

Opening Remarks

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Moderator: Welcome to the Second International Symposium on University Distance Education jointly organized by the University of the Air and the National Institute of Multimedia Education. First of all, I would like to call upon the Chairman of the University of the Air Foundation, Mr. Miyaji, to deliver the opening remarks.

K. Miyaji: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It is my great pleasure to be able to say a few words of greetings to you at the opening of the Second International Symposium on University Distance Education jointly organized and hosted by the University of the Air and the National Institute of Multimedia Education.

The University of the Air is in charge of organizing this symposium, and I would like to briefly explain this university. The details are described in both Japanese and English in the brochures that have been distributed to you.

The university was established in 1983 as an institution of higher education using the new telecommunications system and also as a university best suited for life-long education. With the high hopes and expectations of the national public, the students started enrolling in 1985. There are several unique features of this university that distinguish it from other universities. One is that we have a television and radio broadcasting station that transmits lectures 18 hours a day, from 6:00 a.m. to 12:00 midnight. We also offer an open system where students willing to learn, can learn whoever they are, wherever they are, or whenever they want, a wide offering of higher education classes are thus available to people in the workplace and to housewives. At present, there are 26,000 students at the University of the Air. Their ages range from 18 to 90, and some married couples or three generations parents, children and grandchildren attend the school together. There are also some students of foreign nationality, and one percent of the student body are disabled a number ten times higher than a general university.

There are some students who already graduated from an other university or

graduate school but entered our university to learn, the fact that eighteen percent of our students have previously obtained college degrees is another unique feature of the University of the Air.

In March, 1989 we graduated our first class of 544 Students. Sixty percent of those students re-entered our university to continue their education. This clearly indicates the era of life-long education has arrived in Japan. We offer wide-ranging lectures covering the latest research and studies of as many as 300 subjects presented by the faculty of our university as well as faculty with other national, public and private universities in Japan. Starting this fiscal year we also initiated a Japanese language course for non-Japanese wishing to learn the Japanese language, the task of improving the modality and method of learning is on-going. We are now trying to expand the geographic area of our broadcast transmissions beyond the Kanto area so that in the future we can reach a wider portion of our country.

The other co-host, the National Institute of Multimedia Education, was established in 1978 as an institution for joint use by universities in Japan, we commemorated the tenth anniversary of NIME last year and, we have distributed to you the Institute's brochure which for your convenience is in, both English and Japanese.

The major task of this institute is to conduct research and development in the production of TV and radio programs for the university education system. A second task is to study distance education in various other countries of the world as well as to conduct research and development into the contents and method of education which uses multi-media in a comprehensive manner. NIME therefore contributes to the improvement and enhancement of higher education throughout Japan, of course including the University of the Air. Our institutions maintain a close, cooperative relationship with each other working in unison for the production of programs and research and development of various kinds. This hall we are meeting in belongs to the institute.

The first international symposium on distance education was held here at Makuhari in November 1986 on the theme of "The Outlook for the University Distance Education." The proceedings of those discussions were compiled and published.

This symposium aims at exploring the future image of education through distance education methods, with the participation of experts from many nations and through active discussions, we are certain to deepen our understanding of the effects of new media on learning. I do believe that the symposium will contribute much to the progress of our efforts in these areas, and we are fortunate to have the participation of experts who are highly knowledgeable and experienced professors.

From Canada we have Dr. Morrison from Athabasca University, a school which is

offering in Canada the first distance education using communications satellite.

From the Kingdom of Thailand we have Professor Jumpol Nimpanich of STOU which delivers a multi-media system for adult Life-long education.

From the United Kingdom we have Professor Keith Harry with the International Center for Distance Learning which provides various documents on distance education to institutions in many countries in the world.

From Australia's Queensland University we have Professor John Henningham who is also active as a journalist with the Australian Broadcast Association.

From the United States we have Professor Marie Oberle from the National University Teleconference Network which provides higher education through this unique system.

And also we have Professor Meuter from California State University at Chico which provides a Master of Science Course in computer science. We are very grateful to all your participants for coming here all the way from distant places.

And domestically from Japan, we have many experts, who will participate in the proceedings. We are also very grateful to all these participants.

Today and tomorrow, under the main theme of Technological Innovation and Life-Long Education, we shall be having two sessions. With your kind cooperation, I hope that this symposium will be most fruitful and that the outcome will contribute to the further development of distance education and higher education in general.

Before concluding, I would like to express our deepest appreciation for the kind support rendered to us in organizing this symposium by organizations such as Hoso Bunka Foundation, Broadcasting Cultural Foundation, as well as the International Communications Foundation and many others. On that note, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you.

Moderator: Now we would like to invite Dr. Morrison to give us the keynote lecture. Dr. Morrison majored in education and history at the University of British Columbia and taught at Manitoba University. He is the President of Athabasca University in Canada which is the major institution for distance education in Canada.