we Pakistanis think of drones, drone missile attacks disturb our mind and the names of Taliban leaders start circulating in our minds. It is not our fault since our introduction with drone technology was made through the war in Afghanistan.*

*Afghanistan has been a theater of war for the world powers for many decades. Due to the participation of the world's largest powers i.e. America and Russia, we, the people from Pakistan continued to be introduced to the latest war technology and equipment. Our country fought in Afghanistan. The past rulers sometimes brought the ongoing war to the interior of Pakistan with their choice and*

*preparedness, and sometimes the flames of this war burn us even if we do not like it to happen.*

*The United States brought drones to the battlefield for the first time to spy against the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. These drones, capable of flying for a few hours, were capable of taking pictures and sending direct videos to the headquarters with the help of powerful cameras. The revolution came when missiles were installed on these spy drones. The duration of the flight increased from a few hours to a few days and now it has reached the point of continuous flight for weeks.*

*Unmanned aerial drones have proven to be the most effective weapon of the United States in Afghanistan. American soldiers now generally remain in their cantonments and air bases now. Local Afghans used to pass information about militants to the Americans and the Americans used them to determine the targets of the drones. As soon as a desired target appears, they lock it and fired a missile. A military expert friend has said that the target error in this control missile is up to five inches. Yes! Only five inches, that is, if the missile is fired at the head of the terrorist, even if it makes a mistake, it will hit the man's chest at most. There is no chance of a mistake more than that. Example of drone aircraft is similar to an airplane. The purpose of this invention may have been different in the minds of the people inventing it, but military experts have started using this invention as a weapon of war. If we analyze the most recent wars, it seems drones stand more effective weapons than today's most modern fighter jets, from F16, F35, Sukhui and Rafael to our JF Thunder.*

*In the United States, a technology company Amazon has been delivering its customers' goods at their doorsteps with the help of drones since last many years. But this is the first*

*time that drones have been used to distribute newspapers. Though the Japanese company has been working on this project for several months, but the need for it was felt when a great earthquake occurred in Hokkaido, Japan recently, a situation where there was no gas, no water, no telephone or internet. After this natural disaster, this private organization of newspaper distribution decided to distribute the newspaper through drones, the only means of delivering information to the people in such an unexpected and emergency situation.*

*Throwing bundles of newspapers, which achieved their goals 100%. Newspaper delivery by drone may be a relatively expensive business, but we should consider the contingency. For example, if there strikes a flood, earthquake, war or any other natural calamity, and as a result of which roads and bridges are broken, ground communication is cut off for people, the delivery of newspapers by drone in such a situation is the most effective way. Newspaper distributor company has announced that it plans to automate completely the newspaper distribution in future. The desire of this organization is to automatically distribute 100% of the newspapers through the drone aircraft. The procedure will be such as the newspaper will be wrapped in the shape of a round roll on the drone and loaded in a wax envelope, and the required delivery addresses will be installed in the system. For the delivery, the drone will confirm the address with the help of a camera and throw the newspaper at the specified address, very like a plane drops a bomb. After that, it will find out the address of the next customer and throw the newspaper there. After distributing the newspapers, the drone will come back to the same place from where it had started its flight. So a toy-considered gadget will serve us with recent news in the morning to make our day!*

## *World's Tallest Tower*

*Tokyo Sky Tree, at first glance, looks like an Indian rosewood or 'shisham' tree standing in a field of wheat or corn. If the city of Tokyo is considered to be a field of high-rise buildings, consider that this tower is so tall that it stands in the middle of this field like a tree. Perhaps, accordingly, this minaret has been named "Sky Tree", A few years ago, the construction of this Tower was accomplished, and it was opened to the public. It has been declared the world's tallest communication tower in the Guinness Book of World Records. From its completion to its inauguration, and from the coverage of the inauguration ceremony to the present date, scarcely a single day's newspaper stands devoid of news about the Tokyo Sky Tree. While you watch the news on television, you would feel that this is an eternal symbol of Tokyo, and some people essentially had been labeling it as an "eternal symbol".*

*Influenced by this deluge of news, well, this marvel has a price tag, too. the world's tallest minaret is being built at a cost of 160 billion rupees. The 634-metertall tower deserves to be called Tokyo's new landmark around the world. The first*

*test of its strength was the troublesome earthquake a few years ago, the shocks of which it bore well. Unaffected by the earthquake, it emerged as a symbol of hope among all Japanese, including the ones affected by the tsunami. It is also important to elucidate that the tsunami here is not a political slogan, as is in Pakistan, I'm talking about the water-based tsunami created as a result of an earthquake on the ocean floor a few years ago, in which 30,000 people expired. Tsunami is a Japanese word which has been adopted internationally by almost all languages.*

*Let me clarify here an important point that the tallest building, the "Burj Khalifa" is located in Dubai, which is 828 meters high. It is such a building that brought the government of Dubai to the brink of bankruptcy before its completion. Abu Dhabi bailed out the Dubai government but took over the project, otherwise the tallest building in the world would have been named something else. It should be noted that Burj Khalifa is a complete concrete building while Sky Tree is a steel tower. Thus, this tower competes with Eiffel Tower in France', along with Tokyo Tower, and these are the fifth and fourth tallest buildings in the world respectively, or the second and third tallest towers in Canada and China. Dubai's Burj Khalifa, Malaysia's Petro Tower and America's Empire State Building have a different category. Attracting tourists is also among the objectives of the construction of this tower, but mainly the objectives of this project are related to the communication sector. Originally, five television stations, two FM radios, a taxi company and a mobile phone company's communication equipment have been installed on the tower. It is not a government building, but a private sector project which is expected to generate an annual revenue of Rs. 300 billion.*



*Two observatory windows have been built on this tower for tourists. The first observatory is at a height of three and a half hundred meters, on which two thousand people can view the scene, simultaneously. The second observatory is at a height of 450 meters which can accommodate around 1000 people. Thus, the elevators running at a speed of 600 meters per hour are installed in it, but there are also stairs for load shedding in case of emergency. It is only a little difficult that it has two and a half thousand steps. If you have to go up or down the stairs, it would be such an ordeal.*

*The woman who suggested the name of the tower in 2008 had the honor of being the first to visit the observatory of the Sky Tree on the inauguration day. It should be remembered that more than twenty thousand people had suggested the same name apart from the above-mentioned lady, but the lucky person's name was drawn by a lottery. The construction of this tower was announced in 2008 on the occasion of the golden jubilee of Tokyo Tower, which was built in 1958. For years, Tokyo Tower held the distinction of being the tallest tower in the world. At the completion of fifty years, the Japanese had proposed to build a tower twice as tall, not many years have passed and now it stands in front of everyone as a reality. A small town is built around this tower, located just five kilometers from Tokyo's main railway station. A railway line has been laid up to the tower, as a special rail service has been started. Apart from hundreds of shops and restaurants, a logistics center and an aquarium have also been built on the ground floor for tourists. What does the view of the city look like from Observatory? it's a difficult question but while I was standing at the observatory, I felt like landing at the Haneda Airport of Tokyo.*

## *About the Ocean*

*The fishermen of Latin America name the sea as a woman. Their belief about the waves is that when they come to the shore, they bring pleasure with them, and when they turn back to the sea, they take the griefs and pains with them into the sea. Maybe that hope and belief was the reason that I also drove to the coast. The second reason could be included a day off from work and searching for mental relaxation. The shore of the Pacific Ocean where I am sitting for lunch today is located at least ten thousand kilometers away from Latin America, but today on this remote shore in the outskirts of Japan, while arriving in the coastal suburbs, the common thing I felt was the smell of the beach. I closed my eyes for a while and felt the same touch of the wind on my face and the very same scent of the beach air through my nostrils, and the same salty moisture in the air is felt thousands of miles away on the other side of the sea. The ocean water, its foaming waves and the specific salty taste, are also exactly the same.*

*It is important to describe here that other oceans have a different smell, taste, and moisture.*

*It would be more fitting to say that each sea has its own atmosphere and apart from the specific climate, the aquatic life and birds found on the beaches are also different. The oceans, also sometimes, get sick. As I mentioned about the Latin fishermen, they also believe that the sea is a living entity. The reason why the sea is called a lady may be because of being at the mercy of the waves for a long time, and the fishermen's aloofness from women. But as a proof of the sickness of the sea, my friend Sergio Alejandro Ravero showed me such places in the sea, where the water had taken on a yellow color and it felt stagnant. He told me the reason for this was the pollution caused by dumping in the seas. We went to the deep sea to catch fish, but we could not catch a single fish, not even a baby fish. The reason for this was the unusual movement of the sea water that day, and our unskillfulness also became a hurdle in our fish hunting. The more sea water moves, the more difficult it grows to catch fish. Another reason was that we were out late for fishing, while the expert fishermen leave at dawn.*

*I had no problem returning home empty-handed. My friend Sergio, on the other hand, had come out of his house by announcing that we are going to catch fish, and he had ordered to keep everything ready to cook and grill the fish i.e. the spices and other ingredients, as only fish was to be served in the house. A simple solution to his problem was found by shopping at the fish market, located right on the beach, to our solace. Sergio bought three big golden fish from there and, reaching home, told his wife and children that we had just caught them fresh from the sea. The family, beyond doubt, declared him a great fisherman, his enviable achievements*

*included today's fishing. But the issue took a naughty turn when his goofy son, sitting among his Pakistani friends, recalled the day when his father had caught a golden fish. This is the literal translation of the fish of the "Dorado" breed. Our local fishermen may call it by another name. Pakistani friends were aware of the fact that, in order to overcome the shame and fear of returning empty handed, Sergio had bought golden fish from the fish market and the same had been taken home. Therefore, instead of understanding our real problem of water issues and going late for fishing, they just mocked him. There is another reason for declaring the son to be a delinquent, which requires a separate article, how he opened a restaurant after turning his father bankrupt worth fifty million dollar in company, and now he works as a schef in someone else's restaurant. A rich proverb comes to mind. The real wealth lies in the children, as the future of the family depends on their being worthy. Even more suitable is the example of Punjabi proverb that the birth of a blind daughter is better than the birth of a stupid son.*

*The sand of the beaches produces the same smell, but the oysters are of different species in different countries. It is also important to clarify that the smell of the beaches refers to the smell of the Pacific Ocean. It is more appropriate to say that the fragrance of each sea is unique and exclusive. Its effects on the mood and nature of its people differently. A Nepalese friend of mine who came to Japan from the foothills of the Himalayas in a hope that air of Pacific Ocean would strengthen his body and the wind would also exert positive effects, and he would be blessed with new energy. But soon we realized that the level of fear he had of his wife, the wind of the Pacific Ocean, the wind of the seven seas and the water of these Oceans together cannot cure the weakness that he suffered from. According to a common friend, he was not*

*suffering from any physical weakness, but rather a domestic abuse. According to a young man, it is an incurable disease.*

*For the students, let me tell you that 70% of our world consists of oceans and the remaining 30% is land. Mentioning the oceans, the Pacific Ocean is the largest and most extensive ocean, followed by the Atlantic Ocean and the Indian Ocean. I have mentioned the seven seas as an idiom, because their actual number in the world is slightly different. In literature and history books, they are counted as seven. In the ninth century AD, the Arab writer Yaqoobi wrote that seven seas must be crossed to reach China. The famous Arab geographer and writer, who lived in the era of Abbasid Dynasty is considered internationally the first historian of world culture.*

