

Opening Remark

The 27th 2006
KANEKO Satoru

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you very much for your introduction. My name is Kaneko, the president of Osaka City University. Thank you very much indeed that so many of you are joining us for this international symposium.

The Osaka City University International Academic Symposium is a yearly event and this time it is the fourteenth time that we are holding this symposium. This year, we are quite fortunate to get the all-out support from the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, thus this year this symposium is, on a larger scale, and very rich in contents.

Our university has its origin in the Osaka Commercial Training Institute, which was established in 1880, thus our university is the oldest public city university with a history of 126 years. And indeed we have produced many distinguished people with talents to the financial and business circles. In session 2 of today's meeting, we invite Dr. Norbert Walter who is the renowned economist of the Deutsche Bank as the representative of financial institutions in Europe, but here I would also like to mention that one of the great figures in the business and financial circle of our country Mr. Tokushichi Nomura, who is the founder of Nomura Securities which is a renowned financial institution throughout the world, is indeed an alumnus of our university.

This year indeed our university has made a new start as a public university corporation. So it is our great pleasure that this year's international academic symposium is being held with the largest scale because it perfectly matches with this special year. That is, to mark the new start for our university. So, indeed, it gives us a great pleasure.

As for this year, the topic is possibilities of Asian regional integration and learning from Europe, and in fact what I'd like to say is that we've had a very close relationship with Germany historically, Germany which has played a major role for the promotion of European integration, together with France, and let me elaborate on this point a bit further. Firstly, in 1928, during the era of the Mayor of Osaka, Mr. SEKI Hajime, our university transformed itself into Osaka College of Commerce, and at the time Mayor Seki stated that universities should exist and develop together with the city, and the city should exist and develop together with the university. And so he made the University of Cologne, the first college of commerce in Germany, as a model for us. And so, our university was based on the concept of the urban university and local government university focusing on practical theories. So that was our model.

As for the second element which has to do with the relations with Germany, we have the Sombart library. In 1929 we purchased 11,000 books from the collections of Werner Sombart, who was the renowned economist and sociologist of the University of Berlin. Our library, which is a part of our academic information center, has one of the greatest samples of the collections in universities in Japan. And this is largely thanks to Fukuda Library and also due to this Sombart library. Sombart library has mainly the books of the German Historical School in the field of economics.

Third is our relation with the University of Hamburg. The City of Hamburg and Osaka City are sister cities. So we have very active exchanges at the level of faculty and students. And I myself in fact have the experience of conducting research at the University of Hamburg. I have heard that the vice-president, Prof. Kakuno, who is with us today, and also Prof. Yamashita from the Faculty of Economics, who made all the plans for this symposium, have experience of conducting research at the University of Hamburg.

So, the topic for this year's symposium is Asian regional integration, and we would like to refer to the experiences of Europe, and we would like to seek the possibilities of realizing it from multilateral perspectives.

In recent years, indeed, there is mounting interest towards Asian regional integration here in Japan, too. So it would be our great pleasure if this symposium can serve as a trigger to deepen the discussions on this matter. We are going to have this symposium for the coming three days, and very active discussions will be made by the distinguished speakers on a variety of issues. I sincerely hope for the very productive and fruitful meeting. Thank you very much indeed for your kind attention. Thank you.