

Report of the Explorer Program

Year of Enrollment: 2013

Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies

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I visited the Kingdom of Jordan from July to September, 2013 thanks to the explorer program. I visited there for three aims: practicing my linguistic skill of Arabic, collecting Arabic books, and exchanging opinions with researchers in Jordan.

As to practice of Arabic, I registered to the language center of the University of Jordan from April to the beginning of August, and to the modern language center, a private school, from the middle of August to the middle of September. In the classes, I brushed up my knowledge about basic grammar and developed my vocabulary. Not only from the texts distributed from the centers, I also studied with daily newspapers. I talked a lot with local people, which enabled me to develop my skills of talking Arabic.

Second, I collected Arabic books. Since I stayed in Amman, the capital of Jordan, I went to two districts in Amman which a number of bookstores located: downtown and al-Abdali district. I bought 45 books mainly of politics in contemporary Egypt. There were a number of books about the "Arab spring." This fact implies a high concern about the contemporary political situation in the Middle East.

Third, I had an opportunity to have a talk with a researcher in the University of Jordan. Dr. Walid, a specialist on Jordanian politics in the center for strategic studies in the university, willingly spared me time for discussing not only the socio-political situation in Jordan, but also the current situation in the Middle East area.

From July to September 2013, during my stay in Jordan, political situation in the Middle East was in tense. In Egypt, President Morsi was driven out of office; Syria was struggling with civil war and the international society was divided over the military intervention in the conflict. The experience to spend in the Middle East in the midst of the situation made me feel the large impact of international relations toward the Middle East. Countries in the Middle East are mostly under political difficulties. To comprehend the difficulties, it is indeed important to have an eye on domestic situation, but at the same time we should study international relations between the area and other areas. This is the largest lesson I learned through the visit.