

**President Hamada's address**  
**on the establishment of the Tokyo University Alumni Association of Korea**

My warm congratulations on the inauguration of the Tokyo University Alumni Association of Korea. My congratulations too, because what is born here today is the hub that unites all of you who studied at the University of Tokyo. Further, we welcome this association as the first country-wide alumni association set up by former students.

I understand that the very great effort of Professor Emeritus Lee Yong Soong of Seoul National University, Doctor of Veterinary Science from the University of Tokyo, was vital in the launch of this association. I am deeply grateful for his effort.

Today we are honored by the presence of many eminent guests. Cho Wan Kyoo, former president of Seoul National University and former Minister of Education, Science and Technology; Chung Un Chan, former president of Seoul National University and former Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea; Representative Kang Chang Il; and from the Embassy of Japan in Korea, Kanehara Nobukatsu, Minister and Deputy Chief of Mission; Suzuki Hiroshi, head of the Public Information and Cultural Center; and Sasaki Kunihiko, First Secretary. My sincere thanks to you all.

I would like to add a few words about the great disaster that has hit the northeast of Japan. I should like to express my deep gratitude to the people of Korea for their many warm messages of sympathy and encouragement, and the dispatch of search and rescue teams to the affected area. A great many people are still missing, and urgent search and rescue efforts Minister Efforts towards a full-scale recovery are under way, and the University of Tokyo will make the maximum contribution possible.

Last year, I presented the University of Tokyo Action Scenario, in which I grouped into nine targets the issues and ideas I planned to tackle at the University by March 2015, the end of my term of office. One of the priority areas for action was "formation of a close network with graduates." It gives me great pleasure that this alumni association should be founded in Korea at the start of our efforts to improve alumni relations. I am sure that it will be a great encouragement to young Koreans now studying at the University of Tokyo, and to those who plan to do so in the future.

To attract international students, it is vital that the University of Tokyo is a center of academic excellence but also an engaging environment. Consequently, another goal outlined in the Action Scenario was to raise the level of education and research still further, while promoting even greater internationalization of the campus. The Times Higher Education Supplement recently announced its global rankings for reputation in education and research, in which the University of Tokyo ranked eighth. I hope that you take great pride in having studied at the University of Tokyo. We will strive to continue to be a university in which you can continue be proud.

As you know, the University of Tokyo is honored with many students from Korea, and I myself have supervised several excellent Korean students. There are currently some 3,000 international students at the University of Tokyo, of which 652, just over 20%, are from Korea. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the remarkable enthusiasm of our Korean students, which is a great stimulus for our Japanese students. While it is impossible to recount the activities of each individual student, I would like to mention a couple of stories I heard recently. One female student from Seoul National University who studied Japanese Art History at the University of Tokyo, went on to work at the Seoul National Museum, and now works as curator at an American museum as curator of Korean and Japanese art. She says that her goal is to realize a utopia of mutual prosperity of Asian culture. In addition, while

not directly related to academic work, a male Korean student who had just enrolled in the Graduate School of Engineering rescued a man who had fallen onto the tracks at a station near the University of Tokyo. I regularly say that I want to raise just this kind of “tough student” at the University of Tokyo. It is our Korean students who are providing the role model.

I am certain that this Tokyo University Alumni Association. of Korea, created by such intellectually and emotionally mature Korean alumni, will prove to be a great force. This association will be a place for alumni to connect and become better acquainted with each other, but will also be a great source of encouragement and support for the University of Tokyo as we work to become a world-leading center of knowledge. On this occasion, turning your attention once again to the University’s educational and research activities, I would be very grateful for your continued strong support as the University of Tokyo fulfills its role supporting the world of tomorrow.

At the same time, I hope that this alumni association will be an open network. That is, I hope that each member of this alumni association will act as mediator between the University of Tokyo and the universities, research institutions, businesses and government agencies to which you are affiliated. The challenges we face today, of which global warming is the most pressing, are not challenges that can be solved by one researcher, one university, or even by academia alone. Increasingly, they can only be solved through the application of the advanced knowledge of many individuals and organizations collaborating across borders. While wishing you great success and growth in the future, I hope that this Tokyo University Alumni Association. of Korea will serve as a hub for such broad cooperation.

Recently, I received via Professor Chung Un Chan a book about Son Ho Yeon, a Korean who wrote Japanese *tanka*. Among the poems was the following *tanka*, written when Son’s memorial was erected in Aomori, in the northeastern region of Japan.

Far from my homeland stands my memorial  
next to each other, standing shoulder to shoulder, let us grow closer

It is with the same emotion that I welcome the foundation of the Tokyo University Alumni Association. of Korea. Thank you.