Greeting by Professor Dr.-Ing. Matthias Kleiner

15. April 2009 Tokyo – Opening DFG Office Japan

"Promoting Young Researchers in Germany and Japan"

Dear Mr. Kumekawa,
Dear Ambassador Daerr,
Dear Prof. Ono,
Dear Prof. Kitazawa,
Dear Prof. Kobayashi,
Dear distinguished guests, dear colleagues and friends,

On behalf of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft DFG, the German Research Foundation, I am very delighted to welcome you all to the opening of our new Japan Office. We are very glad to be here!

Our new office here in Tokyo underlines the fact that there is an extensive history of exchange and cooperation in science and research between our countries.

Relations between researchers of our countries indeed have a long-standing tradition. They go back to the Edo period (1600 – 1868) when Germans in Dutch service came to Japan to work for Dutch East India Company. You all may know names like Engelbert Kaempfer or Philipp Franz von Siebold.

At the end of the 19th century, Germany was often the country of choice for Japanese students in science and medicine. Japanese names like Mori Ogai or Kitasato Shibasaburo, an immensely talented young scientist who made breakthrough discoveries in bacteriology and immunisation when working with Robert Koch, are very familiar to us Germans.

And, already during the 1920s, there were intense collaborations between Germany and Japan in areas such as theoretical physics, and many of the well known physics working in Germany – including Albert Einstein and Max Planck – visited Japan during that time. And, these exchanges and collaborations contributed to a strong tradition in theoretical physics that lead to the first Japanese nobel prizes, in 1949 by Yukawa Hideki, and in 1965 by Tomonaga Shinichiro.

And also we, at the DFG, have a long history of collaboration with Japan. And not just collaboration. Let me tell you here the story of Hajime Hoshi who lived from 1873 to 1951. He is a renowed Japanese industrialist and entrepreneur, founder of the Hoshi Pharmaceutical company, the first enterprise in Japan to manufacture on commercial scale such alkaloids as morphine, cocaine, quinine and atropine. He is also the founder of Hoshi Pharmaceutical University in Tokyo. What is perhaps less well known to most of you is that Hoshi was also one of the early benefactor of the DFG, and of German science.

We all have come to embrace the idea that it is mainly states and nations that provide most of the funding for public scientific research that we tend to forget that until the end of the 19th century sponsorship for science has often been much more varied. In fact, the history of the DFG goes back to a private emergency fund, the „Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft“, set-up in a difficult moment for German Science when funding from public and private sources was simply drying up in the tormoil following the end of World War I.

At this very moment, it was people like Hajime Hoshi who provided support and assistance. When Wilhelm Solf, the German ambassador in Tokyo at that time, asked Shinpei Goto, Japan´s first stateman for science and research, for Japanese support to German scholars in times of financial hardship, Goto referred him to Hajime Hoshi. Hoshi responded with a sizeable donation to the Notgemeinschaft, which, in turn, set up a special „Hoshi Fund“ and a „Japan Board“ in order to dristribute the donated funds. Chaired by Fritz Haber, 1918 Nobel prize winner in chemistry for the synthesis of ammonia from its elements and also called the „father“ of the „Notgemeinschaft der deutschen Wissenschaft“, the review board included many nobel laureates, but also members of the German bureaucracy.

In the original documents – which we have tracked down in the DFG-archive in – it is said that Hoshi donated a considerable sum of money. Even in times Hoshi ecountered financial difficulties he kept on donating money to the Notgemeinschaft. The „Hoshi Fund“ or „Scholarship“ helped not only Friz Haber but also other Chemists and Physicians, e.g. Richard Martin Willstatter (1915 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry), Max Karl Ernst Ludwig Planck (1918 Nobel Laureate in Physic), Otto Hahn (1944 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Leo Szilard (one of Albert Einstein´s most gifted students) etc. Since 1924 young researchers had become the main target of the „Japan Board“.

It is thanks to personalities like Hajime Hoshi that I am here today, 80 years later, representing the DFG which stands nowadays for a proven system of self-governed research funding in Germany. Many of the values of former days still hold true for our work today: From the very beginning we were buttom-up oriented and very much focused on funding and supporting research excellence. Already 80 years ago, we engaged in promoting young researchers and we continued to do so since we know that research is first of all about people. That is also the reason why we chose as a topic for our opening symposium today „Promoting Young Researchers“.

