

IAUP Closing Address

XVII Triennial 2014, International Association of University Presidents

Closing Address, Toyoshi Satow, President

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As the host of the 17th IAUP Triennial Conference, I am very pleased by its successful conclusion.

Twenty-one years ago, another Japanese city, Kobe, hosted the 10th Triennial Conference. Since that time much has happened in Japan, including a disastrous earthquake in Kobe itself in 1995, and then three years ago an even larger earthquake in Northeast Japan, accompanied by a tsunami that took many lives. The support received from universities around the world in the wake of those disasters has been a tremendous encouragement to those of us who live and work in Japan.

As a result of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami, universities in eastern Japan suffered many casualties and much physical damage. One of my own school's students lost her life to the tsunami as she was spending spring vacation in her hometown. Her mother and grandmother were also carried away by the tsunami. However, having passed through this unprecedented trial, Japanese students have learned the importance of supporting each other. Many universities created new human networks and many students, faculty, and staff members began to provide support for the restoration efforts, support that continues today.

Looking back upon this Triennial Conference, I believe that both new members and old enjoyed the Welcome Reception on June 11, which began with the ceremonial breaking of a cask of sake. At the Opening Ceremony on June 12 we were honored with the presence of the Honorable Shinichi Yamanaka, Vice Minister of the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, who delivered a Welcome Address, and of the Honorable Dr. Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, Under-Secretary-General for Public Information at the United Nations, who reads the message of

encouragement from Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, whose official duties unfortunately prevented him from attending the Conference as originally planned.

The Plenary Session and Concurrent Session took place over the space of three days to the benefit, I think, of all in attendance. As host, I am particularly pleased that we were able to include a new student-organized session, “Voices of the Future.” No doubt all of you have your own impressions regarding the individual sessions, so I will make no attempt to summarize them. But I do wish to express my thanks to the many partner organizations that lent their support and cooperation this time again, including the UN, UNAI, UNU, IIE, AAU, ACE, and others too numerous to name.

For the next three years, the IAUP Presidency will reside in Japan, where I take over as president from Michael Adams and Neal King. Over the course of my term, I intend to support the IAUP’s many ongoing initiatives while at the same time endeavoring to develop them into even more effective agents of change.

Following my term, the Presidency will move to Europe, and the next Triennial will be held three years from now in Vienna. Dr. Kakha Shengelia has been chosen as our new President-Elect, Dr. Gerald Reisinger as Secretary-General-Elect, and Dr. Elizabeth Davis-Russell as Treasurer-Elect.

On June 12 the IAUP presented the first “J. Michael Adams Award” in absentia to His Excellency Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations. The award symbolizes the resolution of the IAUP membership to further develop higher education in memory of the late Michael Adams, who

made so many outstanding contributions in that field.

Here let me introduce several people you already know: Dr. Alvaro Romo, the new Secretary-General of the IAUP; Dr. Ichirō Tanioka, the new Treasurer; and the other members of the leadership team.

Over the course of the next three years, we intend to place emphasis on the following three areas:

- First, the global strengthening of higher education. We hope to improve standards of higher education worldwide by promoting mobility and diversification through projects such as “The United Nations Academic Impact,” “ASPIRE/IAUP,” and the “Qatar Foundation/IAUP/IIE WISE Education Leadership Programme.”
- Second, provision of help to students and educators in regions where education and research are poorly developed owing to social disorder. Examples of specific projects here include the “IAUP/UN Commission on Disarmament Education, Conflict Resolution & Peace” and the “IIE/IAUP Scholars Rescue Fund.”
- Finally, / the further development of education/ through new initiative at the worldwide level and regional level promoting partnerships with international and regional network of universities , as well as the most important organizations, such as the United Nations, the World Bank and others. Africa deserves special attention and we will support the Chairs for Africa Initiative. /The new teaching methods represented/ by these initiatives will provide educational opportunities to those who have previously lacked them.

As has already been announced, a 50th Anniversary IAUP meeting will be

held next year in London and in the organization's birthplace, Oxford. The meeting will launch the IAUP into its second half century, for which I ask your support as we move toward our Gold Anniversary in 2015.

From our vantage point today, halfway through the second decade of the 21st century, the pressing tasks facing human society have become increasingly clear. As you all know from having lived through it, the 20th century was one of tumultuous change.