*By the way, seven seas are created by drawing a line, dividing it into the north and south, but it doesn't comprehensive and conclusive argument. Well, the 97% of the total water in this World is in these oceans. Nevertheless, I love the sound of the ocean waves as they make a moment go by. There is an indescribable peace of mind when you see the waves moving towards the shore and then back to the sea. I remember a Nobel laureate poet, diplomat and politician Pablo Neruda who spent some months of his exile in the Italian island of Capri. After returning home, he asked his friends in Capri to go to the shores of the island and record the sound of the ocean waves and send them to him. And, his wish was honored by his comrade.*

## Seasonal Festivities

*When the fragrant paddy harvest is prepared in Japan, the traditional harvest festivals are measured as an announcement of the season. The smell of paddy spreads in the air in the countryside. The first harvest is offered to the gods in traditional temples. In the first ten days of September, as per my experience, even if the weather forecast is for a typhoon at that time, despite reports of devastation and earthquake damages, the centuries-old cultural and religious rituals get celebrated to usher in the new harvest continue with their traditional fervor. Stalls of edibles and drink items are decorated around the places of worship and items of children are also sold. such gets visible in fairs and stalls in our country. Just like the shrine of religious elders are resplendent on the occasion of anniversary, exactly the same.*

*Disorder is perceived around shrines these days in rural areas of Japan. Japan is an industrialized society, but culturally its social foundations are tied to the agricultural sector, very like the society of ancient India which was divided into four castes, which largely determined the occupation of a person, including Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishis and Shudras. We see a comparable situation in the ancient Japanese society, where we witness four strata, ranks or castes of society. In Indian society, Brahmins were considered to be born from the head of God and Shudra caste born from the feet of the entity. Based on this belief, Brahmins have been in-charge of the religious sector for thousands of years; Kshatriyas were warriors and defense and war were their*

*occupations, they did business, while Shudras were considered impure, and they worked hard laborers.*

*The same division still exists in Japan, but it is never as cruel as in Indian society. The only basis of this division here was the division of work. No human was intended to be insulted or humiliated. These four social levels were as follows: The king and his family were the first and highest. The second level were the samurai and their warriors. The third level were the farmers, working in the fields and living a simple life. Businessmen were considered to be on the fourth and last level. The king and his family always received religious respect and still does. The king was not only respected on the basis of governmental authority, but he was considered to be the incarnation of God on earth. Being the vicegerent or caliph of God was a diverse matter. Common people are cremated after death like Hindus and Sikhs, while King is buried in the ground. After the defeat in World War II, the King announced on the radio that he was no longer God or any of his incarnations, but he is still revered by the people for centuries.*

*Samurai is such a subject that hundreds of books have been written on it. But to put it briefly, this class consisted of loyal vassals and warriors of the king. The whole of Japan was divided among these vassals, they had their own castles and armed forces. They numbered in hundreds, if not thousands. None except the samurai class was allowed to carry a sword. It was the law and the acknowledged fact in the society that no one could be heroic except the samurai. Only the family names of the samurai class remain in the society now, but their profession in the society does not exist anymore. Another change is that after the industrial revolution, the business class has gained more status and respect than the peasant class.*

*My Japanese friend Kugo San has the gift of being able to tell by the surname of any man whether he is historically of the samurai class, a farmer, or a business family. The total number of such family names is around five hundred. The interesting thing is that every citizen can choose the name of his choice from the list of five hundred family names. In general, when a foreign citizen acquires Japanese citizenship, he must choose one of these five hundred family names to suffix his name. Kudo San suggests that if I ever become a Japanese citizen, I should take a samurai name. I always reassure him that it would be so. Let me explain here that Japanese people use the suffix "san" at the end of every name. This word "San" is used in the sense of 'Mr.' which stands necessary to be used as a suffix with every name. Calling any name without this "San" is considered thoughtful insolence. The barber, driver, cleaner, mechanic or even relatives are called with suffixes which is a traditional oriental society, as manners and demeanors are very much taken care of here. In the parlance of the perfumers, the atmosphere of Japan is neutral. Generally, there is no smell, fragrance, or odor in the air. These days are special.*

*Just as the traditional festival of "Vasakhi" is celebrated on the occasion of wheat harvest in Punjab, Pakistan, so many unique things are observed on the occasion of rice harvest in Japan. Processions take place from street to street. The participants of these processions, come out with religious and cultural fervor, and the masses are dressed in traditional clothes. In front and back, the drums are beaten, and the beat of the drum is followed by the children, holding flutes from their lips and chanting loudly. In front of these processions, there is a ghost-like flat with a terrible shape or an image of an animal in a large size prepared by the local people, the purpose which is to scare the devil and evil spirits.*



## *A Country of Technological Miracles*

*The astonishments of this wonder-land are endless. Japan's expertise and innovation in technology and especially electronics have been recognized all over the world. Sometimes we feel that the possibility of development beyond the achievement made by Japan stand impossible. Perhaps, in this field, and it seems as if we have achieved climax, but even after such perceptions, unexpectedly something new comes that opens up new chapters of amazements. The latest news was still beyond my imagination and I'm sure it won't be in the box of possibility of your mind either. The latest innovation is that now we would be able to taste TV programs apart from watching and listening. Appalling news, but true to the letter and hundred percent authentic. After this invention, you would be able to feel the taste of colorful food, fruits or vegetables by licking the TV screen. So astounding! Isn't it?*

*The description of this ingenious invention is that a Japanese professor has invented a prototype television whose*

screen is sprayed with ten different flavors. As soon as any image appears on this flat TV screen, the matching taste emerges, which can be felt by licking the screen with the tongue. The name of this new invention is well selected by its inventor i.e. (TTTV) abbreviation for, "Taste the TV". Regarding his invention, Professor Miyashita said that the purpose of this invention was to give people the opportunity to feel the experience of eating from a restaurant on the other side of the world, while sitting at home. Indubitably, this fork is also an electrical device, but it does not have any harmful effects on human health. Apart from this, the professor, who is credited with several tasty inventions, said that the commercial model of the above-mentioned tasting television would be available in the market for one thousand US dollars only.

The professor further says that in the era of Covid-19, when human contact and communication with the outside world has been reduced, Taste the TV (TTTV) has the ability to be a means of connecting you with the surrounding environment while staying within the four walls of the house by providing us a new kind view of outside world. The goals of the mentioned professor are very elevated. But he is not going to stop here as his next plan is to digitalize the ice cream and pizza selling companies so as enable the customers to taste them before buying. Order!

The second piece of news is even more interesting and perhaps more significant. Without further ado, a dual-mode vehicle has been inaugurated in Japan. It is the first dual-mode vehicle not only in Japan but worldwide, as it runs on the road and on the railway line alike. In simple words, there is a vehicle that you can call either a bus or a train, as you please. While going on the road, you may use it as a bus with

*a speed limit of 100 kilometers per hour running with normal rubber tires on road, but when it comes to running at a railway interchange, the steel wheels from the inside come on the rail track, though its speed a bit lesser i.e. 60 kilometers per hour. I remember that the speed limit on the back of our buses in Pakistan is always mentioned as 65 kilometers, which must have been the legal speed limit at one time. On the highways of Pakistan, the Speed limit is 120 km now though. There is a custom that when an old bus is repainted, it is always decorated like the new bride and the same traditional speed limit is also inscribed on it de novo. But nobody bothers to think about reasoning in such texts. So attractive grows the truck art and bus painters. The above mentioned dual mode vehicle can also be operated as a tram as all its wheels can be controlled. In fact, I see this train-bus hybrid traveling mode would excel the modes of transportation all over the world in the future. It will, definitely, provide an easy, charming and convenient travelling to the passengers. Will it not?*

## *Primary Education System*

*I do not enjoy a close friendship with Thanedar Khan (Literally Means Police Sheriff), but since our business is of the same nature, we do meet often. A few years ago, he got fed up with the law-and-order situation in former FATA, his native land. He brought his spouse and children to Japan. His four children are enrolled in a government primary school adjacent to my car showroom. Sometimes, he comes to pick up the kids from school, and he frequently sits at my office first. I noticed that he leaves his car at my showroom when he goes out to school to pick up the kids. I might not have noticed this, but another Pakistani friend of mine used to do the same. Whenever he would come, would park his car near my establishment, pick up the kids from school and would go to his home or office from there, as the problem is that the parents of the children in the primary school are not allowed to bring them in the car or take them back.*

*The transportation of children on private rides is prohibited. It was also revealed that parents cannot even choose the school of their choice for their children. The municipality chooses the school closest to the child's residence. When the child turns six years old, parents receive a notification by mail from the municipality to enroll their child in such and such school immediately. It is required by law and in case of violation, the constitutional punishment is fixed, but this order is not violated because the literacy rate in Japan is practically 100%. I have not seen a single person here who cannot read or write.*

*Commonly, at eight o'clock in the morning, the children reach school on foot, and then they return home at half past three, wearing a yellow cap. The purpose of this ban is to make children physically strong and healthy. The children leave their homes early in the morning and gather at one place and walk to school in a line on the side of the road, in such a way that the boys and girls of the older groups are in front, and the children of the smaller groups follow them.*

*Let's go back. It is not that there is no one to take care of the children. In every neighborhood, it is the duty of two mothers every day to keep an eye on the children while going to school, until they enter the next neighborhood, two persons from the next neighborhood do the same. Mothers of these students stand in the way of children while walking, and children make their way to school under the close observance of their mothers.*

*Private schools are non-existent Japan. Unquestionably, less than one percent, the schools that exist in the private sector also have been established by foreigners, or for some other unavoidable reason, however, quality private schools*

*throughout Japan can be counted on the fingers-tips. Education in government schools is entirely free, nevertheless, mid-day meals are provided to children by the school for which a small fee is charged. If a child is incapable or unwilling to pay these dues, these dues are waived. The reason behind this all is that bringing food from home or a tiffin is severely prohibited.*

*Because Muslim children only eat halal, the school provides halal food for them, still, they cannot bring it from home. All the children eat their meals in the classroom with their teachers and then have rest for half an hour. Since young children get tired easily, they have a ten-minute break after every hour, once a twenty-minute break and then a one-hour lunch break which we call a half-time break, in which half time is for eating and half for rest, and yes! Children also distribute food to other children. Primary school children do not have a specific uniform, but only a yellow cap. There are two days off from school in a week i.e. Saturday and Sunday.*

*There is no concept of a child failing in school. All students are promoted to the next class at the end of the academic year, which is also comparable to our case, in the month of March. Primary school education spans over six years and middle over three years, and this nine years' education is compulsory. It is thought-provoking that if you ask a child his age, he will answer his school class, because all the children in each class have the same birth year, so a child might answer you that he is in third grade. It is necessary that each student must attain the age of nine years at school. The advantage of promoting all children to the next grade is that no child is left feeling inferior. Each class has an equal number of boys and girls, usually between twenty-five and thirty-five. The number of male and female teachers is also equal among the*

*teachers. In addition to computers, TVs, video games are also provided for children in the classroom. A doctor is always present in the school dispensary. Teachers have close contact with parents.*

