

Very good afternoon,

It's my great pleasure to co-organise an event of the Japan's most authentic artistic culture with this esteemed University, American University in Dubai. First, I thank you very much, Prof. Maruyama, for your enthusiastic cooperation and creative assistance.

Today's main theme is "Washi", a Japanese traditional craft of hand-making paper. Take a look! This is a typical example of Washi use, a fan. It's useful not only for fine painting but also for long years of use as a tool. As an another good example especially for you, students in Department of Architecture, a masking tape sounds familiar to you, as a Washi made tool.

Today, I have a great privilege to tell you, Washi culture, as a Japanese paper-making tradition, was listed on UNESCO world intangible cultural heritage 5 years ago. Japan has developed its own distinctive paper-making tradition since more than a thousand years ago. Washi production rests on a huge tradition.

Washi is strong and long-lasting. It's because Washi is made of long wooden fibres from tree barks. Each long fibre is intricately bound, thus creating it durable of tear-resistant. This is a distinctive difference with any other papers which are made mainly from wooden tips. Washi also involves neither bleach nor any chemicals in its production process, which means, first, Washi does never deteriorate its colour under sunlight, and, second, it's human friendly.

That's why Washi is not only good for writing and drawing. Also, It has been used for home interiors such as screens, room dividers, sliding doors and lanterns.

These special characteristics such as long-lasting, highly tear-resistance and none colour deterioration make Washi suitable for umbrella, handicraft, wrapping paper and even art restoration. A few months ago, when I visited the Quran Museum in Sharjah, they use Japanese Washi for restoration of the hundreds years-old Quran. Its strength and durability have also made it an essential element in many art preservation projects, including the restoration of Vatican frescos. Even original music scores composed by Bach and Mozart are restored by Washi paper.

In addition, Washi has represented one of the best art canvas materials. The Dutch painter Rembrandt experimented with Washi, hundreds years ago. Most famous artists Picasso and Chagall were also Japanese paper lovers for their painting. Washi is really a state of art cultural heritage.

Today, we offer you a Japanese government's official cultural lecture. "Japan Brand Program". On this program, Japan's most prominent Washi expert, Mr. Yoshinao Sugihara, makes a special presentation focusing on every aspect Washi interior arts.

I hope everyone deepens the knowledge of Japanese magical craft, Washi paper, which is derived from rich Japanese traditional culture.

Thank you very much.