

SESSION 1

Welcome Message

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Good morning, and welcome to Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, a genuine international university in Japan. It's my pleasure to express my heartfelt welcome to all the participants in this forum.

Firstly, I would like to express my profound gratitude to Mr. Yohei Sasakawa, chairman of The Nippon Foundation, and Mr. Hideki Kato, president of the Tokyo Foundation, for appointing APU as the third member of the Sylff community in Japan following Waseda University and Keio University. We are quite proud of this appointment because Sylff has a very effective international network among universities around the world and has endeavored to enhance global perspectives and diversified approaches, foreseeing a deeper globalization on the platform of worldwide higher education in future.

APU is located on a hill, and students describe this university as a “castle in the sky”

in Beppu, which is well known for its hot springs and is regarded as a resort city. I have heard that the volume of hot mineral water delivered from more than 2,600 natural hot springs in and around this city is second only to Yellowstone National Park in the United States. So, number one is Yellowstone, and number two is Beppu.

Next to Beppu is the city of Oita, which is the seat of the prefectural government. Oita is where Western medicine and music were first introduced to Japan in the sixteenth century, when the famous Christian daimyo, which means governor, dominated. APU is located in the southern part of Japan, not in the center. But, looking from another angle, our location is much closer to China and the Korean Peninsula than to Tokyo.

Ten years ago in 2000, APU was established with the cooperation of Oita Prefecture and Beppu City as the centerpiece of Ritsu-

meikan's internationalization in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Ritsumeikan University, and now it could be said that APU has already cemented its unique position within Japan. There is no other university in Japan that can offer such a broad cross-cultural experience on campus every day.

APU has some significant features as a truly international university in Japan. I would like to explain those features from several aspects: its mission, multicultural diversity, and a large intake of foreign students.

Our mission is integrated and sacred. It consists of three pillars: to pursue freedom, peace, and humanity; to improve international mutual understanding; and to shape the Asia-Pacific region of tomorrow. As we are facing many conflicts in this region, we should promote the settlement of disputes by peaceful means. Nothing comes out of violence. Disagreement should be resolved by mutual concession and persistent negotiation.

Currently we have approximately 2,900 international students from 87 countries and regions throughout the world, and they learn and live together with around 3,000 Japanese students on this campus. The ratio of international to domestic students is around fifty-fifty. This means that the very essence of our campus is multicultural. In Japan today, there are 780 universities in total, and we have approximately 130,000 international students all over Japan, 15,000 of them being in the Kyushu area. The number of international students in APU accounts for 2.3 percent of the country's total and 20 percent of the Kyushu area. The students gather here from all over the world, thus realizing "a genuine international campus," as described by the Chronicle of Higher Education in Washington. I think this diversity is a key factor in promoting equality and mutual respect, and I also think that diversity is a true reflection of our existence.

International students represent 47 percent of the student body; they come from 87 different countries and regions, and 44 percent

of our faculty members also have international backgrounds, coming from 26 countries. We have two colleges consisting of about 180 faculty members, with around 70 percent holding doctoral degrees. This extremely dynamic and diverse multicultural campus provides tremendous cultural exchange opportunities for students everywhere on campus—in their classes, clubs, school cafeteria, and dormitories.

One day in May this year, I was interviewed by a journalist from the Chronicle of High Education in Washington, which I mentioned earlier. He described APU in his article in this way: "The remote Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University has developed what many of its rivals do not have in Japan: a genuine international campus."

The unique features of our educational system include a biannual admission system and bilingual education. By accepting students in both English and Japanese, we remove the language barrier for international students. In class, we pursue directed studies, student-active participation, pedagogical innovation, and quality assurance. We also established an extensive scholarship system to reduce the economic burden of studying in Japan. Regarding career support, we have adopted a system called "On-Campus Recruiting," as described in the DVD, in which a great number of companies engage our students on campus every year. For instance, last year, approximately 350 companies visited our campus to look for the best and brightest students to recruit into their workforce.

As described earlier, APU has two colleges: APM, which used to be Asia Pacific Management and has now been renamed International Management, and APS, or Asia Pacific Studies. In APM, we are promoting integrated academic reforms by linking the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation process. APS, meanwhile, is being reformed into four new clusters: International Relations and Peace Studies, Hospitality and Tourism, Environment and Development, and Culture, Society, and the Media. Taking up the example of

tourism, it covers a broad range of areas, such as human intention, actual behavior, destination image, destination branding identity, gender difference, Asian paradigm, and threat of terrorism.

We believe that in the near future APU will become a leading university to pursue the standard for international education and research in the Asia-Pacific era. This is our top priority. This year, we have launched IAAPS, the International Association for Asia-Pacific Studies, which will pursue a new interdisciplinary field called Asia-Pacific studies, focusing on the research toward a “new sense of global and regional community.” We are creating a hub to accumulate and communicate the fruits of Asia-Pacific studies and will develop the system to promote exchanges with

researchers from around Japan and the world. We have entered an age of progressive university exchange, as seen with the initiatives of the Asian Erasmus Plan and the Japan-China-Korea Project to Develop Advanced Human Resources via University Exchange. I hope that APU shall take a significant role in the movement of university exchange through the Sylff program.

Let’s go beyond conflict and move toward mutual understanding. Let’s go beyond prejudice and move toward mutual respect. And let’s go beyond supremacy and move toward equality.

I thank all of you here for your participation and wish you great success with this event. Please enjoy your stay in Japan.

Presentations by APU Students and Faculty Member



APU students Sayaka Naganuma, Mami Mizutani, Keiko Sonoda, and Yuka Sameshima present their findings of a group analysis on the conflict in Sudan.



Peter Mantello, professor of new media in the Faculty of Asia Pacific Studies, discusses the plight of child soldiers, who are “forced to be cruel.”