

## 1,000 Japanese tourists arrive in Aden

Abdul Wahid Muhammed For Yemen Times

**Y**emeni traditions and customs exert a pull on all foreigners visiting the country. At a welcome party organized by the Yemeni Women's Union for 1,000 Japanese tourists visiting Aden on (I will ask about the date and write it), one of the tourists adopted the role of a Yemeni bride. Donning a traditional Yemeni wedding dress and ancient jewelry with Arabian jasmine and screw pine, the Japanese bride followed the traditions of Aden, even putting henna on her hands.

The Japanese tourists visited Yemen as a part of a 12-hour "Peace Boat" voyage. Peace Boat is a Japan-based, international, non-governmental and non-profit organization that works to promote peace, human rights, equal and sustainable development and respect for the environment. It seeks to create awareness and action based on affecting positive social and political change in the world.

The Japanese expedition was almost exclusively women, and included trips to numerous sites throughout Aden including the archeological museum. It involved people of various ages from different fields, including teachers, students and activists from civil-society organizations.

The Japanese's visit with the Yemeni Women's Union was a part of the tour. The liberal movement of Yemeni women was one of the issues of most interest to the tourists. Fatima Murisi, director of the union, let the Japanese know that she hoped they would convey what they had seen of the situation of women in Yemen. She talked about obstacles Yemeni women have overcome to reach their current level, occupying important political positions in the government, Parliament and Al-Shura council.

During the welcome party, kindergarteners from Al-Manar sang various songs, however, the song that the tourists were most enthusiastic about and actually sung along to was "The Arab Dream to be United." The tourists enjoyed their stay in Yemen even though it was short. "Though it was short, but it was sweet," Rubyn Lin commented.



1000 Japanese tourists, most of them are women; visit the Yemeni Women Union in Aden.



A Japanese lady is wearing the traditional clothes of Adeni bride.

Peace Boat departed from Yokohama, Japan on June 9, 2007 and will return on September 20, 2007. The voyage will visit 22 ports, including first-time stops in Mikonos, Greece, and Copenhagen, Denmark, and the first port call in many years to the port of Aden, Yemen. The Peace Boat will take an equatorial course around the world, passing through the Suez and Panama canals.

Peace Boat's call to New York City coincides with Nagasaki Day (August 9), the day which commemorates the dropping of the atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Nagasaki. Exchange and action programs will be organized with partnering U.S. civil-society organizations, fostering understanding between Japanese and Americans regarding their historical connection and working together to build a better future. The voyage will also dock in Costa Rica, which will give participants the chance to compare the country's current war renouncing the nation's constitution with Japan's very own pacifist constitution. Many other programs onboard and in port will focus on issues related to the environment, sustainable development and peace.