

Mak -History student wins the Japanese 2022 MEXT scholarship

Makerere University student Wycliff Watama has won a fully funded research scholarship and will be leaving in a months' time to study at Hiroshima University in Japan. Watama won a scholarship of the Japan Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports Science and Technology (MEXT) scholarship 2022.

Watama holds a Bachelor of Arts in Education of Makerere University and majored in History. He joined Makerere University in (2016-2019) and graduated in 2020 with a First-Class Honors Degree with a CGPA of 4.44.

After graduating in 2020, Watama started teaching at Universal High School Kisasi, a Kampala suburb where he received a link of registration for a scholarship from his Lecturer, Dr. Charlote Mafumbo. Dr. Charlotte Mafumbo is the Ag. Head, Department of History, Archeology and Heritage Studies.

After undergoing the registration, application and screening process, Mr. Watama Wycliffe emerged winner. He will be pursuing a Masters degree researching on the History of Uganda and Japan relations and how it has impacted the development of Uganda since World War II.

Watama was one of the new beneficiaries that was speaking on the study opportunities in Japan during day 3 of the JICA Chair and Japan Week organized by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences to celebrate the 100 years of Makerere University's service to society.

The weeklong event running from (22-25th March 2022) was held under the theme, "Learning from Japan's unique experience of development-Developing Future leaders in Uganda" hosted at the Auditorium in the Central Teaching Facility 2.

Day 3 was characterized by special lectures on Uganda - Japan Bilateral relations with a special focus on higher education since 1962 presented by Dr. Charlote Mafumbo. Other presentations included an Introduction of JICA's Cooperation in Uganda presented by Mr. Ivan Muhame and a special session of the MEXT Scholarship Program and others study opportunities in Japan.

Day 3 was graced by the Deputy Head of Mission of Japan Mizumoto Horii as Chief Guest, Dr. Daimon Midori, Study in Japan Coordinator, for the Global Network Project for Sub-Saharan Africa, the Japanese and Ugandan scholarship alumni, as well as Makerere university staff and Graduate students.

Watama shared how he managed the application process to win the scholarship while Mr. Allan Ochieng from CoNAS -an alumnus of the MEXT Scholarship (2008-2011) shared his study experiences in Japan.

"I got connected to my lecturers who showed me how to progress. I was guided how to construct a statement. As a graduate teacher, I had a conviction that a degree is not enough, my lecturers showed me another definition of life and studies.

You have to be determined that after attaining your first degree, it is not enough, have a mission and look for ways of nurturing your vision and how to realize it.

When I watched seven chapters of Japan devastation during the world war and how it emerged a strong power, I was inspired. And I was exposed to the Japanese opportunities I got interested in applying and I am on my final step in less than a month, I will be flying to Japan”. Watama narrated.

Mr. Allan Ochieng informed prospective beneficiaries that he enjoyed studying in Japan at Osaka university

“ I spent 6 months learning Japanese language and culture as part of the program, was attached to a Japan host family whom I met occasionally to help me cope and after that, I was enrolled in the university for a Master of Science in Advanced Biotechnology.

It was great. Put it in yourself that alongside studies as your primary objective, you need to have fun. On weekends we went for tours, to temples, dressed in Japanese wear, went for canoeing and had to travel in bullet trains and outdoor recreation”. He explained.

The Chief Guest of the day and Deputy Head of Mission of Japan Mizumoto Horii expressed happiness that so many students had gathered for the information session with interest in Japan.

“In collaboration with the ministry of Education and Sports in Uganda, the embassy has annually nominated Ugandan students to study in Japanese universities on fully funded scholarships and so far 100 students have benefitted from this Japanese Government(MEXT) scholarships”, Mr. Mizumoto said.

Mizumoto Horii also reported that there were quite a number of MEXT scholars in Makerere community whose specialization spans over science and engineering to fine art, humanities and education.

“It is always my pleasure to take part in this program as an embassy member. I enjoy meeting prospective scholarship scholars as well as returning scholars. In the past two years under the pandemic, we were not able to hold a gathering for these scholars, however, today, we are resuming the tradition of scholarship scholars gathering in person”, he added.

The day was also marked with serving all the participants with the Japanese dishes.

**Compiled by
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