*The teachers in the MC Primary School in Mian Channu were very kind and hardworking, where I studied. They treated the students like their own children. Ironically enough, despite this, the fear of the cane was always on our heads. Under the "Mar Nahi Pyar" policy, children have been freed from the fear of corporal punishment, but many problems remain unsolved. We used to feel very cold while studying sitting on the tot in winter, surely it will be difficult for children to sit on tot in winter. If the government arranges desks or chairs in government schools instead of bags, students will be able to study in a better environment.*

*'Danish School System' is a good project which should be extended to all four provinces, but it is more important to improve other government schools with primary schools being the first priority. There has been no significant change in our government schools for the last century. There are usually cold water coolers for the worshipers in the mosques, because the believers manage them on the basis of self-help, but in the government schools, the small children are not provided with cold water. It is not a realistic demand to demand from government for facilities equal to those of Japanese schools, but it is the responsibility of the government to provide cold water to innocent students and electricity for their fans in the summer season, at least, only then the educational objectives would be achieved in the best manner.*

## *Princess Marries to a Commoner*

*For so many years, the issue of the princess's marriage had been a popular topic of discussion. It is Emperor Akihito's granddaughter and the Crown Prince's daughter Princess Mako. She intended to marry a commoner Japanese boy. According to the law and tradition of the royal palace, the princess was supposed to be ostracized from the royal family, because according to the royal laws, the female members of the royal family cannot marry, except the members of the royal family. And, if a member of the royal family marries a commoner, she is formally expelled from the royal family.*

*Media coverage was massive but very cautious and responsible. Even the wording of the news and its arrangement was the same in all media. The reason for this prudence is not the fear of any prejudice, but reverence for the king. Until the end of World War II, the Emperor of Japan was considered by the Japanese people to be the incarnation of God, and he was regularly worshipped. When the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in World War II and Japan was defeated, Emperor Hirohito addressed the nation on the radio and declared that from that day on he was an ordinary man, not God or his vicegerent.*

*The Japanese word for the emperor is "Thin Nu" which means "God-like" or "God-like". In today's Japan, the King is not worshiped anymore, because he himself declared that he is not worthy of worship, but still, he holds an immense religious sanctity. Commoners are cremated after death according to Buddhism and Shinto like Hindus and Sikhs, but the emperor's body is buried like Muslims, Christians and Jews. Religious sanctity and imperialism are closely related,*



*the official religion of Japan, Shintoism, is the sanctity of His Majesty the Emperor. Sometimes, I think that what is the reason behind the closeness of the religious class and the rulers. Queen of Great Britain, the heart of the West and the founder of modern democracy, has a sign of the cross on her crown which reads, "Defender of faith". So, all over Europe, wherever there is a royal palace, there will be an equally magnificent church in front of it or at the same level.*

*During my decades long stay, I did not hear a single word of criticism about the royal family from any Japanese. There was talk about Princess Mako's marriage. Princess and her lover are twenty-six years old. The boy has become a lawyer and lives with his parents in Orio-Co-Hama. It was settled that the couple would be engaged the same year and the princess would be married. After more than four years of twists and turns, including severe criticism from some members of the public, Princess Mako has married to Komuro Kei and left the imperial household. The crown prince and princess, her parents, have described the marriage as an "unprecedented" one, making it worth-considering how will it impact the imperial family. According to a media report, Princess Mako and Komuro Kei filed their marriage paperwork, becoming wife and husband officially. She was removed from the imperial family, afterwards. Having become a commoner, who had been diagnosed with a stress disorder, she said had been triggered by "erroneous information" in media reports—joined her new husband at a press conference on the afternoon of the same day.*

*The two delivered prepared comments for about 10 minutes and took no questions from the assembled journalists, instead distributing written responses to questions that had been submitted in advance. The former princess, speaking first, stated, "I understand that there are various*

*viewpoints on my marriage to Kei. I must express my deep regret to those who have been inconvenienced by this state of affairs.” She went on, though, “Kei is an irreplaceable presence in my life. Marrying him is a decision I needed to take in order for us to live our lives with our psychological health. “Komuro Kei spoke next, opening his statement simply, “I love Mako. I want to spend the one and only life that I have to live together with the person that I love.”Mako next divulged several facts that had been unknown to the general public so far. Regarding the reported financial trouble involving the Komuro family, namely the money his mother has been claimed to owe to her former fiancé, Mako said that she had been instrumental in urging the parties involved to resolve the situation. (In connection with this, her husband noted that talks were proceeding smoothly toward a resolution involving a monetary settlement, although his mother had suffered both physically and mentally from the turmoil, and even fears for her own safety at times.)Kei’s study at a law school in New York, meanwhile, which some media channels had described as his “flight overseas” from troubles in Japan, had also been at her behest—she had urged him to “prepare a place abroad for us to live” well in advance of their marriage. According to her statement, her fiancé’s actions following their engagement had all been according to a plan. Mako went on, “Each time Kei’s acts were criticized as selfish decisions taken with no regard for my own feelings, this baseless speculation was picked up by the media as proven fact, and groundless stories took on a life of their own. This made me fearful; I have been pained and saddened by this treatment.”*

*She mounted a ferocious counterattack on the media entities that she described as deceiving the public with erroneous reports. In conclusion, Mako stated: “From the*

*bottom of our hearts, we hope to see society be a place where as many people as possible can live while caring for one another's well-being. "Some reporters wrote on this occasion thus, 'It is hard to call this gathering, which lasted no more than 10 minutes and involved only statements from the couple, a proper press conference.' As I watched it, though, I went pricked by my own doubts about the developments to date melt away from the very beginning, when Mako confidently stated, "We have some things to tell you all today, which is why we arranged this event." They were winning me over to their side. At the same time, I felt that much of the drama we have seen concerning their relationship could have been avoided if they had only come together to speak to the public earlier through a press conference like this on some similar event.*

*There may have been no way around the delay given that until the day the two were formally wed, she was still a member of the imperial family, subject to all the restrictions on her freedom to speak frankly to the Japanese people that this entails. Customarily, the marriage of a princess of the imperial family would invite various official ceremonies. It seems that these were not carried out on the judgment of Emperor Naruhito and Crown Prince Akishino, her uncle and father, that the people would not be thoughtful of such undertakings. This decision was thus one taken keeping the people's feelings in mind. This does not imply that the majority of Japan's people were against the idea of wedding ceremonies taking place. Rather, the national sentiment was one of desiring to know the truth of what had taken place so far—of clearing up any misconceptions that might exist and providing an understanding to the grounds for Mako's marriage to Komuro. It is most unfortunate that the public could only get the information it required directly from Mako*

*at this late date, after the marriage was finalized. There is another point of view which is lesser though, the pain that Princess Mako suffered in connection with her engagement and marriage has shed fresh light on the restrictions on the rights of members of the imperial family. Mistaken media reports and the conjectures and harsh criticisms that can flash across cyberspace in an instant have been the main cause of this pain, but we must stop to ask ourselves whether there are really so many people opposed to Mako's marriage.*

*I believe, there are essentially three types of response to Mako's marriage: strong opposition, a desire to wish her the best based on respect for the freedom of members of the imperial family to marry whom she chooses, and concern about the decision she is making. The first group may be vocal enough to get attention, but I do not believe it is anywhere near a majority view. Look at any website and you can find plenty of comments along the lines of: "Is the public opinion really divided on this? You've got the overwhelming majority opposed to the marriage on one side, and the tiny minority who approve of it on the other. You can hardly describe this as a 'divided' opinion." It is clear from comments like this that people against Mako's marriage see themselves as being in a solid majority, but is this actually the case? Recent opinion polls show that supporters of the marriage are the larger in group.*

*The Yomiuri Shimbun reported the results of a survey that had 53% of respondents saying the marriage was a good thing, with 33% disagreeing. An ANN survey carried out on October 16–17, meanwhile, 61% of respondents stated that they, "want to congratulate the couple" on their marriage, and just 24% were unwilling to do so. In comparison with other marriages involving imperial family members, these opposing numbers may be relatively high, but they are*

*certainly not majority in numbers. Despite this, the most vigorous opponents to Mako's wedding have wielded influence well beyond their numbers, believing that most of the public are with them in their desire to let the marriage to be cancelled. This has led them to publicly bash the couple with no regard for their rights in the matter.*

*If the media have played a part in this with erroneous reports that these people believed undiplomatically, they have to answer for their role as well. In a statement on Mako's marriage, her parents, the Crown Prince and Crown Princess Akishino, said, "This whole affair has had some impact on the imperial family, and we sincerely apologize to those who have been affected by it." They also described the couple's wedding as an "unprecedented" one "who's like has not been seen in the history of the imperial house." This is hardly the sort of statement one would expect from the crown prince's household on the auspicious occasion of a marriage of one of its daughters. And indeed, it indicates the anguish that Mako's parents have gone through. The "impact on the imperial family" that Mako's marriage and the associated media uproar have had can be best described as a lessening of trust among a part of the public in the crown prince's household. This is a most unfortunate alteration. At the same time, by holding her press conference on the very day, she formally left the family, speaking directly to the public and asking earnestly for their understanding, Mako may have succeeded in changing the minds of many of those people. Perhaps her unprecedented actions will, in the end, prove to be a salvation of sorts for her family. Our thoughts turn to as how her younger brother Prince Hisahito has viewed the events of the past few years.*

## *G20 Summit and Economic Rise of India*

*The G20 Summit, the representative organization of the world's leading twenty powers in terms of economy, was held in Osaka, Japan. Such meetings generally do not make any revolutionary decisions, but instead become a practical interpretation of sitting, talking, and dismissing. It was a two-day meeting. The meeting was a typical one. Of course, the presence of nineteen major powers of the world and the representative of the European Union was very exciting.*

*This is also the case in the 14th summit meeting of G20, which is being held for the first time in Japan. From Trump to Putin and British Theresa May to Erdoğan appeared in the meeting. Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman represented his country, while the presidents of Indonesia and China were also there. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had just won the election and was receiving congratulations for his success. As the first daughter of the American president, Ivanka Trump was seen chatting with various heads of state on business, state and other topics of global interest everywhere. Because Donald Trump is an unconventional man, according to a new*

*joke in the town, the daughter insisted, 'Papa! Papa! I have to go too, and have to sit in the first row', so the American president accompanied her the meeting. The same also a Joke that the US president's daughter is acting as his adviser, as Ivanka's husband resides in the White House and wields considerable influence over the president as a special adviser.*

*I became concerned when heard the news about the minutes of the meeting, Trump was heard telling the media the details of Narendra Modi's meeting with the US President. The profundity and importance of the relationship between India and the United States was described with warmth by the first daughter, who also had a meeting with Indian PM. It is also distressing because it seems, rather probable, that Donald Trump also has such friendly and sympathetic feelings towards India. Because of India's economic development and its historic rivalry with China, the fountain of American love and cooperation, which used to flow towards us, Pakistan, has turned towards India now.*

*Brexit i.e., Britain's decision to separate from the European Union, has been a topic of discussion for many years. In the fall of this year, the process of separation will finally be completed. Is this the right decision? Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair seems unhappy with this decision. He says that in the future they would have to regret this decision. But for me, the surprise in this interview was Tony Blair's view of India's economic future. Blair said that they should think thirty years from now when their grandchildren, great-grandchildren, our children, there would be three major economic giants in the world: America, China and India. If Tony Blair had been speaking briefly, the matter would have been dissimilar.*