In the area of science and technology, many doors were opened by the great discoveries of the 20th century. In 1903, Wilbur and Orville Wright successfully launched a heavier than air vehicle into the bone-chilling winds at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina. This first step made possible the supersonic flights and rocket launches that we see today. The first successful transmission of voice in 1902 by the Canadian inventor Reginald Fessenden paved the way for radio broadcasts and simultaneous communication. Thanks to his invention, images as well as voice are now instantaneously transmitted across the world and mobile devices have proliferated. Henry Ford's introduction of assembly line manufacture for the Model T in 1908 was the precursor to the age in which everyone could own his own automobile, giving birth to today's motorized world.

These scientific and technological breakthroughs at the start of the twentieth century caused changes not just in human lifestyles but also in the very structure of society. Demands for social reforms by the working class, together with the rise of movements for democracy in the autocratic countries of Europe, gradually led to tensions throughout the world, culminating in the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and in the Russian Revolution. The power of modern technology also carried with it destructive forces that

dwarfed the imagination. Over 10 million people died in World War I. World War II saw the first use of nuclear weapons, and despair cast its shadow on the world. The age of innocence that characterized the world through the 19th century came to a close and we entered an age of competition in which individual states and peoples bet their very existence.

The modern society that developed so rapidly in the 20th century thus illuminated many aspects of human well-being while at the same time casting life-threatening shadows in the form of two world wars, ethnic rivalries, economic depression, and destruction of the natural environment. Those of us living in the 21st century have a responsibility to spread the light further while rolling back the shadows and working toward sustainable development on a global scale. In that sense, worldwide expectations toward higher education are great indeed.

What will the world look like at the end of the 21st century? It is extremely difficult to predict events 85 years in the future, but it is essential for us to maintain peace and harmony as we move forward. In that sense, a key word as we progress toward the end of the 21st century is what we call “kyōsei” in Japanese. Originating in the biological concept of symbiosis, “kyōsei” is recently often translated into English as “living and working together for the common good.”

The world’s population first reached 1 billion in 1810. From then, it took 115 years to reach 2 billion, only 35 years to reach 3 billion, and 15 years to reach 4 billion. The 5-billion mark was reached on July 11, 1987, and the 6-billion mark in 1999. The world’s population is now projected to reach 8.1 billion in 2025. As population has increased, so has the nature of higher education changed.

The first institutions of higher education in Europe were the University of Bologna and the University of Paris, both founded at the end of the 12th century. The style of learning at that time consisted not of courses taught by professors in classrooms, but of those interested in Roman law and ecclesiastical law, regardless of age or social status, simply gathering together to listen to those versed in such matters.

The universities of those times, which catered to a very special group of people, changed greatly over the centuries so that today, practically anyone who wishes to learn has the opportunity to study at a university. One might say that universities have become objects of what the educator Martin Trow called universal access. The growth of world population, together with changes in social expectations and values, has led to both quantitative and qualitative changes in higher education. Medieval universities taught the seven liberal arts; modern universities provide education as preparation for employment. Methods of instruction have also changed greatly with the development of distance learning and other technologies. However, when we look at the world as a whole, it is a fact that great disparities remain. Those of us in higher education must continually stay on top of what is happening in the world and boldly scrutinize ongoing changes.

Human society is where those with different cultures, religions, and values coexist and cooperate. It is especially necessary to respect the culture, religion, and history of other countries and to understand each other's perspectives. I believe that we in higher education have a calling to respect diversity while attempting to feel others' pain and learn to think about things from their perspective.

In closing I would like to recite two quotations. The first is from Charles Darwin, the author of *On the Origin of Species*, who said, “It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

The second is from the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, whose “Serenity Prayer” reads as follows:

O God, give us
serenity to accept what cannot be changed,
courage to change what should be changed,
and wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Taken together, these quotations suggest that as society continues to change at a dizzying pace, universities must also change as necessary in order to survive. However, I would take this idea one step further to suggest that as institutions of higher education we must change not reactively, but proactively, as a force for good.

I thus close my remarks with my hope that during its second half century of existence, the IAUP will continue to be a pioneer in working for humanity and for peace throughout the world.