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JAPANESE LANGUAGE THE THIRD MOST POPULAR LANGUAGE IN USM



USM, PENANG, 8 November 2016 - The strong and cordial collaboration between Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and The Japan Foundation Kuala Lumpur (JFKL) since the early 1980s has popularised the Japanese Language among USM students making it the third most popular language at USM after Bahasa Malaysia and English.

USM Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Industry and Community Network), Professor Dr. Abdul Rahman Mohamed said that the University has always taken cognisance of the importance of languages towards developing a well-rounded individual, nation building as well as removing international barriers for enhanced diplomatic and economic networking.



"Besides Bahasa Malaysia and English, acquisition of a third language would always give an individual an added advantage and a competitive edge in one's career pursuit both locally and internationally," said Abdul Rahman, who represented the USM Vice-Chancellor in officiating the USM SAKURA Week 2016 organised by the School of Languages, Literacies and Translation (SoLLaT) in collaboration with JFKL here today.

He added that the organisation of SAKURA Week 2016 is a testament to the strong bond between USM and JFKL and their joint efforts to increase the number of university students taking up Japanese language as a foreign language which is being offered at SoLLaT.

Currently there are about 500 students studying Japanese Language at SoLLaT USM.



Meanwhile, JFKL Director, Koichi Horikawa hoped that the three-day event would be able to attract its targeted audience and participants, namely the Japanese Language learners at USM, primary and secondary school students and members of the public who are interested to know more about the Japanese Language and culture.

"We are proud that USM is one of the five members of the Malaysia Sakura Network, and we will continue to support and assist USM by providing grants for Japanese language education research and also for activities that promote Japanese language learning and culture among USM students," he said.

He added that JFKL has also been working closely with several schools in USM, for example with the School of Social Sciences on the Japanese Studies Summer Institute Programme.

At the ceremony also, JFKL donated another 40 Japanese language books of various genre to SoLLaT's resource centre, to add to the rich collection of such books that have been contributed over the years for the reading pleasure of the students at SoLLaT.

According to the Dean of SoLLaT, Professor Dr. Tengku Sepora Tengku Mahadi, the objectives of the SAKURA Week 2016 are noble in that it is hoped that by being exposed to the Japanese language and culture, participants will develop a greater understanding and appreciation in their Japanese language teaching and learning endeavours.

"At the same time, Japanese language educationists and classroom practitioners will be able to build a common platform towards developing Japanese Language education in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia (namely Perlis, Kedah and Penang) and taking it to greater heights.



"It is also hoped that by gathering teachers and learners of the Japanese language under one roof in this event, there will be an active exchange of ideas and experiences that will be mutually beneficial for all," said Tengku Sepora.

She also look forward to more fruitful undertakings with JFKL in the future to raise intercultural awareness that will contribute towards bridging gaps and fostering closer international ties.

Among the exciting activities lined up were Ikebana contest, sushi making, origami making, calligraphy writing, yukata wearing, Yosakoi dance workshop, speech contest, J-Pop Karaoke contest, talk on Japanese culture, and Japanese film screening.

Also present were the Consul-General of Japan in Penang Kiyoshi Itoi and the Honorary Consuls of Denmark and France.

Text: Tan Ewe Hoe / Photo: Mohd Fairus Md. Isa



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