*The main point of his narrative on the subject of Brexit was that the United States would remain an important country even after thirty years due to its military power and geography, due to its population and diversity, while China and India would remain an important country in their economic influence, which would increase so much that the fourth country in the world would not even have half of their economy. After these three countries, middle-class countries will follow. Countries like Britain and Germany would remain middle-class countries. But for us, the alarming thing is the part of his speech that after thirty years, India would be one of the three major economic powers of the world.*

*We should think how we can compete with India in the economic field because we can neither change our geography nor change the history of wars and corrupted relations. Presently, the economy of Pakistan seems to be suffering from serious crises. From the gross national product to the growth rate, from the exchange rate to the fall of the stock market, nothing shows encouraging signs. Some loans, aid received, promises of more aid. The treasury has recently announced that the road has been smoothed. The matter does not end here, the troublesome thing is that the growth rate of our economy this year is 3 percent while that of Bangladesh is 7 percent. This shows that the Bengali economy is likely to be excel ours in the coming years. As the size of India's economy is increasing, in the same proportion, she is increasing the purchase of military equipment. Nowadays, India is the largest buyer of arms in the world. These weapons are not of any use within the country, as such weapons are not used to control the civilian population. Of course, its target is across the border. Most likely, that target is Pakistan. Our poor financial situation does not allow us to increase our defense needs. We must reduce the necessary*



*expenses. After 30 years, if India really becomes such a big economic power as predicted all over the world, will we be able to fight it with the current conventional defense capability? In this regard, friendship with China can be our strength. The war between India and China, in which India was defeated and some of its territory was also taken over by China, will continue to be a hindrance to the cordial relations between these two neighboring countries. But can friendship with China be a guarantee of Pakistan's defense?*

*I think we have to make our own defense capable, there are no alternatives to that. In his famous book "The Prince", legendary writer Niccolo Machiavelli writes that no foreign country can ever be a guarantee for your defense, whoever relies on foreign power for his defense, history shows that she always has to suffer. Today, India's economy is ten times bigger than ours, which is understandable to some extent if we look at the ratio of area and population. But if this economic variance upsurges further, it will have grave undesirable effects.*

## *Secret of Prosperity*

*What is the secret behind Japan's overwhelming economic development? It is a very longstanding question, but it is still a very important and fundamental one. Japan is an example of Success for any country in Asia to follow to develop economically. This Question was asked to me in a ceremony held in my honor by media house at Circuit House, Khanewal. At that time, though I tried my best to elucidate the answer, yet I kept on thinking about this question for a long time as how Japan pulled itself out of the wreckage of the two World Wars and became an example for the world by developing its economy at a rapid pace. On reflection, it dawned on me that there is no secret in this journey to advancement. There are many noticeable reasons that have taken her to the top of economic growth. If I am asked to describe it in just one sentence, there stands no problem. I will say that consistent hard work and social recognition of hard work is the reason for this wonderful economic development. This society is a textbook example of the message and teaching of Quaid-i-Azam that says, 'Work, work and more work'. What I mean by the social recognition of hard work, I will probably be able to explain from this personal incident.*

*Like other parts of the world, in Japan, the traffic police installs cameras to catch over-speeding vehicles and stay hidden as per routine. Apart from this, additional permanent automatic cameras have also been installed to prevent over-speeding. These cameras automatically take pictures of fast-moving vehicles. The police find out the address of their*

owners from the number plates of the vehicles violating the speed-limit on the road, and send them a notice. A few years ago, due to over-speeding, a similar car was caught on camera which I was driving. Since it was daytime, the flashlight was not detected. I came to know about it when a notice came from the police in our office that on such and such day, at such and such place, I had violated the speed-limit, and my picture has been detected. Hence, I paid a visit at the earliest. When I arrived the Police Station, the policeman showed me my picture and asked me if it was my picture. There was no reason for denial as my face was visible with all clarity. On my confession, the matter was handed over to the court. On the fixed date of the court, I was taken to the court from the police station sitting on the back seat of a black official Sedan car like all the accused ones. I was brought before the judge along with the lawyer. He asked me only one question, "At the time you were driving at a high-speed, where were you going?" Either I was going about some personal task, or I was traveling in connection with my Work or business? I responded to this harmless question by saying that it was something personal and not related to my work at the time of that occurrence. The judge did impose me a fine worth seventy thousand Yen and handed me the voucher to deposit penalty amount.

I was a little surprised at this decision. The reason for this surprise was that when I was sitting in the courtroom waiting for my turn, there was a Brazilian boy who was also a victim of speed check camera like me. Interestingly, his speed was the same as mine when Automatic camera took the picture. He appeared before my turn, before the judge in the court, and he was fined forty thousand Yen. When I came out of the court room, I happened to find the same Brazilian boy in the car parking area. I asked him in a friendly way that our crime

*was the same, but why has the cruel judge imposed a penalty of fine more than you on Me? He rather asked me the counter question what I Did answer to the judge's question? I replied that my answer was that I was going to a place in connection with a private engagement. Hearing my answer, Brazilian guy told me that I made a mistake. If I had answered that I was going somewhere in connection with my work, my fine would also have been less like his. You might be thinking that all the people of this country would argue that over-speeding in that situation would have been attached to some Work, business for a relief. But people do not lie in Japan, They Still remain unfamiliar with the culture of lying.*

*Here, I am reminded repeatedly of the owner of the electric battery manufacturing company located in the neighborhood of my office, whom I considered to be a worker of this company for years. He used to pick up the batteries himself and put them in his car and took them out. The discovery of his ownership was revealed, that one day I went to his factory and found that he was dressed as a worker, but all the employees called him "Sha Chu" (boss). You could call him a billionaire from a Pakistan's perspective. According to my observation, Pakistani people are no less intelligent than Japanese ones. Our natural resources are also almost the same if we compare them to Japan. Our natural resources and the intelligence of our people are bonafide facts in their place, but these things cannot be a guarantee of development.*

*According to a sage, "Intelligence is something and hard work is everything". God commands us that the laborer's effort be paid before his sweat gets dried, and the Lord of the Worlds cannot do such injustice to the working nations and individuals that do not reward their laborer in the best possible way.*

## *A Different Kind of Elections*

*Politics functions very hot, along with the weather in Japan these days as the people are going to elect a new parliament and prime minister in a few days. The most important thing about these elections is that the party which has been ruling the country continuously for more than fifty years seems to be bringing up the rear. Most of the analyzes and surveys indicate that the opposition party, the Democratic Party, is more likely to win this time. To be honest, as a Pakistani, I find this election absolutely boring, colorless and lousy, as no wall chalking has been done anywhere in the entire country and no banner is visible. There is not even a poster on the wall of any house or building. Election hoardings have been installed by the municipality at specific places, which are divided into several boxes with the help of lines.*

*Each candidate and party pastes its poster in its designated box. One is not legally allowed to put up more than one poster, or they do not do it ethically. Although all the*

*hoardings stand more than half empty, they look deserted. Pena flexes and billboard skins can also be used for political purposes, either they are unaware of it or they are banned by the Election Commission. However, placards are seen everywhere, which are usually allowed to be hung by a shopkeeper or a family member. There are no flags of political parties here, only the national flag of Japan is hoisted. No other flag has ever existed, but the flag of Japan's army dating back to World War II is still used by far-right parties. In black armored-type vehicles, while playing war anthems on loudspeakers, their operatives fly the war flag unseasonably, which is legally prohibited.*

*Now that the election campaign is reaching its final stage, the situation of the meetings of the leaders of the most popular parties is that there are not even a thousand participants in them. By the way, a political gathering consisting of one hundred people is also considered a very big and successful meeting here, but such political gatherings are also the specialty of central leaders only. Public campaigning for ordinary candidates is done in a slightly different way. Each candidate sits in front seat of a Toyota-Hiace Type Wagon or Suzuki box-style vehicle and his supporters sit in the back seats, opening the rear windows and waving to passers-by. All the supporters put on a uniform with the name of the candidate and party name written on it. A loudspeaker is installed on the roof of the vehicle, which continuously broadcasts the request to vote for the chosen candidate and party. This election campaign vehicle patrols streets, neighborhoods and roads at the speed of normal vehicles. When the traffic signal turns red, it stops along with other vehicles and the election candidate starts his speech. Political supporters sitting inside the car move out of the car. Occasionally, they distribute handbills to the vehicles standing*

*at the signal or greet everyone by waving their hands. As soon as the traffic light turns green, the supporters sit inside the car and the address ends. By the way, these political supporters are also paid workers, and not volunteers usually. The candidate's vehicle moves forward with the rest of the vehicles and waits for the next red light to proceed with the rally.*

*As I have mentioned earlier, political workers here do not work for any leader voluntarily but they receive salary from the candidate for running political campaigns on a daily basis. Some more intelligent candidates choose places where there is constant rush like railway stations, bus stands and parks etc. to express their ideas. At these places, candidates have an audience who are waiting for someone or there is still time for their bus or car to arrive. During election days, candidates often choose places to eat at that are popular with the public and tend to be crowded. The candidate tries to meet the diners individually, and after the meal they must say that the food here is very delicious.*

*Similar to Pakistan, here too, the Westminster form of parliamentary system is a democracy. The head of the government is the prime minister while the head of the country is the king. The number of seats in the House of Representatives is 480, out of which 300 are directly elected by their constituencies while the remaining 180 seats are distributed in proportion to the votes obtained by each party, which are distributed by the political parties among their nominees. This method of election is exactly the same that is in use in Pakistan for women's seats, but the difference is that here each voter casts two votes.; one to its favorite candidate and the other to his or her favorite party. Accordingly, each party gets its share of the specific seats in proportion to the*

*votes it gets. Directly elected candidates have no relation to the number of votes or the number of seats they hold. Many candidates stand contesting directly from their constituencies in the recent election, and they are also candidates for specific seats, but the important thing is that no party chief or important leader is a candidate from two seats.*

*Eligibility of election candidates is often discussed in our country but here the voter is also disqualified if he is convicted of any criminal offence. For example, a sixty-two-year-old man has filed an application in court against the local election commission for being declared ineligible to vote in the elections. The lawyer of the said person told that he had earlier filed an application in the Election Commission to restore his client's name in the voter list as the Supreme Court has declared him innocent but the Election Commission rejected the application saying that once the Supreme Court has sentenced a person, that sentence should be expunged or suspended in an appeal for revision, The Election Commission considers that such a voter might have been convicted anyway and will not be allowed to vote and counts them ineligible until court decides in their favor.*

*It should be remembered that these elections are being held because the ruling party lost to the opposition party in the local elections, so the leadership of the party decided that since they had lost in most of the cities including Tokyo in the local elections, it would be appropriate for them to go back to the people and ask them whether they still have trust in the ruling party or not. It seems that the result will be in negative. By the way, will democracy ever be so strong in Pakistan and will reach the stage of evolution that after losing a local government battle, the ruling party will relinquish its power and return to the people? I had been thinking for a really long*



*period, why people in Pakistan take so much interest in the electoral process? And on the contrary, why in Japanese society, there is so much of obliviousness and disinterest in politics that a significant portion of the population does not even know the name of their Prime Minister? Remarkably, they are not even ashamed of it. Instead, they give the excuse that they are not interested in politics, or that they don't know about the current prime minister because they are extremely busy with work these days.*

