

Opening Address

Ko HIRASAWA

President of Kyoto University

Ladies and gentlemen ;

It is a great honour for me to extend greetings and congratulations to all who have come to represent the countries of the world at the International Conference on Cosmic Rays and the Earth Storm.

First of all, on behalf of Kyoto University, I would like to assure you that we welcome you with our warmest friendship. The city of Kyoto which is the ancient capital of Japan invites you to enjoy the monuments of its thousand years of history and the mountains and rivers of its countryside.

Since the earth is the place where mankind lives, the study of earth and the conditions which affect it is not a problem for specialists alone, but in the last resort, a crucial problem of human life. The earth has undergone a long development of some thousand million years, and there are still many, many unsolved problems concerning both itself and its relationship to the other planets, among which are also those presented by the cosmic rays and the earth storm.

These problems are in the first place problems of natural science, but ultimately, when we think of their direct or indirect influence over human life, we have to recognize that they are also problems of the humanities beyond the limits of natural science. It would be a mistake to overlook the possibility that such phenomena may have effects on us which do not emerge into consciousness. At present, science cannot answer precisely how much cosmic rays and the earth storm influence human life. Let me hope that in the future, our advancing knowledge of cosmic science and biology will clarify these effects.

By clarifying our understanding of the earth itself and its relationship to the other planets, the present International Conference on Cosmic Rays and the Earth Storm will have great significance for us. With the outstanding progress of transportation and communication in recent years, the earth is getting relatively smaller and smaller. The speed of the manned space-ship per second is about eighty times faster than that of the transmission of stimuli by our sensory nerves. Now is the critical time for human beings to hold on firmly to the dignity of man and to humanism. Scholars should make every effort to realize this ideal of mankind and avoid causing injury to life through science. In this connection, the international conference may have another important mission beside the primary mission to exchange knowledge and information in their specific scholarly fields, namely to bring about personal understanding between the scholars of the world.

I believe that in this conference, the scholars from the different nations who are assembled here will deepen their understanding of each other, and reaffirm the true destiny of science to contribute to the happiness and peaceful living of mankind. Science and scientists inspired by humanism are the pioneers who prepare the way for real peace on earth.

We shall no longer, I believe, recall the phrase, "East is east, west is west," but instead learn to understand that the world is one. This is our sincere prayer, and also our pride as scientists.

Finally, let me express my confident hope that the conference will have a fruitful outcome and contribute much to the growth of friendship between nations.
