

Japanese workshop opens at Grand Museum

Advanced photography course for conservators

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EGYPT and Japan already enjoy deep and wide-ranging relations, which are growing stronger through many joint projects, the most important of which is building the Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM).

"Japan has been supporting capacity development for the conservators of the Grand Egyptian Museum and its Conservation Centre for the past two years, as well as providing ODA [official development assistance] of 35 billion yen, or \$300 million, for the construction of the new museum," Japan's Ambassador to Egypt Kaoru Ishikawa said yesterday at the opening ceremony of a workshop on 'Photographic Documentation for the Grand Egyptian Museum Conservators'.

"It is a pleasure to see here some good combinations," he added, referring in particular to the combination of Egypt and Japan.

Egypt has the world oldest civilisation; Japan has the world's oldest conservation centre," he added.

The other combination, the Ambassador added, is man and technology.

"I am delighted to see here that our Egyptian friends are being trained in



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High-tech equipment: Japan's Ambassador to Egypt Kaoru Ishikawa (R) at the opening ceremony of the workshop held at the Grand Egyptian Museum's Conservation Centre yesterday.

Japanese high-tech photographic techniques and the Japanese method of good organisation.

"I say this because conservation is a multifaceted task, which needs good organisation, high technology, dedication and meticulous attention," he told the gathering at the museum site, 2km from the Giza Pyramids. Work on the

new museum should be completed by 2013.

Photography plays an important role in the museum's activities, for example for making inventories, documentation research, recording conservation and preparing descriptions of exhibits.

The objective of the workshop,

which started yesterday and runs until March 25, is to enable conservators working at the Conservation Centre to take high-level photographs for the documentation for museums.

This training course will teach participants a series of advanced techniques and the whole process of photography, such as functions of cameras and surrounding equipment, lighting methods and digital image processing.

Up to now, according to Ambassador Ishikawa, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has conducted workshops on the conservation of various materials such as paper, textiles and metals, as well as fumigation, here in Egypt, with over 80 conservators attending these workshops.

"Last year, 11 Egyptian conservators also visited Japan for longer-term training on textiles and equipment for conservation, as well as packaging and transportation," the Ambassador added.

"Photography has much more visual power than any other form of documentation and it is crucial not only for conservation work but also research, transportation and exhibitions," he concluded.