*The reason for this divergence is probably the problems of Pakistani people and their expectations related to politics. As their complications are numerous and serious, their expectations and hopes from their governments are also high, while any government comes or goes, it makes no difference to the life of the common man in Japan. That's why, there are no rallies, no immense gatherings, and no processions armed with drums and crackers, but as a Pakistani, I find the election here entirely dull, colorless, desolate and devoid of any fun. Such a great diversity in attitude toward elections!*

## Fireflies

*The popular-most music of the season in Japan's suburbs these days is the chorus of frogs croaking from the rice fields, especially at night it grows non-stop. The Festival of Stars is the most important cultural occasion in this month of the calendar, as the beauty of July is amply venerated now. The mythical festival is said to have taken place on two star-planets on opposite sides of our galaxy, the Milky Way where two lovers live. They live in separate stars for the whole year experiencing the sufferings of separation, except for seven days of the night of the seventh month. This loving couple is allowed to meet for one night only. And on such hours of marriage, all the stars smile and express the feelings of mirth. This festival of stars is celebrated by decorating bamboos like Christmas trees, on the branches of which the lovers can be seen. People write their wishes, vows and love poems on colorful papers and tie them on the trees like our Sufi shrines, pledged threads, cloth strips and bells on this occasions with a hope to make them realized.*

*The festival was also celebrated with traditional enthusiasm this year. After this festival, no important cultural, political, social program was expected this month. But on Saturday night as I was passing by a zoo in a coastal town, there was no traffic, I looked far and wide but there were no lights and instead of the sound of a musical instrument in the air, and it was a kind of very mysterious silence. The crowd of people was steadily increasing and they were walking towards the darkness. I have often passed by such places but never witnessed such a rush at this place before, a growing crowd of people in silence and darkness. My curiosity increased after watching it. Being a weekend night, I was also mentally free, so I decided to stay there to watch the spectacle. I parked the car in the parking lot of the zoo and looked around but could not understand what kind of activity it was. Is there any festival?*

*It was so unusual against the routine that the main gate of the zoo was open even at that hour of the night, as it is common that the gate gets closed by that time. It rather seemed the manifestation of some miracles! What was the matter? A lot of people were entering the zoo, while it was dark inside. All lights were off. What was the end of the story? Thinking this, I bought an entry ticket from the ticket house and entered the zoo. All the animals were as normal in their respective cages and specific enclosures, but surprisingly the people were no more showing any interest in anything that I could understand. Everyone was walking on the tracks. I did not know what had brought all of them there, so, went beyond my understanding.*

*Instantly, I sensed the presence of Fireflies around those tracks. The light of the tiny torches in the darkness of the night presented a very fascinating scene. Now I had realized*

*that all the crowd had gathered there to see Fireflies at this late hour and were lost in the charm of the scene. Then a question arose in the mind, why are Fireflies not seen in Pakistan anymore, although today our country undergoes so much of load shedding which helps a lot in the sighting of darkness at night.*

*This all reminded me of the pleasant experiences when we would sleep on to the roof of our house at night in the rainy season and the sky would be covered with small moving living lights. Fireflies were attached to the innocence and eagerness of an eager eyes of the baby. And, when we went into the room and the room would also be full of stars. Such were the beautiful nights of my childhood in Mian Channu, Pakistan. The nature presents at its best of the beauties in the rural areas where the nights are never lesser beautiful than the days.*

*The beauty of the Fireflies gets a mystic and mysterious touch when that innocent light disappears for a moments and which is a continuous process. We would be overwhelmed by the desire to catch fireflies but such act was not appreciated by our elders as some respect should to paid to the tiny and vulnerable beautiful creatures of nature.*

*In spite of finding a considerable place in the poetry of classic poets, we wonder where the fireflies have gone? Perhaps they have been killed by the insecticide toxic sprays, and the disappearance of such harmless fireflies is a tragedy as they were the metaphor of beauty of the night, enlightening our imagination.*

*Does the disappearance of fireflies not imply that the beauty of our nights, which would ignite our imagination, has faded away?*

## Snow Monkeys

*From the jungles of Africa to the temples of India, monkeys live in relatively warm countries. I have heard that monkeys run away from the cold. Here is a surprising phenomenon, we have such a valley in Japan where snow monkeys live, just like snow bears. Logically, snow monkeys can also exist as the other creatures live in the snow, but the real interesting thing is the life of these monkeys. There is a hot spring and a monkey park built by the government. Only the name of the park has been used, but actually it is set in the forest and if you happen to visit in winter, the forest is wholly covered with snow. Located near the village of Hakuba, this location is almost exactly the same where the Nagano Olympic games were held a few years ago. It was the beginning of the sixties when this natural park was discovered. In winter, a tourist came to this snowy valley surrounded by high mountains, where the color of nature seemed to touch its extremes, and the hot water springs seemed to erupt from the middle of these snowy mountains.*

*This extremely hot water boiling from the chests of ice-covered rocks is commonly called the Hot Spring. Bathing in this "hot spring" is considered as a cure for many diseases,*

*but also for skin. The tourist saw an interesting sight that some of the hot springs water had collected in a small pool in which a monkey was bathing. The people of Hakuba village had been watching this scene for centuries. Therefore, it was not a strange phenomenon for them, but for a tourist, the sight of a monkey bathing in a snowy valley was an amazing sight. The tourist stayed in that village for a few days and watched the monkeys sitting in the hot water pool and enjoying the bathing like human beings for hours. He was a tourist from Tokyo. On his return from the trip, he narrated his strange observation to his friends and thus the description of the snow monkeys reached to the government halls. It is mentioned in 1964 when the government constructed a huge pond there for the bathing of these monkeys in which hot water from natural springs is collected, and, also constructed a huge park along with it.*

*Despite the difficult roads off the main highway, thousands of domestic and foreign tourists come here every day, specially, in the winter season when the monkeys stand in warm water with their eyes closed, only their heads are out of the water and snow is falling on their heads. Sometimes, it looks as if the monkeys are wearing white skull caps. This bathing facility is not available for all monkeys, but only the important ones among them and their families. It seems as if only leaders and Their families are eligible to bathe in hot water in such a cold weather. If a common monkey who is not a noble one tries to enter this hot water pool, they all, collectively and immediately, chase him away. On this point, our right-wing intellectuals can also say that socialism cannot succeed even in monkeys.*

*Strangely enough, the name of this beautiful valley as we only find in stories is 'Valley of Hell'. 'A Heaven with a name of Hell!' But the reason for this phenomenon is the presence of this pool in the valley of volcanoes. It is the lava that boils inside the mountains, which causes the hot water boiling from the chest of the snow-capped mountains. Perhaps, that maybe the reason that this valley is called the valley of hell.*

*There is also the news of a mischievous monkey printed on the front page of today's newspapers which suspended electricity supply to thousands of homes. The details of this news are as follows that yesterday in a district of Aomori, around seven thousand houses faced power-cut for three and a half hours. The cause of the power-cut that started at 10 am was a mischievous monkey that entered the grid station supplying electricity to four municipal committee areas and tampered with the wires and transformers, resulting in a circuit break. When the power company officials tried to chase away the monkey, they faced stiff resistance. After an hour-long run in the sun, officials of the power supply company managed to catch the monkey after it got badly tangled in the power lines by itself, but it took three and a half hours for the power company to restore the power suspension. It was reported that the monkey suffered minor injuries on its legs, which was given medical aid and was released in the forest, afterwards.*

*Power outages are uncommon in Japan, even a few minutes of power cut makes news. In such a world, a blackout of three to four hours during working hours is an unusual thing.,*

## *Favorite ride*

*Keeping in view the increasing violations of traffic laws by cyclists and the concern over it, the principled decision to crack down on dangerous cyclists by the police has come out. This is the main headline on page two of Japan's largest newspaper, which has covered half of the above page. The details have been covered, But I Think This news in itself Should be enough to shock you. Moreover, this news clears many things in the mind about the structure and composition of the society. If We go into the reasons for this proposed police operation, The Biggest reason is that almost half of the traffic accidents that occurred in the city of Tokyo during the last one year, i.e. 47%, involved bicycles.*

*Fed up with the increasing lawlessness of cyclists, the Metropolitan Police has decided to toughen the punishments. Four aspects of the severity of the punishments for those who do not follow the traffic rules are being described. The first of them is that of the traffic signal. Instead of a warning, a fine slip will be suspended for those who ignore the red light. The police have decided definitively and categorically that there will be no more warnings and fines. The truth is that cyclists are the darlings of this state and its police. Decisions have been made many times, but in the end Doesn't Change Much*



anyway. Perhaps the aim is to induce people to obey traffic laws more by intimidation. The government's heartfelt wish and first wish has always been that more people should adopt cycling. Perhaps. Government initiatives and social conditions are the reason why there has been an increase of 22% in the number of cyclists this year. The majority of them are between twenty and thirty years of age.

It is not that the increasing number of cyclists is limited to the working class and the white-clad class. The former Minister of Law, who is still a respected member of the Japanese Parliament, last day when he was riding his bicycle to attend a meeting in the Parliament building, there was a lot of publicity. The journalist of a newspaper asked him about his ride. The question and answer style was very interesting. The journalist asked, "Your Excellency! When did you buy this bicycle?" Soon after My Official black colored car as a Minister was Returned, I Bought This black colored bicycle. It is my alternative transport. Very well, It should be clear that alternative transport here means black bicycle instead of black car.

The rising oil prices all over the world, and the continuation of their increase day by day, have affected the lives and lifestyles of people all over the world. Another reason for the increase in the popularity of cycling is Pandemics & Viral Diseases like the corona virus, which made public transport dangerous. Bicycles adopted as a better and cheaper alternative. Bicycles and private individual rides are definitely less likely to get infected with the viruses than public transportation such as trains, buses, taxis, etc. Another priority is the increase in home delivery services, for which bicycles are being used the most. During Previous Years, due to the spread of the corona virus, people have Changed their

*Behavior & reduced eating out by going to restaurants. Home delivery, as popular as it is now, was certainly not even twenty percent of what it was before the outbreak of the epidemic.*

*Talking about cyclists, it would be interesting to mention that electric bicycles are also becoming very popular these days. Just as hybrid cars run on both electricity and petrol, hybrid electric bicycles also have pedals and are charged by electricity. Practically, After a few pedals at the beginning of the journey, it becomes a motorcycle in a way, but the speed does not increase. Practically, it does not travel at the average speed of a motorcycle, but at the average speed of a bicycle. One of the Companies that manufactures such hybrid electric bicycles is Panasonic. Indeed, The same company that manufactures Globally Popular Electronics, which is Based in Osaka, Japan. It is reported that the Panasonic company is helping the police and the government in efforts to reduce bicycle traffic accidents. In order to highlight the importance of awareness and respect for traffic laws among people, Panasonic intends to hold such awareness seminars in the future. Let me tell you that this year, more than one million electric bicycles were sold in Tokyo and its surroundings. Would you Believe that one million electric bicycles sold in just one city, Tokyo, in one year, Conventional Classic Style bicycles certainly Has Many Times More Sales. Buying and selling of old and reconditioned bicycles is in addition to these figures. Keeping in View these facts, it's Not hard to understand how important Bicycles are in this society.*