Yet, some things have changed. Today, the DFG receives the vast majority of its funding – some 1.3 billion Euro annually – from the German federal (*Bund*) and state (*Länder*) governments. As a service provider to the scientific communities in Germany we today employ about 750 staff, including many highly qualified experts in all branches of the sciences. Further, we at the DFG are in the unique position to serve all branches of the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities.

And yet, over all these years we have kept our idependence. As a truly self-governed research funding body, in all of our boards and decision-making bodies, independent scientists and academics hold the

majority. And, the results speak for themselves: Almost every German Nobel Prize winner in the past few decades has been funded by the DFG.

It is then, with a sense of history that we are setting up a representative office here in Tokyo today. Its general mission is to create ideal conditions for the interchange of scientific information, build an extensive network of personal and professional links in order to enable research cooperation. The reason behind: Science in itself has become a truly global enterprise. But even in times of the Internet, personal contacts and networks between researchers remain crucial. It is still often within these networks that research groups are linked across the globe and that novel ideas and aproaches travel most quickly. Innovation in research often happens at the interface between different disciplines or even different scientific cultures.

For young scientists at an early stage in their career it is crucial to gain experiences in many different environments. And it is of course young scientists who are the true innovators. For us, at the DFG, it is a crucial goal to support young scientists and assist them at the most important moment in their career: To help them to gain independence. Here, also gender equality is a big task we face. Since 2002 the DFG included in its statues to promote equality between men and women in the scientific and academic communities. Some of our measures already show effects.

Yet, our objectives are all with the future. Japan and Germany as many other countries are facing big changes within the innovation systems. Key words like Centres of Excellence, Higher Education Reform are worldwide commonly know words nowadays. As a service provider, the DFG is a leader in the reform process taking place in higher education in Germany and decisively shapes this process by putting an absolute priority on academic excellence.

Japan today is a true scientific leader in many areas of science and I have no doubt that Japan´s role within the global scientific community will further grow in the years ahead. Therefore we are very happy to be in Japan and look forward to exciting years. We hope to join forces in order to make the scientific world move around.

I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have helped us in setting up our new office: the German Embassy and the Consulate General for their continued support and in particular Ambassador Daerr, who supported the idea of a DFG office in Tokyo from the minute the idea first came up to its realisation which we celebrate today. My thanks also go here in Tokyo to our Partner Organizations JSPS and JST. And my thanks go the OAG, the German Academic Exchange Service, Fraunhofer and the Goethe Institute, who are our direct neighbors and always ready to help us. I also want to thank the German Institute for Japanese Studies (DIJ) and the German Chamber of Commerce for their continued help and support.

Finally, I would like to thank my staff and introduce to you the people whom you will be working with: Dr. Iris Wieczorek, director of the Japan Office, and her counterparts at the DFG’s International

Affairs Division in Bonn, Dr. Ingrid Krüßmann (Director of the Division East Asia and Mongolia) and Sabine Ganter-Richter (Programme Officer) who support the Japan activities at our headquarter in Bonn.

I would also like to introduce you to additional colleagues from the DFG's Head Office: two of our Vicepresidents: Prof. Dr. Wagner, Prof. Dr. Samwer; Dr. von Kalm (head of the central administration Division), Dr. Schneider (head of the International Affairs Division), Dr. Streier (head of our Public Relations Division), Dr. Schmidtmann (head of Research Careers Division), Dr. Wehrberger (head of Research Centres Division, Dr. Krawisch (Director Sino German Center for Research Promotion) and Mr. Kiefer (Programme Director in the department Physics, Mathematics, Geosciences). We are are all very happy to be here and honoured that there will be opening remarks by Mr. Kumekawa, by Ambassador Daerr, Professor Ono, Professor Kitazawa and last but not least that Professor Kobayashi will give the key note speech today.

Let me close by saying that I hope that our office in Tokyo which demonstrates the long history and exchange will between our two countries will trigger exchange and successful cooperation between the research communities in Japan and Germany. And I hope that on both sides we will be able to encourage "nails that stick out" to choose a scientific career instead of "being hammered down", and that they work together in order to make the scientific world moving.

I am grateful to all of you for coming here today to mark the opening of our Japan Office. I wish you a pleasant day and informative and inspiring presentations and discussions. I look forward to talk to you during our lunch (sushi buffet) and coffee break.

I would now like to turn the mic over to Dr. Iris Wieczorek whom many of you might already know as she was active in the German/ Japanese scientific community for many years and still is. This time she just arrived in Japan two months ago and she will be your contact person here in Japan for the next years.