

It is my great pleasure to be afforded the opportunity to extend a hearty welcome to you all gathered here to participate in the Conference 'Geometry and Foliations 2003' at Ryukoku University in Kyoto.

Ryukoku University is comprised of seven faculties that include cultural, social and natural sciences. Our university was founded 364 years ago as a Buddhist university based on the Jodo Shinshyu Buddhism, which was founded by Shinran Shonin. The name Ryukoku comes from the sango of Nishi-Honganji, i.e. the title applied to Nishi-Hongannji Temple, and represents Otani, the site of the mausoleum of Shinran Shonin.

Starting as a specialized school that mainly provided education and research in the humanities, Ryukoku University has grown into a general university which includes a faculty of science and technology. Our university is the first and only Buddhist University in Japan that has a faculty of natural science.

The development of science and technology has no doubt greatly benefited humanity. However, it is also true that science and technology are threatening human dignity by damaging the environment.

It is human wisdom that infuses science with a new vitality. A religious mind and ethical spirit that encourage people to pursue a meaningful way of life are indispensable to the development of science and technology. Ryukoku University wants to create new wisdom that helps to make all the people content and peaceful in these times of modern science and technology.

I feel it highly significant that this Building No. 21 built for the 21st century was preferred for the Conference to our other buildings.

I wish to close with a firm belief that the Conference will not only be successful in the exchange of new ideas in various fields of foliations, but also offer you a wonderful chance to understand Kyoto more deeply and widely.

Thank You