

Dr Haruo Nishihara



Dr Haruo Nishihara, President of Waseda University in Japan, received the honorary degree of Doctor of the University at a conferring ceremony for the Faculty of Science on Thursday, 15 June 1989.



Dr Haruo Nishihara and Chancellor Sir Hermann Black, *photo*, 'The University of Sydney News', 20 June 1989, University Archives.

Report

Dr Nishihara requested to give the address. Although his understanding of spoken English was not strong, he gave his address entirely in English with an element of humour which was appreciated by the audience.

Dr Nishihara told the gathered assembly an amusing story about how he came to choose the University of Sydney as the one in Australia which would enter into academic exchanges with Waseda.

'Like Sydney and Melbourne in Australia, Oxford and Cambridge in England, Waseda and Keio in Japan are known as rival universities in our hundred year history,' he said. 'For many years, the two universities have been competing in various sports. Of course, Waseda has been prominent in many of them.'

'It was in 1983 that Waseda and Keio rowing clubs started a visit exchange program with Sydney and Melbourne, visiting the other group every two years. I have attended the Waseda-Keio Regatta since I took the presidency in 1982 and got acquainted with the Australian managers and crews who came to Japan every two years.'

Some alumni of our rowing club suggested to us that we develop the sports relationship into an academic exchange relationship. The question arose as to which university, Sydney or Melbourne, would be our partner.

'I noted that on the eve of the regatta the Melbourne crew went to bed very early, without drinking or socialising, while the crew from the University of Sydney stayed up till very late, getting to know the Waseda crew and, of course, drinking too much. As a result they lost the regatta the next day. From this, I realised how similar Waseda and Sydney are, and Sydney was chosen to be our partner.'

On a more serious note, Dr Nishihara said that in no other era had Asia played such an important role in world history. There was no doubt, he said, that Asia would grow and develop in the course of the 21st century.

As European countries would be united into the European Community in 1992, this suggested that the world would, in the near future, be divided into several large blocks. 'To which block will Australia, one of the five continents, belong?' he asked. 'My personal prediction is that Australia will be a major advanced country in the Pacific economic community which includes East Asia and Southeast Asia'.

Dr Nishihara said he believed that the relationship established between Waseda and the University of Sydney and the resulting mutual understanding and cooperation would contribute to the development and peace of the Pacific community.

After the ceremony, Dr Nishihara and his wife, Sachiko Nishihara, were presented with a charming framed painting by Marienne Wiles of a view of Sydney Harbour from Mrs Macquarie's Chair. In presenting it in his office, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor John Ward, said it was a gesture of goodwill and gratitude to Waseda University and its President in particular.

Later in the day, Dr and Mrs Nishihara participated in a tree-planting ceremony on Maze Crescent where they each planted one snow pear tree.

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