## *Effects of Tsunami on Children*

*A few years ago, the destruction caused by the earthquake was followed by tsunami in Japan. How did this dreadful disaster affect the children? My friend Mrs. Tasneem Qazalbash from Peshawar asked me this question, while giving the example of children in Afghanistan. The lady said that her daughter was doing a house job as a doctor in Peshawar Hospital. It was common that the wounded were brought to Peshawar Hospital from Afghanistan. There were often many children among these wounded. In most of the cases, there were serious injuries, as the minor injuries were treated within the home in Afghanistan after first aid. It was very strange that those injured children remained entirely silent. They would not be crying at all. My friend's doctor daughter says that when these children were given a drip or injection, they did not move, did not panic, were restless but did not cry. Completely silent! They would be watching all this with open eyes in a calm state. When the female doctors of the hospital watched the wounds, their eyes would dampen, but the children did not protest or cry at all. They observed a complete silence. I was surprised to hear this reflection and questioned about the reason of that dreadful silence. Surprisingly enough, Afghani children had met the same accident as had the Japanese ones. The reason for this surprise was nuclear bombing and tsunami in Japan. The children affected by it were similar to the injured children from Afghanistan. Unbelievably, the children affected by the nuclear bombing and the tsunami also remained silent. For years, they did not utter a word about these events. No protest, no complaint, complete silence! Especially the eyewitnesses and victims of the American nuclear bombing of*

*Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the children did not utter a single word from their tongues about this incident for many decades.*

*. Many children lost their strength of expression forever. But there were many who opened their mouths and described the details of this event after ten years, some after twenty years, and many after fifty years about the American nuclear attacks in August 1945. Lately, an elderly man has written a book about the event seventy years later, in which he presented his memories about the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima. The eyes of a child witnessed how a living city was engulfed by fireballs. The writer saved his life by jumping into the river outside the city, except him, everything else was burnt by the flames of the atomic bomb. There were crying children clinging to the burnt bodies of their mothers, covered in blood and spitting blood.*

*It could be interesting to know that Tsunami is the word of the Japanese language. Later, this process of high sea waves and storms hitting the coast was adopted throughout the world as the same name, "tsunami". The high waves are called tsunamis. There was another problem, more frightening for the people than the tsunami that came to Japan a few years ago i.e. the fear of radiation and possibility of explosion or meltdown of the Fukushima nuclear plant. This nuclear plant was severely hit by the tsunami. It was entirely drowned in the water with the Fukushima city. And the basic cause of this whole incident was the earthquake. The intensity of the earthquake at the seismic scale was 9 degrees. About which Nazr Jan my Pashtoon friend from Baluchistan asked me, "How many CC was this earthquakes? He probably inquired intensity of earthquake in CC because we both are in reconditioned car business and capacity of an engine power is*

*measured in CC. At the very moment of the phenomenal earthquake, we both were sitting in an auction house of reconditioned vehicles. When we were asked to leave the premises of the building and go out some open and higher point, the same was repeatedly announced to evacuate, and all the people were forced to go outside which stands a very unusual thing, and then electricity failed and the earth was swaying.*

*Magnitude of catastrophe was unknown because it was unprecedented. Although the tsunami was limited to a few cities and the issue of nuclear emission occurred within a radius of twenty kilometers, but psychologically, it affected the entire nation and other countries of the world. There were long-lasting effects. Many governmental and non-governmental organizations are still conducting research to assess the effects of homelessness of children. It was a great disaster indeed that had to be faced. There was one thing in common among the children affected by these two tragedies and that was their silence. While facing such great destruction and horror, the children stopped crying. I remember a poem by the Nobel Prize winning poet Gabriela Mistral from Chile. I had the honor to translating her book directly from Spanish to Urdu language. The title of the poem is, "His name is Today".*

*We stand responsible for many mistakes and errors, but our greatest crime is that we have neglected children, the fountain of life. There are many things that require attention, but can wait for us. But children can't wait. This is the time of the formation of his bones, his blood is ready to have circulation for a complete life and his senses are just starting functioning. We cannot answer him by saying "tomorrow", since his name is "today".*

## Mottainai

*Young children are trained in Japan not to leave a single grain of rice as left-over, a lesson taught from childhood; in school and at home, and if there is a little appetite, small amount of food should be put in the plate, but no food should be left uneaten. You will be surprised that there are no leftovers, Even at restaurants as no customer leaves food in the plates. But if there is an extra-amount of food at the table, restaurants provide Customers with a service of take-away, and the customers take home their extra food happily out of their ordered amount. People are so careful at homes that it is unbearable to imagine leaving a portion of food at home in the bowl and plates. We can say that Japanese love the rice most and their second favorite dish is fish, and we can pronounce that rice and raw fish is their national food. As everything is becoming digitalized nowadays, the effects of technology can also be perceived in places of eating and drinking. Family restaurants are now abandoning the outdated style and adopting modern technology.*

*The restaurant where I frequently eat and is a prevalent restaurant chain with a slogan, 'the quality food for everyone at reasonable prices', such is their claim, at least. No waiter comes to take food order anymore here. This is not only the case of a single restaurant chain in one city, most of the branches of almost all family restaurants are adopting the new technology, and the waiters are disappearing from the restaurants slowly, and in their replacement, a slate-like tablet is placed where you choose your favorite food, and place the order on the same screen. After a few minutes, a robot car, with a slight variation of model, will pick up your food and approach your seat to serve. It is interesting to see that if you want to reduce the amount of rice from a normalized rice plate, you will have to pay an extra amount of money for this. The idea comes to mind that you should eat as much as you wish and leave the rest on the plate, and there is no need to pay extra, but such stands impossible for a person who has been raised in this society. If a Japanese feels less hungry or he is on a diet, he will reduce the amount of rice on the plate by paying some extra money. It has become a part of culture that food should not be wasted at any rate; not even a single grain of rice should be left in the bowl, and this is in contradiction of manners and etiquettes. I have heard a narration from the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon him) that his eating utensil was easily recognizable as that used to eat used to be very clean always, and there would never any leftover food in it. The Japanese and we, Pakistanis, have one value in common that Japanese also eat while sitting on the ground traditionally, like us. People who come from the west are often quite tired of this tradition of sitting on the ground in the posture of Buddha. As they struggle while sitting like we do in yoga-style gives a sense*

*that sitting in our style on the ground is also an art. In terms of the cost of edibles, whether you eat in any street corner restaurant in any village, town or busiest metropolitan area, there is not much difference in the cost of lunch between any modest restaurant and a five-star hotel. If somewhere, a cheap lunch is available in 1000 yen, a restaurant in a good hotel would be 2000 yen. Sometimes, it seems to me that Japan is perfect example of a socialist society. It doesn't look much dissimilar if you compare the cost and quality of the lunch of the richest people to the cost and quality of food of a working class person lunch, as it is almost the same. As is the tradition, the lunch is typically brought in tiffin from home. Small children are provided lunch by the school, almost free. If you are a Muslim or a follower of any other religion and you require your child to eat halal, kosher, vegetarian or some other special diet, it would also be arranged by the school administration. You cannot do it by your own self, as the parents are not allowed to send food from home, under any circumstances. Meal times are counted culturally from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. Although is no legal restriction, yet people do not visit anyone or make calls on telephone during meal time. All offices remain open, but the staff alternately eats lunch between twelve and one o'clock during the day.*

*As per my view, it is not the most prominent feature of Japan that there are high-rise buildings, with high-rise buildings and grand and dazzling hotels and restaurants, shopping malls and all kind of game centers. Rather, the real beauty of this country is that the whole thing in these high-rise buildings and glittering surroundings stands within the reach of a common man, almost everything. Obtain ability is not a big deal to me but these things are also within the*



*purchasing power of the man in street, which turns this country remarkable to me. The purpose of this writing is not merely to praise the Japanese, it also intends to draw consideration to the fact that we are adopting the wrong habit of wasting edibles. Although traditionally and culturally, we have been very reverential towards food, but its wastage is growing very common nowadays. In Japanese language, there is a word “Mottainai” meaning, ‘wasteful’.*

*Internationally, a movement is gaining attention with the same name to conserve the resources of the earth. The United Nations and dozens of other Non-Governmental Organizations are working under the banner of “Mottainai”, taking initiative to stop the wastage of food and minimize the trash from this planet.*

## *Reading Habits*

*Books should be an important part of our daily life. However, this is not the case in Pakistan. The books written by even respectable and reliable authors of Pakistan are published but in very small numbers, usually between five hundred to one thousand. When the books get sold, the publisher considers the book a success, and one reason for this small number of publication may be the economic condition of the readers. There are a lot of people who like to read books but can't afford to buy them because they have other urgent requirements and obligations, so, buying a book is still a luxury in Pakistan. As for the matter of other group of the people is concerned, those who have good economic conditions and it's easily affordable for them to buy books, but sadly enough, this group of people do not like to study, usually.*

*In our neighboring country, Iran, almost every household has a library inside just like a kitchen, a library or at least a bookcase is considered an essential part of a home. Even if*

*Dewan-e-Hafiz is already present in the domestic library and another new and better edition of it is available in the market, any of the family member would buy it and bring home. It stands nothing less than a tragedy that in Lahore City, where private libraries used outnumber, milk and yogurt shops have opened in the same buildings now. Importantly, just as the body needs good food, so does the mind. Food of thought can only be provided through study.*

*Some foreigner friends of mine think that the book is an excuse, in fact, Japanese people are rather shy of eye contact, but this point of view is negated by the fact that if one book is published in hundreds in Pakistan, the book of the same worth is published in millions in Japan and other European languages. Take any train or bus, you will see a book in the hand of every second or fourth person which stands a clear proof of the popularity of the book. If we only look at the total number of newspapers, magazines and books printed in Japan, the same is also made evident. It can be said with certainty that every person must buy a book or a newspaper daily on an average.*

*I wish to share this information with readers that the largest center of book sales in the world is located in Tokyo. It has books on more than one million titles. "Khanda" area of Tokyo can also be called the Urdu Bazar of Japan. But the unique thing about this market is that there are numerous second-hand book shops as well. Recently, to increase the sale of second-hand books, an organization has been formed by the booksellers under the auspices of which a booklet has been published which is available at every book stall across the country. Along with the introduction of the booksellers,*

*these shops have been divided in categories related to different walks of life.*

*The aim of this effort is to encourage the young generation towards book-reading, which are rather moving away from books and published materials. It is also important to mention here that the young generation is not moving away from studies, but its fascination with hard copy books and published materials is not the same as it used to be traditionally. The trend of the use of internet for studies online and downloading of soft copy among the new generation is increasing and getting more popular as compared to the achievement hard copy. This drift and the practice of reading books on the computer screen is growing so fast that the dozens of companies are providing the favorite books on the computer screen now where each book is purchased in the name of the respective customer. These companies charge a reasonable fee. Also, a company in the United States introduced digital pads, and the companies providing books on computers has been on the boom. Interestingly, one company digitized 10,000 books in One Month. the Next month number reached 15 thousand, and the Month after 25 thousand books are expected to be digitized with the help of this company. Keep in mind that I'm not talking about the books that are already available in soft copies online. By the way, 40% of the total sales of the book are now in the form of digital copy or soft copies internationally, so we can read them on the computer screen or on smart phones. There is a legal battle going on currently between the publishers and these companies regarding copyright, which is very exciting. But that is not our topic at the moment.*

