

President's Address
at a Welcoming Ceremony for Recruits of FY 2025

It is my great pleasure to welcome you, new colleagues, to JAEA.

I look forward to seeing each of you reach your fullest potential at your newly assigned destination.

We are witnessing every day a substantial change around us. This change is multifaceted and occurring almost simultaneously in politics, economy, and society.

In politics, the international peace order led by the United Nations that we have taken for granted since the end of World War II, is on the verge of crumbling down from its very foundations following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

As for the economy, the free trade system that has guaranteed the economic prosperity of various countries is collapsing, and economic blocs are beginning to form.

Turning our eyes to society, we find developed countries suffering decline in birth rates, large-scale ethnic movements known as immigration have become commonplace, and violent conflicts due to differences in sense of value take place more frequently, thereby rendering society as a whole less stable. The biggest change of all is that the carbon-based society that has been the basis of human prosperity since the beginning of human civilization is reaching its limits, and the whole world is moving simultaneously to build a new, carbon-free society.

Amidst these massive changes, Japan must rebuild a new social system.

The position of nuclear energy is changing significantly and so is the role of JAEA.

In particular, the so-called GX Policy, which proclaims "maximum use of nuclear energy to build a decarbonized society," can be a new lighthouse illuminating the course we should take.

In response to the policy of the government of Japan, JAEA set forth its new vision of "Exploration of a New Future with the Synergy of Nuclear and Renewable" in April 2023.

It is a statement of the direction of R&D that JAEA should proceed to challenge toward the realization of a decarbonized society by 2050, and consists of the following three areas.

- Synergy: R&D for pursuing synergy of nuclear and renewable energies;
- Sustainable: R&D for making nuclear energy itself sustainable; and
- Ubiquitous: R&D for applying nuclear technology to diverse field in society.

Our country has a large population living in a small territory, and we are not blessed with resources affordable enough to support the nation's basic needs, such as energy and food. Under these circumstances, our country cannot open the way to the future unless we continue to win the fierce international competition. In this sense, I believe that we, the current working generation, have the responsibility to create a stable social infrastructure for future generations, and for that purpose it is essential that we make maximum use of nuclear energy.

TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident is a clear example to prove, when handled incorrectly, nuclear energy can bring about tremendous disaster to society.

We must never forget this, and at the same time, we must keep in mind that nuclear R&D can only be carried out with the support of the people.

We must also remember that the value we create through our daily R&D activities can only be realized when implemented in society.

In other words, we must always be conscious of the will of society and act accordingly. We must never remain immersed and secluded content in a self-centered world.

Today, at the beginning of my speech, I touched upon the issues of "politics", "economy" and "society". Some of you may find this strange, but it is because I expect you to understand that in order for JAEA to deliver value to society through R&D, a broader perspective and viewpoint than required so far.

We live in an era where nuclear issues cannot be solved by nuclear science and technology alone. Of course, there is no doubt that nuclear science and technology are at the root of our value-creation activities.

However, delivering the value of nuclear energy to society requires knowledge and experience not only in other natural sciences such as IT, chemistry, and biology, but also in social sciences like politics, economics, finance, and law, as well as in humanities fields such as communication and psychology.

I want all of you to understand this in its essence.

I'd like you to look at your surroundings and yourself from a broad perspective, and then clearly determine the path you should take. This means that each and every one of you will become independent.

Looking at your fresh faces, I recall my nervous expression as I listened to the president's speech at the company's ceremony for new employees almost half a century ago.

When I think about where I am now, standing at the final stage of my life as a working adult, the work I have done each and every day up to now seems like a cornerstone that determines the meaning of my life.

I am grateful to have the opportunity to work in the nuclear field, and I strongly believe that achieving results here and delivering value to the nation and society would be a fitting final reckoning for my life.

In this sense, it is no exaggeration to say that all of you who are at the starting line and I, who am racing toward the finishing line, are comrades who pursue the same values.

Whether you work in research, engineering, or administrative positions there is no difference in the sense that we are all striving for a goal.

As President of JAEA, I would like to work together with you all to contribute to the future of Japan.

Welcome to JAEA, comrades.

I am delighted to have you here with us.

April 1, 2025
KOGUCHI Masanori
President