

THE JAPAN SCIENTISTS' ASSOCIATION (JSA)

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<HEADQUARTERS >

SYMPOSIUM "FULL DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, AND SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY" HELD IN TOKYO

Since 2003, the government has transformed all the state-run universities and research institutes into independently managed organizations (public corporations), where the parties concerned faced with a number of difficulties for fully developing education, and science and technology. The government introduced the principle of *competition first* into all university and institute agencies to carry out efficiency and activation, where the authority (1) trimmed down the fundamental budget for research and education, (2) introduced various evaluation systems based on the competitive principle, (3) carried out top-down management, and (4) distributed huge money to develop the special area of technology, which resulted in many difficulties for the comprehensive development of science, and education and for the contribution to peace and welfare. Such a circumstance gives rise to inconvenient environment for students as well as faculty staff. On the other hand, the private sectors in which the principle of *result first* had long been introduced also gave many problems for researchers' partnership and training of successors. Thus, the principles (*result and competition first*) would perfectly inhibit the country's development of science and technology.

The JSA academic system section organized the above symposium on January 26, which was to make clear the problems to immediately be solved. In the symposium, attended were seven research committees (science and technological policy, researchers' rights, university problems, public research institute, researchers belonging to private sectors, young scientists, and women scientists), where the participants enthusiastically discussed the following subjects: (1) neo-liberalism, and science and technology, (2) researchers' rights problems in higher education, (3) women scientists and their fundamentals, (4) women scientists, the present and future, (5) university evaluation, and the strategy of the government and economic circle for reforming agencies, (6) university evaluation, the present and future, (7) struggle for research development for achieving real development and safety of science and technology, and (8) the 3rd fundamental plan for science and technology and the present situation in private sectors, respectively. In a synthetic discussion, reports and comments were presented from the floor, and the participants made clear what we should carry out to improve research and educational environments for really develop science and technology for citizens.

<LOCAL ACTIVITIES IN DECEMBER (2007) AND JANUARY >

1. OSAKA BRANCH

- 1) The study group *Philosophy* organized a meeting on December 18, where Dr. Sugano (Osaka branch) reported on the task of contemporary science, which was followed by a year-end gathering.
- 2) On December 22, the study group *Energy problems* held a meeting, where Prof. Aoyama (Kinki Univ.) discussed the 2007-energy white paper.
- 3) In a meeting of the study group *Contemporary capitalism* on December 27, Dr. Iwahashi (Osaka branch) gave a seminar "Mr. Ozawa's Democratic Party and the revision of Article 9 of the Constitution".
- 4) The Kansai-area's colloquium for scientific workers in private enterprises was organized on January 6, where Dr. Nakamura (Osaka branch) gave a seminar on the utilization of bio-energy (plant-originated oil) for a diesel engine.
- 5) The branch held a new-year gathering on January 12, where Mr. Nakamura (Osaka City Univ.) gave a lecture on the recent oil-price-hike question, which was followed by a get-together meeting to exchange their views on environmental problems, peace, the young's employment, and scientists' social responsibility.

6) The study group *Hegel's 'The Great Logic'* held a meeting on January 12 at a St. Andrews Osaka satellite office, where they discussed the text book "The Logical Lecture (1831)".

2. FUKUOKA BRANCH

On January 5, the branch's group for studying environmental question held a regular meeting at a Kurume University Fukuoka satellite, where Dr. Umeki (Fukuoka branch) gave a talk on the problems relating to bio-energy and food.

3. TOYAMA BRANCH

The branch organized the 3rd regular meeting on January 15 in Toyama City, where Dr. Yokohata (Toyama branch) gave a lecture entitled "Preservation of parasitic organisms and the principle of *human being first*", which was followed by a new-year gathering.

4. KYOTO BRANCH

1) The individual members organized the 33rd regular meeting on January 9 at Kyoto University, where Dr. Mitsui (Kyoto branch) gave a seminar on science literacy for the purpose of making clear the minimal requirement of scientific and technological knowledge for citizens.

2) The branch organized a meeting to exchange their views on January 11, which was accompanied by a new-year gathering.

5. MIYAGI BRANCH

On January 19, the branch organized a new-year exchange meeting in Sendai City, where Dr. Karita (Miyagi branch) lectured on the theme "War and medical ethics", which was followed by many discussions.

THINKING OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY IN THE COUNTRY

The free trade based on neo-liberalism has caused a great damage in Japan and elsewhere in the world. Moreover, the Liberal Democratic and Komei Parties have carried out the policy of abandoning small- and medium-scale farmers that are unable to compete with the big, while pushing ahead with import liberalization of agricultural products. Due to growing rice import and the abolition of the governmental assistance to maintain rice price, rice farmers' hourly income has become 256 Yen, which is less than half of the minimum wage in the country. Zenkoku-Shokkennren (National liaison association to safeguard the food and health of the nation) has asked the government to take an urgent measure to buy up surplus rice, because the continuation of a free market system basing on import liberalization causes a sharp decline in rice price in Japan. The government finally did it. For this year (2008), however, the government plans to resume selling off stockpiled rice and to impose a severer rice-paddy-acreage-reduction policy with harsher punishment of farmers who do not comply. We have to criticize such the governmental policy, and demand the need to improve the governmental subsidy program supporting farmers in growing rice even for animal feed and other crops, and establish a system to secure rice price for farmers. Also, we must urge the government to realize a halt to the governmental policy to limit to wheat and soy growers that are eligible for the governmental subsidies, since the active policy will also bring about reductions in income of even the large-scale rice farmers that receive the governmental subsidies. On the other hand, the evidence that Australia now needs to import rice and wheat due to the draught (it has never experienced for four consecutive years) teaches us that we must establish food sovereignty in each country so that we can fully serve food to the people as much as necessary. Again, since the import liberalization policy is to destroy domestic agriculture production, we must develop a national movement to revitalize the country's agriculture, and build solidarity in establishing food sovereignty domestically and internationally. To enhance the domestic productions, on the other hand, we can carry out a campaign to request elementary and nursery schools to use agricultural products that are locally produced or brought directly from farmers for school lunches based on the idea of locally grown and locally consumed, which is the very way that goes off the present standard (free trade basing on neo-liberalism) of serving food via a long-range transport system across the countries.

(S. YUASA)