*Talking about the second-hand booksellers in Tokyo, whose booklet is currently in front of me which includes photos and introductions of twenty smiling booksellers. The author writes, "We want to change the image of the bookseller as a grumpy old man holding a duster in his hand". I visited a similar kind of book shop last evening by chance in a small town, and believe me, there were at least two hundred people, found to be viewing, analyzing and buying books. I have watched the same scene many times before so it stood no surprising, rather it seemed that it was included in the routine of life there. But now, while I was visiting this old bookstore, I thought that if we also adopt this habit of reading and renew the same tradition of friendship with the books, it would play a great role in the evolution of our society by turning it better, prosperous and more tolerant, and we would be able to avoid so many blunders and numerous inconveniences, as opportunities can be created.*

## Quad: Anti-China Military Alliance?

*In general, there are global political, social, economic and military alliances or organizations, their names are not like "The Quad". Something is different because it is not a formal alliance or organization. Ironically, note that today this loose alliance is the topic of discussion on every major international platform. The reason for the news these days in the world media is the recent summit of the "Quad". In addition to US President Joe Biden and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Prime Ministers of Japan and Australia also participated in this important meeting through video communication. Apparently, there is no exaggeration in it, while Chinese government has labelled this meeting and organization as 'anti-China', a reflection of the outdated thinking of the Cold War era and an excuse to halt China's development.*

*In the four-nation alliance established with the aim of ensuring free trade between the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean, at last there will be such a thing that it is being called anti-China. Something is happening, but after all, why is China calling Quad as its opponent? Speciously, Quad's initiative is designed to enable Indo-Pacific nations to track illegal fishing and incursions by Chinese vessels in real time, But it doesn't seem that simple. Even the word "quad" sounds like "squad", which is used in the sense of defense and security. The reality is that, neutral observers are calling it the "Asian NATO" and running a counter program to current Chinese President Xi Jinping's 'One belt one road' initiative.*

*Currently, the term 'anti-China alliance' is not only the voice of the Chinese media, but also the same voice is constantly being heard from the western media as well. It would be fitting in the world to mention the origin and foundation of this forum from where many such questions may be answered. The idea of creating a quad was presented by the assassinated former Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, in 2004. It was 2007 when this idea took shape, and thus, in the corridors of the first Asia-Pacific meeting last year, the heads of the four countries met and this alliance was designed. The truth is that the main purpose of this forum is to block China's economic development and growing strategic influence. This institution of free and open Indo-Pacific vision called FOIP is apparently created for peace and stability in the region, but when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentions the "spirit of QUAD" while addressing the recent virtual meeting, he is clearly saying that they are aiming at limiting China's influence in the Pacific region.*

*As per the definition, the Quad – an informal alliance made up of Japan, the United States, India and Australia claim that the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) would aid the Pacific Islands and countries in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean track against illegal fishing and other illicit activities in their waters in real-time. And although the Quad did not mention China by name, analysts say the initiative is aimed at addressing long-held complaints from countries in the region about allegedly unauthorized fishing by Chinese boats in their exclusive economic zones as well as encroachment by Chinese maritime militia vessels in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.*

*Regarding this Issue, Ramon Pacheco Pardo, A professor of international relations at King's College London Said that China's maritime behavior is a "concern not just for the Quad,*

*but also for countries in Southeast Asia,” “So, I expect many countries are going to join [the IPMDA].”*

*This organization was established in 2007, but after years of slumber, it woke up in 2017. They also wanted to attack China on all fronts as suggested by the imaginative former US President Donald Trump, quite a contrast to Joe Biden. They have decided to advance the foreign policy of Donald Trump. All matters related to the production of the corona vaccine in India and its delivery to the world level had been decided on the platform of the Quad. As per my observation, such an alliance is improving the global status of India. "Quad" has a very important role behind current international role of Indian's global standing. Here I would like to mention one more aspect; as a nation, we need to understand that in this world of free market economy and strategic advantage, well directed nations come closer or departs as per their interests.*

*The mutual foreign relations of independent countries are not the same as individuals. There have always been personal contacts among the people and such relationships or friendships require sacrifices. A person who cannot sacrifice even a slight interest of his own right for the sake of ease and happiness of a friend, is not worthy of any friendship. But if you look at the global political scenarios, the situation looks wholly different from the personal relationships where each country is actively working to protect its own interests. No country holds a permanent friend or permanent enmity. Having common interests and common enemy also brings countries closer, or vice versa. Otherwise, we have seen our prime minister driving the for the rulers of Arab countries in recent years which may be a fruitless act.*

*There are many concrete reasons for Pakistan's friendship with China. The first reason is geography, the second reason*



*being the common enemy, India, and the third reason is the Uighur Muslim population of Xinjiang along the border. The economic aspect is the most important in our bilateral relations. It is the economy which forces the Us and China not to let their foreign bilateral relations deteriorate to a certain extent, as since 2020, the largest trading partner of the US is China. It is important to state that after the recent meeting with the Americans, the Chinese government has issued a statement that the United States and its allies have started a cold war and that China is not weak as supposed to external powers.*

*Whether one may admit or not, the fact is that the whole world, especially the Western world, has benefited greatly from China's economic growth. Let me present a simple example that thirty years ago in Japan, the minimum price of a glass was around a thousand Yen and it was not available easily as well. But today, the same glass is easily available in every city and every village for 100 yen because of China, and most of the things that we use could only be made available at cheap prices by China. In my view, the brightest aspect of China's revolution and economic development is that it has brought seven Hundred million people out of the mire of poverty. You should think that if any system and state relieves fifteen percent of the people of the world from the nuisance of poverty, it becomes admirable. Chinese revolution is miracle, and the Communist Party and the People's Republic of China, both, are acclaimed for this economic miracle.*

*India's priority in the Quad alliance is to bound China's activities in the Indian Ocean and reduce its influence. Ironically enough, Australia, India and Japan are economically dependent on China as it is Japan's largest trading partner. Furthermore, China is number one in Australia's imports and exports, and It is also India's largest trade partner.*

## *A Delegation of love and Peace*

*The general image of Japan in the minds of the Pakistanis is of a modern technological wonderland, but rather of an isolated country. Despite the fact that the number of Pakistanis living in Japan is around ten thousand and the Pakistani community can be said to be one of the most economically strong and energetic among the foreigners living in this country. But unfortunately, there is no literary and cultural contact between the two countries, if we talk generally. In order to encourage the literary and cultural relations between Pakistan and Japan, I, along with some literary and socially active expatriates, decided to establish a Non-Governmental Organization.*

*Accordingly, Pak-Japan Literature and Culture Circle was established few years back by the idea, and We decided to make some factual efforts to make a cultural and literary bridge between the two countries. A solid try was the object, that was the Basic Plan. Pakistanis with some literary and*

*academic tastes and some Japanese people interested in the literature and culture of Pakistan and Urdu Language helped a lot to establish this organization. I'm honored to be the General Secretary of this organization. On our invitation, other institutions and organization with prominent intellectuals, journalists, poets and writers from Pakistan visited Japan. This delegation included the group editor of most circulated newspaper and most viewed news channel Mr. Mahmood Sham, a prominent author, diplomat and educationist Ata ul Haque Qasmi and Amjad Islam Amjad. It will not be an exaggeration to say that these men are the most popular poets and columnists of Pakistan. By the way, the name of Dr.Hashmi was also included in the expected participants of this delegation but he could not come to Japan due to some health issues.*

*This was the first visit of its kind by a Pakistani literary delegation. Before the arrival of this delegation, famous writers like Ibn-e-Insha and Hakeem Saeed had visited Japan and also had written about their travelogues, but all of them had visited individually and none of them had a dialogue with the Pakistani community living in Japan. This delegation started its visit with a talk session at the Islamic Circle of Japan which is situated at Hira Mosque in Tokyo. Mahmood Sham called it a good omen that the first program of the tour was held in the mosque. We had reached the mosque straight from the airport along with the guests. My elder brother Mr. Abid Hussain Abid was also with me. It was night time, so after leaving the mosque, the guests were taken to the hotel to rest.*

*The Tokyo International Forum and discussion was the most important program of the first day, in which, apart from Pakistani writers and audience, Japanese students also*

*participated. Local poets included Dr. Fakhr-ul-Haq Noori, Abdul Rehman Siddiqui, Sulaiman Bukhari, Mazhar Danish, Shohe and I also recited some poems. The Mushaira was presided over by Imtiaz Ahmed Gondal who was the President of Pakistan Association in Japan. I and my friend Mazhar Danish conducted the management of this beautiful event. After this session, a discussion was also held in which Mahmood Sham, Ata-ul-Haque Qasmi and Amjad Islam Amjad Participated, besides some local intellectuals who are attached to Urdu language development at Tokyo University Heroji. Katauka and Nishi Mura, Shohai, also expressed their views. They expressed their views on Pakistan, Mr Shohai said, "I like your joint family system. In which everyone helps all other. People of Japan should learn good things from Pakistan and other eastern countries instead of following America and West."*

*It should be remembered that these teachers and students expressed their views in Urdu rather than in Japanese. At the end of the ceremony, the Press Attaché of the Pakistani embassy in Japan, also spoke, Though he spoke a bit arrogantly and complained me, why I had not spoken some highly flattering words about their diplomatic mission in Japan? Later, a party was held in a five-star hotel in the northern coastal city of Toyama, Japan. The main reason for the party was that after Greater Tokyo Area, the largest number of Pakistanis live in this city. Almost all the Pakistanis living in this city are involved in the reconditioning of vehicles and export of used cars to Russia, while buyers from Russia would come in ships by themselves. These ships usually would bring wood with them and carry vehicles on their way back. Apart from Mahmud Sham, Ata-ul-Haque Qasmi and Amjad Islam Amjad, Dr. Fakhrul Haque Noori, the teacher of the*

*Urdu Department of Osaka University, and other guest poets also participated in this Mushaira and were much applauded.*

*The Osaka University has been a place of learning for the centuries. This great institution has an Urdu Department Circa 1930. They also invited our delegation, and the program was organized by Soyamany who is an Urdu Language Teacher and ex-Urdu Student in Punjab University Lahore, along with Matsumura, Head of the Urdu Department. A large number of students participated in this program and all of them were wearing Pakistani clothes, shalwar kameez and Japanese students were looked with an envy at this gorgeous Pakistani attire. A student Nakamura played tabla and a few students performed popular Pakistani songs 'Jaan-i baharan, rashik-i chaman, ghancha dahan shireen badan, ae jaan-i man'. After that, Amjad Islam Amjad, Mahmood Sham and Ataul-Haque Qasmi expressed their views. At the end, a mushaira was held in which, apart from the guest poets, I had the honor to speak at this historic event.*

*Daito Bunka University Saitama organized a meeting with Japanese scholars which was organized and coordinated by Hiroji Kitao Ka who had been teaching Urdu at Tokyo University for almost half a century. This university maintains close ties with Punjab University and there is an exchange of Urdu students between the two universities every year. Apart from this, Pakistani teachers are also performing teaching duties in the field of Urdu. The last visit of the intellectuals from Pakistan was a visit to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, organized by Professor Yotka Asada. Students performed a stage drama in Urdu language on the subject of 'International Peace'.*

*At the end of the visit, a poetry recitation session was held at Al-Karam Restaurant, in which a large number of Pakistanis participated. The dinner was organized by Siddique Restaurant, a famous Pakistani restaurant chain in Japan. According to Mr. Qasmi, the last mushaira was "House Full "The neutral Pakistanis also had the same impression that there was a record number of people in all the gatherings held in honor of this delegation.*

