

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> University Administrators' Workshop: *Innovating Universities through Internationalisation*

Opening Remarks

by

**Toshio Yokoyama**

Distinguished Guests, Dear Colleagues from Asian Countries, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is my great honour and pleasure to welcome you here today on the occasion of the 2nd University Administrators' Workshop.

The theme chosen for this workshop is: Innovating Universities through Internationalisation. I am sure you will all agree that this sounds a readily comprehensible theme for us, but if we take into account that every participant gathered here is to represent the administrative side of his or her university's international activities, it is clear that our chosen theme is epoch-making, implying, as it does, that the future of our universities depends on the efforts of their administrators. In this, we have a message that challenges the conventional perception that universities should be governed solely by professors -- an idea formulated perhaps in nineteenth century Germany which was disseminated and took root in many Asian countries, particularly in Japan, around the turn of the nineteenth century. For myself, I do not believe that it is altogether out-dated for professorial bodies to be self-governing. On the other hand, I do believe that the role of university administrators has not always been properly defined, and is often under-estimated, particularly in Japan. For this reason, I feel that the time has come to search for new models of university organisations which encourage academics and administrators to co-operate in increasingly close and creative ways. This applies particularly to the field of international activities.

I emphasise this point because the twenty-first century is already revealing its own characteristics, one of which can be called, 'The Age of Intermediaries', in Japanese, '*Naka-dachi no Jidai*.' In the last century, academics, specialist groups and institutions alike tended to be too absorbed and inward-looking to think about the importance of intermediaries and the creative roles they played. In the minds of conventional scientists, for example, internationalisation too often meant a simple extension of relationships across national boundaries within their own fields. In this new age of profound change, however, when even the notions of Nature and Humanity are under

serious review, any new knowledge obtained, or any new question that comes up in laboratories and in study rooms needs to be considered in terms of its meaning for the entire human and ecological community on this planet. Everyone in academia must, therefore, continue discussions internationally and across disciplines; and for this, cultivate languages accessible across the borders of discipline and nation. It is in such a new global context that each university must open more varieties of intermediary channels and networks than ever before, to prepare for proper dialogues and co-operations not just within world academia but more importantly with society at large. I hope that many of you will share my prospects that this workshop will meet the challenges of this new stage in human history, the significance of which may become equivalent to that of the Renaissance in Europe some five hundred years ago.

The First University Administrators' Workshop held in Kyoto a year ago offered many of its participants their first experience to enjoy extensive discussions with their colleagues from different countries, free from interruption and disturbance from ever-demanding Presidents, Vice-Chancellors or other faculty members. My colleagues were relieved to discover that many of the administrative difficulties they had been facing individually in pursuing international activities were in fact common to us all.

The idea behind this Second Workshop is that we can take a further step forward in asking ourselves how we might support one another with regards to the capability of our respective international offices, or how might we all perform as good intermediaries for international co-operation, enriching our own experience and knowledge in the process of elevating others. This type of endeavour with a broad communal spirit is the very essence of the traditional idea of 'civilised society'.

For this workshop, Kyoto University sent requests for participation to member universities of the Asian group within the Association of Pacific-Rim Universities, as well as member universities of the Association of East Asian Research Universities, and a number of universities in Asia which have MoU agreements with Kyoto University. Similar letters were sent to universities in Japan that have made notable strategic efforts to internationalise their academic activities. The result is that more than twenty eminent universities in Asia have consented to send representatives to Kyoto, and for this, I should like to express my heart-felt gratitude. I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Vice-President, Professor Dr Ernst Rank of Technische Universität München, and Vice-Provost, Professor Dr William B. Lacy of the University of California, Davis, who have kindly agreed to give Guest Speeches before the working sessions. Both Vice-President Rank and Vice-Provost Lacy will, I am sure,

contribute greatly to our Workshop's proceedings, by sharing with us their views with regards to what is happening in and around their esteemed universities, and what kind of ideals or missions are guiding those institutions.

The City of Kyoto, Japan's old capital, has had a history of ups and downs for more than twelve hundred years long, and has, as the result, developed a rich tradition of seeking harmony with the environment. It is my sincere hope that holding this two-day workshop in such a cultural milieu will enhance mutual understanding and friendship among us, and foster chances to promote truly necessary international initiatives from among the participating universities.

Thank you for your kind attention.