

Opening address

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On behalf of JAEA, I would like to express cordial welcome to all of you, participants to the 20th Anniversary Symposium of the Advanced Science Research Center, ASRC. I greatly appreciate your continuing support and encouragement during these twenty years, which have enabled the great evolution of the ASRC.

Now, please let me mention about the situation of Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute JAERI, the former body of the Japan Atomic Energy Agency, prevailing at the time 20 years ago. As the core institute of comprehensive research and development on nuclear energy under the national policy, JAERI installed some key facilities, such as research nuclear reactors, accelerators and irradiation equipment. Meanwhile, basic science research including nuclear physics, solid state physics, nuclear reactor chemistry, has made a great progress to consolidate JAERI as a basic science institute. However, around the nineteen eightieth, the activities of our basic research programs were not conspicuous behind the major big projects, such as nuclear fusion, high temperature reactor and SPring-8. Therefore we had serious discussion on strengthening basic science research, and then made an aggressive proposal to enhance the basic science research closely related to atomic and nuclear fields. In this movement, the advanced science research promotion committee conducted by Professor Akito Arima, the chairman of this committee, was organized based on the report of the council for science and technology founded in the Cabinet Office. The committee strongly encouraged to promote basic science research in JAERI. According to the committee recommendation, the Advance Science Research Center was established in April 1993 as a special organization aiming the front of basic sciences among world.

The ASRC was expected not only to be conducting new frontier research for discovery of new principles and phenomena, creation of new materials, and for development of innovative technologies in nuclear field, but also to be a front runner in the related research fields. It means that the ASRC should become an international center of excellence, COE, for basic research on advanced nuclear sciences. To achieve this ambition, several efforts were made. For example; The distinguished scientists, who have excellent research carriers and strong leadership in the world-wide, have been appointed to the successive Director Generals of the ASRC. The Director General is able to manage all of research programs under his complete leadership to conduct the state-of-the-art subjects and to produce prominent achievements. Cooperation with other institutes is strongly encouraged to enhance scientific exchange, and many guest scientists are invited to study with the ASRC members to establish COE. Each research subject adopted with 5-year term has been strictly reviewed by the evaluation committee consisting of experts from domestic and abroad. With these unique strategies, the ASRC has stood out in JAERI as a distinctive research center.

Here, let me briefly introduce the successive Director Generals of the ASRC.

Professor Muneyuki Date, the first Director General, created the fundamental bases of the ASRC. An open-offering research program called Reimei research program was originated by his idea. The Reimei program has been conducted to cultivate forefront and frontier researches in the diverse fields of atomic and nuclear sciences and its related fields.

His successor was Professor Hiroshi Yasuoka who laid the pathway toward internationalization of the ASRC. He invited outstanding foreign researchers as research group leaders, and organized international symposia, so-called the ASR symposium.

The next Director General was Professor Yoshihiko Hatano. One of his main focuses was placed on education and human resource development. The educational program collaborated with Ibaraki University started by him is still ongoing at present. Based on these managements, the ASRC has launched out a number of scientists who are now playing active rolls in related research fields.

Let me once again pay tribute to those eminent leaders for their outstanding contributions to the ASRC.

The present Director General, Professor Sadamichi Maekawa, has been engaged to facilitate the ASRC as a leading world-class competitive research center. He has introduced several innovative ideas on organization and administration to the ASRC. Some distinguished scientists were invited from overseas as the evaluation committee members, the director's advisors, and the group leaders. The application of the Reimei research program has become open on an international basis. Cross-institutes interaction based on competition and cooperation is a crucial factor for the ASRC. Thus, he strongly encourages scientific exchanges in the world-wide scale. Such efforts have been producing a number of advanced achievements even within his short term so far. Recent typical achievements will be presented at this symposium later, and also are seen at the poster presentation.

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiich Nuclear Power Plant Accident, sharp criticism has been drawn against nuclear energy. However, it should be the time to emphasize importance of basic nuclear science with a long-term outlook. I hope that the ASRC would be dedicated to the further development of atomic and nuclear sciences as a pioneer institution retaining its original spirits.

Finally, I would like to close the opening address by expressing my sincere appreciation to all of you here for great contribution and ask further support to the ASRC as before.