*This visit of Pakistani writers was the first of its kind by any Pakistani literary delegation in the history of Japan, which was hosted by three major universities in Japan where Urdu is taught, and was also of great interest to Pakistanis living in Japan, and an ample opportunity for participation was provided, large-scale demonstrations and talks were organized in three cities. Amjad Islam Amjad has also written a travelogue about this visit. By reading this travelogue published under the name "Let's go to Japan", you can know in detail the activities and feelings of these intellectuals from our country.*

*Hosting this delegation was an unforgettable and beautiful experience for me. In his book, Amjad Sahib has put the crown of the organization and success of this historic visit on my head, but I think that the hard work of my friends and comrades was much more than me. This effort was made by us keeping in view the better relations between Pakistan and Japan, though humble, is still a source of pride for me. According to legendary poet Ahmed Faraz, to whom I had the honor of hosting as well,*

*'T's better than complaining against dark night,*

*To kindle a light of thy own share.'*

## *Hachiko*

*Study of human history shows that dog is the first among the creatures who left the forest life forever in the love of Human. The dog and the horse left the forest in such a way that they never returned to their ancestral habitat and made the human settlements their permanent new home. In the Holy Quran, there is a story of Ashab-e-Kahaf or Seven Sleepers. a group of people who had a dog namely Qatmir, was with them while they slept in a cave for centuries, This incident is also a proof that the dog has been the companion of mankind for the last thousands of years. It is proved by the study of ancient ruins of Indus Civilization as the traces found in Harappa and Mohanjo Daro show that five thousand years ago this animal left the forest and settled in human settlements in the Indus Valley.*

*All this Prelude is to tell you the story of Hachiko, A famous Japanese dog showing his love to his owner and carved made into a statue and installed in Tokyo University lately. "Hachiko" Is a Legend in Japan. Before going into the details of the unveiling ceremony of this statue, it is important to describe that why "Hachiko" is so important even after eighty years of his death? Hachiko is so significant that his statue is installed in the agriculture department of the most prestigious university in Japan to celebrate his anniversary, which is not the first or only statue of this dog. At the railway stations of many cities, you will find a statue of "Hachiko". Film buffs will surely be familiar with this dog, because a popular Hollywood blockbuster movie has been made on it in which the famous Oscar-winning actor Richard Gere played the hero. The film is based on the life of this dog "Hachi".*

*The story of loyalty of the dog to its owner dates back to 1924, when Tokyo University's Professor Ueno bought a brown and white dog. He names him Hachiko, who was about a year old. Professor Ueno was considered one of the founders of modern irrigation systems and rural development in Japan. One fine evening, when he returned home after teaching at the university, he found his dog at the nearby local railway station waiting for him. the dog came to greet him. then it became a daily routine that when that professor Ueno would be back from the university to the nearest station from his home, he would find "Hachiko " waiting for him at railway station. Then both of them would walk home together. This routine lasted for a year. The professor died unexpectedly in 1925. But his pet dog "Hachiko" waited for his master at Shibiya station in Tokyo for the next nine years, nine months and fifteen days, and every day at the time of the arrival of the train, a time when that professor used to return home, Hachiko would become anxious to see his loved*



*professor. At first, the general attitude of the people towards "Hachiko" was indifferent, but gradually they began to know that Hachiko was waiting for his late owner. In 1932, a young dog researcher published an article about Hachiko in Japan's most respected and widely circulated newspaper. The race of this typical Japanese dog is known as "Akit" which was of "Hachiko". After the publication of first article on it, many more newspaper articles appeared and were published the story of Hachiko. He had become a symbol of loyalty during his life. During World War II, "Hachiko" was used as a metaphor for loyalty to the Emperor.*

*The ten-year wait for his master's ended with the death of Hachiko's in 1935. This extraordinarily loyal dog, who lived for almost twelve years, is preserved in the National Museum of Science in Tokyo. Every year a memorial event is held in his memory at Shibiya station. Outside the station, there is a large bronze statue of Hachiko which was damaged in World War II. Then the son of the artist who had created the first statue, created a new statue of Hachiko in 1948. That so far stands on the station. The entrance to the station is also named "Hachiko Gate". In the recent ceremony, five hundred people attended the unveiling of the statue of Hachiko and that professor at Tokyo University. A volunteer who participated in the event said,*

*"We hope that this statue becomes a symbol of unfathomable love between humans and animals."*

## *Bad Omens*

*It was the month of August when 32 years ago today that a Pakistan International Airlines, full of passengers, flight took off from Gilgit Airport for Islamabad. This ill-fated flight never reached its destination. It went missing until today. No clue could be found whether it was eaten by the sky, or was swallowed by the ground. While reading the story of this flight, I stopped after reading the mention of flight number 404 and the 54 passengers on board. The reason for this is the concept of chaos and death is associated with the number four in Japan. It would be easier to understand and would become clearer if it is narrated in this way that any flight having number four in it stands out question in Japan. Normally, it is believed that science and technology are the antithesis of superstition. As faith progresses, spirituality strengthens and superstition fades. Likewise, if the technology spreads in any society, the concept of supernatural phenomenon becomes less and less relevant to daily life. But*

*it seems vice versa in this part of the world. One of these ancient beliefs of bad omens and concepts are related to the number four, here.*

*You don't need to worry if you come to Japan for tourism or on other purposes and find while standing in an elevator the fourth floor of a multi-story building missing. It just means that the floor after the third floor is called the fifth floor to avoid confusion and bad spirits. Predominantly, hospitals generally do not have a fourth floor or a ninth floor. The number 9 is also considered to be a symbol of misfortune or bad luck. But Numbers 9 is considered less fatal than 4 in Japanese society. Since Japanese is a pictorial language and is traditionally written with a brush instead of a pen, i.e., in literary language, with a nib, it has the image of the number four and the letter of death. Diagram and pattern of Digit 4 and 'Death' stands same.*

*That is why the four called "Yun" for the same reason is tried to pronounce and called "Shi", Instead, the former is also used for death. Living in this society, you cannot avoid these social concepts. It is quite possible that you Present a gift to someone with great Affection and they will consider it as a wish for a painful death. If so, the whole relationship will be possibly abandoned. Here is a suggestion for foreigners visiting Japan, never give a gift to a Japanese person that contains four or nine digits, with number Four, definitely not. The number of flowers you want to present to anyone here, should not be exactly four, or, mark my words, you will regret it. As number four stands for death, the number 9 is considered to be a forerunner of suffering. An internationally renowned electronics and I.T. company Apple, introduced the iPhone 10 after iPhone 8. Why? Just think, why the iPhone 9 was not presented?*

*The numbers seven and eight are symbols of happiness. The concept of seven being associated with good fortune comes from Buddhism, and since the number eight does not end anywhere, it means 8 quamrit, endless life and never-ending happiness. It is considered a sign of Eternity and Life. Like the rest of the world, Japan also has organized crime groups known as the 'yakuza'. Petty crime and individual criminals are rare. Criminals are involved in organized crime in the form of the mafia. These syndicates are commonly called "Yakuza". Their car number is usually 4444. The purpose of this number is to insult death with the declaration, 'I do not fear death, but Distribute death myself'.*

*This underworld is such an interesting topic that it requires a separate article, I wish to write about it in detail at some other time. For my part, I was exposed to this Bad Omen stereotype when I just moved here. I decided to rent a mansion at a high rise apartment building. Reason was, a multi-storied building considered safer and more suitable for a single person. The third floor was a sub-flat and the fifth floor above it, and there was not a number four floor in this building. I needed a parking lot to park my car. I spoke to the property dealer about that and he said that any of the parking lot in that building was not empty. I enquired out from some other dealer as well, but he also repeated the same answer. Anyhow, a real estate agent reluctantly said to me, "Do not panic, I have a parking lot but it's number is four." I agreed to accepted that.*

*For the next ten years, I parked my car at the number four parking lot and still I'm doing Fine. Very like Japan, the number four is considered a sign of death and ominous in China also. People related to CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor) and who are doing business with China also know*

*that superstition holds a very place in Chinese society. And they will never build a shop or open any other business at the T-Junction of the road, if they really want to run their business.*

*People with the understanding of Chinese Culture or having business with Chinese people usually tell us that if you offer any Chinese a business at the T-Junction Roads, he will never accept it, even for free, since it is generally believed that the bad luck would follows. Ironically, in my hometown i.e. Mian Channu, the busiest business center is a T-Junction on the G.T. Road, even called a T-Square. Many of my friends have shops there and almost all of them are making a good fortune there.*

*Europe is considered the most secular continent on the planet earth but the whole of Europe considers the number 13 to be inauspicious and unlucky. In the Hindu religion, broken mirrors and glasses are considered the sign of bad luck and it is considered Bad Omen to keep them in the house. Even if the hands of the clock stop, they are also considered to be attracting bad luck.*

*In my observation, Indians are the most superstitious in the sub-continent. Being superstitious is not confined to any particular country or faith, for instance in Russia, despite the end of Communism and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the trend of returning to religion has not been developed yet. Even then, there exist many superstitions. Let me tell you a personal experience that I am in a habit of whistling with my tongue since my school days, and if any of my customer or my staff from Russia sees me whistling especially in the office, they forbid me and Ever warn me, "No money will come. Don't Whistle, as all the good Luck will go away; don't whistle*

*otherwise the business will be destroyed.” One aspect of superstition common to Japan and Pakistan is of the black cat. If a black cat crosses the road, it is considered a sign of bad luck. In the past, it would happen so that if a black cat would cross the way, the people would abandon their intention to travel.*

*Captivatingly, Japan's largest private courier company 'Yamato' has a black cat monogram, generally called 'Black Cat' company, as its monogram is a black cat with its black baby in its mouth. That is the distinguishing feature of this postal delivery company is that it crosses everyone's path, but no one can cross its path, as whoever crosses its path will be responsible for its own loss. There are examples galore which words cannot cover. If a cat dies in your car, its price gets reduced by half, as, it is important to mention while selling a car that an animal has died in it. In case of Real State, especially while selling a house or an apartment, it is very important to inform the buyer that if someone had committed suicide there, and hiding such an information is a crime. And the people try to get rid of such houses and cars by selling them at cheap prices.*

Amir Bin Ali has Reinvigorated the Urdu poetry. He has always been a globetrotter filled with the passion for travelling. Wandering all around the globe in Search Of New Sights & Experiences. He has Written four poetry Books & Two Travelogues along with his Books Of Interviews With Celebrities. He has translated several Nobel Prize laureates poets, as he is Expert in Seven international Languages

(Daily Times Book Review)



Amir Bin Ali is Residing in Japan from last many years and a frequent international traveler. He is an optimistic writer. It was unearthing for me when Amir Bin Ali mentioned that the national flower of Japan, which is cherry has its origins from the Himalayan mountains near Islamabad in Pakistan.

With the passage of time its growth spread in other parts of India, America, Canada, Korea and Japan. In Japan it is called Sakora in local language. Flowers on the trees appear only during spring and the tradition of watching these flowers is called "Hanami".

Maybe, after reading this book, a few people will decide that we should learn something from Japan to start the journey towards progress.

(Express Tribune Book Review)



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