

June 20, 2019



I am Masahiro Takagi from School of Materials Science, Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology. I was appointed as the 22nd President of the Society of Biotechnology, Japan (SBJ). It is my privilege to serve as President of our Society and I am committing myself to the responsibilities of being such. With the help of Vice-President Prof. Eiichiro Fukuzaki (Osaka University), Dr. Yoji Hata (Gekkeikan), and director / executive members, we can bring more excitement in the celebration of our society's 100th anniversary in 2022 (Reiwa 4th). It is my desire to further promote the revitalization of the biotechnological field, and the improvement of membership services.

Please allow me to share with you with my thoughts as the new President of the SBJ.

【Issues to be addressed: Action plans】

Three action plans were proposed by the 19th SBJ President, Prof. Kenji Sonomoto. I will continue to implement the following plans:

1. Securing the economic foundation of the society
2. Formulating plans for public benefit, and fostering a culture of donations
3. Strengthening exchanges among members regardless of fields, ages and cultural backgrounds.

Furthermore, I would like to focus on the collaboration between the industry and the academia, and the improvement of the Society's English and Japanese Journals (JBB and Seibutsu-kogaku Kaishi).

【What is the unique feature of SBJ? Close Relationships】

The above plans are common matters to other academic societies, thus, we should always keep in mind the unique characteristics of the SBJ. Looking back at the history of our society, it started as an "Alumni Association" proposed by students. In its evolution and development, the SBJ encountered what seemed to be contradictions between sound development as an "academic society" and the nostalgia for an "alumni organization", as pointed out by our 5th President, Gyozo Terui. The idea of establishing a "non-top-down alumni association" has been cherished by members over the years, which certain people find to be unique. We hope that the society members continue to share their opinions and requests with the SBJ, and maintain their good relationship with other members. This kind of atmosphere is the energy that will further boost the development of the SBJ in the future.

【Relationship between science and technology】

In Japan, science and technology are highly developed fields. In such a society, I think it is necessary to reconsider the relationship between science and technology. Ryoji Ueda, a physicist, says: "Many Japanese believe that technology will be developed based on scientific knowledge. However, Galilei improved the telescope not after studying geometric optics. The steam engine is not the outcome of thermodynamic but the steam engine contributed to the development of thermodynamics. In history of science, there are many examples where applied research triggered basic science. Blackbody radiation brought a theoretical concept in quantum mechanics. Aspirin contributed lipid mediator research. We need to think more seriously about "innovation" in which the basic research develops after application studies.

"Biotechnology" is a typical interdisciplinary area of study, and various knowledge and methods have been developed by integrating each other. A creative research is born in the boundary area where different academic fields are integrated. Integration of academic fields starts with meeting people. Different peoples with different values in engineering, agriculture, medicine, pharmaceuticals, industry, government, academia etc. should be mutually and actively stimulated, confronted, and fused.

The important mission of the SBJ is to help our members get involved in creating innovation through interaction with society members from different fields. I would like to earnestly solicit the cooperation and active involvement of the SBJ members, and together we will all help the society in achieving its goals.

The Society for Biotechnology, Japan
President
Masahiro Takagi