

Preface

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These proceedings contain the results of the VIth International Symposium's "Nature and Humankind in the Age of Environmental Crisis", which was held at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (IRCJS). Since its foundation the IRCJS has held annual international symposiums on special topics.

On this occasion the symposium was organized as a joint project with the Scientific Research on Priority Areas, sponsored by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Culture as "Changes in the Earth Environment and the Rise and Fall of Civilization", in which numerous IRCJS members of staff participated, including its team research "Japanese View of Nature" which is organized by myself.

The global environmental crisis is one of today's great issues, and in response to which we seriously seek a new form of civilization. It is vitally important that we cooperate internationally, to understand how up to the present changes in the Earth's environment have led to the rise and fall of civilizations, and to rethink the relationship between man and nature, in order that we may find a way for humankind to survive of this planet into the twenty-first century.

The symposium was held between 28 September and 2 October 1992, and was attended by eleven eminent overseas scholars, from the US, Britain, France, Australia, Austria, India, and China, who are studying at the frontiers of this problem. It was also attended by some seventy eight excellent researchers from Japan, whose various specialist fields cover ecology, climatology, archeology, earth science, history, religion, psycho-analysis, philosophy etc. Some very suggestive reports were presented at the symposium which provoked enthusiastic discussions amongst the participants. After the symposium three public lectures on the "Japanese View of Nature" were held on 3 October at the Tokyu Hotel.

Reflecting on several newspaper reports on the symposium I believe it was a significant event which had a tremendous impact.

Unfortunately we are only able to present here the English language papers. Because of cost and size constraints we have been forced to omit the Japanese language papers and part of the participants discussions. Still I believe that this collection of papers will prove invaluable for readers.

For the success of this symposium we owe a debt of gratitude for the earnest support of numerous people. In particular I would like to express my deep sense of gratitude for his perpetual support to the Director of the IRCJS, Professor UMEHARA Takeshi, and for his indefatigable devotion, as secretary to the symposium, to YASUDA Yoshinori, and for the cooperation displayed by all members of the Organizing Committee. Finally I feel much obliged to the staff of the International Research Cooperation Division of the Administrative Department of the IRCJS.

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