



Hiroshi Matsumoto Executive Vice-President for Research Promotion and Finance, Kyoto University. Born in 1942, Prof. Matsumoto received a Masters degree in engineering from the Department of Electronics at the Graduate School of Kyoto University in 1967. In 1973, he was given a Ph.D. in engineering from Kyoto University. After spending time as a visiting researcher at the NASA Ames Research Center and Stanford University, he returned to Japan and became associate professor at Kyoto University's Radio Atmospheric Science Center, and was subsequently promoted to full professor. He became director of the research center in 1992. In 2004, he became a professor and the first director of the Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere. Since October of 2005, he is serving as Executive Vice-President for Research Promotion and Finance at Kyoto University. His specialties are space radio engineering and space plasma physics. His research includes satellite observations of space plasma environment and theoretical and computer simulations thereof. He also studies the possibility of making active use of outer space as a clean energy source, including photovoltaic power generating systems and microwave energy transmission. Prof. Matsumoto has long been an observer of outer space as a researcher, but he has said, "I really wanted to go to space. I still want to go." It is a dream he has cherished ever since 1962, when as a student he met Yuri Gagarin on the occasion of the Soviet cosmonaut's visit to Japan. He has recently received the Gagarin Medal from the Russian Federation of Cosmonautics, a medal normally given to cosmonauts and limited number of excellent space scientists. This year it is hanging on the wall of the Vice - President's office.

The Three Senses of "Aya" and Human Welfare

Where is Kyoto University headed for? At this point, just two years after the university was chartered as a corporated national university, I would like to note a few things that I have contemplated while formulating the university's research strategy.

A corporation measures the worth of various strategies based on the clear objective of the pursuit of profit. So then, when we think in terms of an academic institute like Kyoto University, what are the standards of measurement? I believe that the standard is, without doubt, the creation of knowledge, but it also occurs to me that what is also needed is research imbued with the three meanings of the Japanese word "aya".

The primary meaning of "aya" is a rich and diverse palate of color. An exceptionally broad range of research is being carried out by a variety of researchers associated with our university with passion and flair for curiosity and inspiration. Another meaning of "aya" is patterned brocade woven from a warp and woof. The intellectual approaches and philosophies of a variety of researchers interact with one another, and through dialogue, they are woven together to form the whole academism of Kyoto University. It may even be appropriate to say that this should be the essential nature of a comprehensive university. Yet another meaning of "aya" in its classical and narrowest sense is "literature," but in its broadest sense, it refers to academia in general. It means carrying out education and research that is headed for fostering next generation of scholars. Of course, modern and future university must not be called an ivory tower, and I believe that such an institution must make a contribution to human welfare through open-minded attitude. It is important to be aware that we are contributing to welfare on every level of the human experience — the individual, family, workplace, ethnic group and country, and races.

Kyoto University has the good fortune of having been one

of the original centers of the Kyoto School (Kyoto "Gakuha") of philosophers. They have carried out a truly wide range of research into many areas, such as philosophical thought, grappling with new topics that transcended existing concepts, and were not imposed from authority, and creating their own methodology. One of their most widely known approaches is field science, which proceeds almost like an adventure, investigating whatever is not yet understood. It is a unique system of scholarship that proponents of this school of thought have put together in contact with the local people and their culture and environment, with the local people in mind. An approach to research that incorporates the three meanings of "aya" is an outgrowth of the research style and methodology that Kyoto University has developed throughout its history.

The original goal of our academia lies in the pursuit of harmonious coexistence within the human and ecological community on our mother planet, but today more than ever we must look squarely at the issue of what it really means to be happy and coexistence as members of a global society, because we live in an era when organizations such as the Science Council of Japan are discussing the possibility of humanity having reached a sort of historical dead end of survivability and scientific data is being used to simulate the extinction of the human race in the worst case. I hope that all affiliates of Kyoto University, including faculty, staff, and students, will honor the university's glorious heritage by pursuing research with their eyes firmly fixed on our future horizon.

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