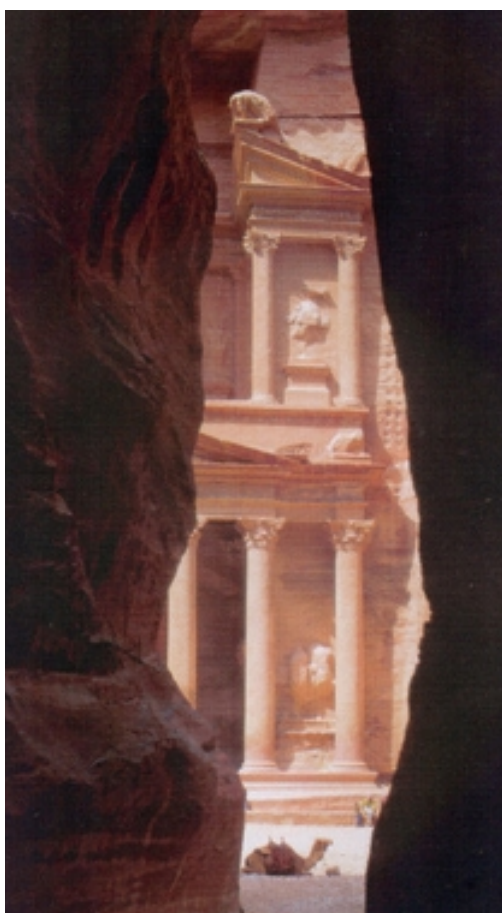


## Before and after coming to Niigata

Department of Orthodontics: Bashar Alkhamrah



A picture of Petra, where the city entrance can be seen, just before it ends, where you can see the most beautiful part of Petra, the Treasury

My name is Bashar Alkhamrah. I came from Jordan. in October 1997, and studied Japanese for a short time. After which I began my study from April 1998 at the Department of Orthodontics, Niigata University. Speaking a little bit about Jordan, it is a land steeped in history. It has been a home to some of mankind's earliest settlements and villages, and many relics derived from the world's great

civilizations can still be seen today. As the crossroads of the Middle East, the lands of Jordan and Palestine have served as a strategic nexus connecting Asia, Africa and Europe. Thus, since the dawn of civilization. Jordan's geography has given it an important role to play as a conduit for trade and communications, connecting east and west, north and south. Jordan continues to play this role today. Because of its centralized location, the land of Jordan is a geographic prize which changed hands many times throughout antiquity. But since the mid-seventh century AD, the land of Jordan has remained almost continuously in the hands of various Arab and Islamic dynasties. You can see the fingerprints of those people by visiting the different places in Jordan. Amman, Jordan's present capital, has the old roman theatre standing side by side with the new buildings. Petra, in the picture of Petra, where the city entrance can be seen, just before it ends, where you can see the most beautiful part of Petra, the Treasury south is the ancient city



Taking part in introducing my country to elementary school students, who were very keen to listen to what I said

carved in stone which goes back to 2000 years before, and is still existing in spite of the many earthquakes previously taken place. Of many other relics extending everywhere on the soul of Jordan. I have chosen a picture of Petra, showing both the entrance and the Treasury, which is the most famous and beautiful part of Petra.

After I had graduated from the National University of Jordan in July, 1995. I was working at a medical centre as a general dental practitioner. My work extended everyday from 8:30 in the morning to 5 o'clock in the evening. After that, it was a time for myself and my family. This included shopping, going to the gym, meeting friends or participating in meetings of the dental assembly. Social relationship in my country is characterized by very strong family ties, where keeping in touch with relatives is an important part. The image which I and other Jordanians hold to Japan, is an image full of respect and admiration. It is a country that stood and built itself to be an economic power within a short time. I was curious to know what the reason was, and I had the chance to witness it with my own eyes.

What did I expect to see in Japan and Niigata? A country with a special land, unique people, customs and habits. A land, with a beautiful nature and amazing architecture.



A picture with a friend, while climbing Kakuda mountain here in Niigata

People famous to be hard working, disciplined, committed to their jobs. I came with a lot of expectations, and was not disappointed at all. I found a modern society, westernized, but still having its peculiarity, such as Asian spirit, deeply rooted in the society. Respecting the elder, appreciating the habits and customs, things which didn't change with time. The old and the new integrated together, the newest technology side by side with the traditional life style, very clear in the clothes, houses, customs and the different annual festivals. In the university, I found a big department consisting of professors, teachers, and students, but despite being an educational institute. I have felt a very strong family atmosphere dispersed between everyone, expressed in the teaching process and the daily life, and mostly by the willingness to offer help whenever needed.

What am I going to take with me when I go back? For sure my luggage, my books, and a lot of nice memories. The people I have met, the friends I have made, the experience I have had, and of course most importantly, everything I have learned here.