

## Thai Sci-Tech Minister Visits AIST to Promote Cooperation

On June 5, 2004, a delegation of 20 science and technology officials from the Kingdom of Thailand visited AIST Tsukuba to further promote cooperative ties with the Institute. The group included Science and Technology Minister Korn Thapparansi and Permanent Secretary Sunthad Somchevita, as well as National Science and Technology Development Agency (NSTDA) President Pairash Thajchayapong.

The visit began with remarks from Minister Korn explaining the current Thai administration's strategy for promoting science and technology and actively importing personnel and technology to strengthen Thai industry. Thailand is also working to advance the development of human resources at the policy and organizational level. Conscious that Thailand lags behind Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, and Taiwan in science and technology, it has established NSTDA and four subsidiary research centers (BIOTEC for biotechnology, MTEC for materials, NECTEC for information technology, and NANOTEC for nanotechnology) to work on closing the gap. Listeners were particularly impressed by NSTDA's organizational structure, which has enabled and facilitates prompt action and rapid progress, without rule-binding procedures.

Participants from AIST included Senior Vice President Dr. Kisaburo Kodama, as well as two Vice Presidents, Dr. Kazunobu Tanaka and Dr.



Tatsuo Katsura. After the welcoming remarks, Dr. Hiroshi Yokoyama, director of the Nanotechnology Research Institute, provided an overview of research activities in nanotechnology, and Dr. Kenji Yokoyama, deputy-director of the Research Center of Advanced Bionics, described his organization's work. In addition, Dr. Michio Kondo, director of the Research Center for Photovoltaics, gave a presentation on the center's activities and conducted a tour of its solar panel installation.

The participants were divided into individual research fields at separate tables, and spirited discussions were held on ways to promote both comprehensive cooperation and collaboration in specific fields.

## President Yoshikawa Gives Zuckerman Lecture

On June 16, 2004, AIST President Hiroyuki Yoshikawa gave the Eleventh Annual Zuckerman Lecture in London. Speaking at the invitation of Lord David Sainsbury of Turville, Britain's Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Science and Innovation, Dr. Yoshikawa became the first Japanese to be selected for this honor since the series was inaugurated in 1994.

Named after Solly Zuckerman, the first Chief Scientific Adviser to the UK Government, the Zuckerman Lecture is given by important figures in the field of science policy at the invitation of Britain's Minister for Science and Innovation. Past lecturers include top science officials and scientists from various Western countries.

Dr. Yoshikawa spoke about the "Roles of the Scientist in Sustainable Society," covering such subtopics as "The Scientist and the Social Contract," "The Scientist and Discipline," and "Full Research." Professor Yoshikawa also explained the role and function of AIST as an organization promoting Full Research. After the lecture he fielded numerous questions regarding Japan's energy policy and other issues. He exchanged ideas on research trends in Japan and the UK and bilateral cooperation, with Lord Sainsbury, Professor Sir David King (the British



government's current Chief Scientific Advisor), Sir John Browne (BP Amoco CEO), and other eminent British figures in the field of science and technology, as well as Mr. Masaki Orita, Japanese Ambassador to the UK, and Dr. Yasuhisa Kanaguchi, Director of the London Office of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.

## Second AIST and KOCI Joint Workshop Held in Hokkaido

On June 29, 2004, the Second AIST and KOCI Joint Workshop was held in the city of Sapporo in Hokkaido. KOCI, the Korea Research Council for Industrial Science and Technology, is a government organization directly under the South Korean Prime Minister that comprises seven research centers devoted to various fields of industrial technology (Research Institute of Chemical Technology, Institute of Machinery and Materials, Institute of Industrial Technology, Electronics and Telecommunications Research Institute, Electrotechnology Research Institute, Institute of Oriental Medicine, and Food Research Institute). In February 2002, AIST and KOCI signed a comprehensive cooperation agreement. The first workshop was held in South Korea in November 2002 and dealt primarily with administrative aspects of research collaboration and assessment. It was therefore agreed that the second workshop would focus on specific research topics.

After opening remarks by AIST President Hiroyuki Yoshikawa and his KOCI counterpart President Won-Hoon Park, a total of 21 presentations were given on subjects such as materials, bioscience, and energy. The presentations were followed by lively question-and-answer sessions. The workshop provided a valuable opportunity to advance cooperation in specific areas of research.



## A\*STAR Visits AIST

From July 13 to July 15 2004, a group of officials from the Agency for Science, Technology, and Research (A\*STAR), a core research center in Singapore, visited both AIST Tokyo Waterfront and AIST Tsukuba. They engaged in talks with President Yoshikawa and top AIST administrators and toured AIST's research units.

In addition to formulating the Singapore government's science and technology policy and allocating its science and technology budget, A\*STAR oversees 12 research institutes covering a wide range of fields, including bioscience, IT, and materials. Managing Director Boon Swan Foo (at right, photo below), who led the A\*STAR delegation, was already well acquainted with the AISTs activities as a member of the AIST Advisory Board. (President Yoshikawa, likewise, is a member of the A\*STAR board.) Nonetheless, after touring the facilities, he expressed a respect for the AIST's capacities and indicated his eagerness to conclude a future agreement for comprehensive cooperation. AIST and A\*STAR plan to move forward with discussions leading to such an agreement, regarding each other as an important partner in their Asia strategy.



## Dr. Ohji of AIST Appointed Fellow of American Ceramic Society

Dr. Tatsuki Ohji, Principal Research Scientist of the Advanced Manufacturing Institute, was granted the title of Fellow by the American Ceramic Society at its 106th Annual Meeting. The title, regarded as one of the highest honors for a specialist in the field of ceramics, is conferred on world-

class researchers who have made an outstanding contribution to the ceramic arts or sciences. Dr. Ohji became the second AIST researcher to receive this honor, following Dr. Shuzo Kanzaki, Director of the Advanced Manufacturing Institute.

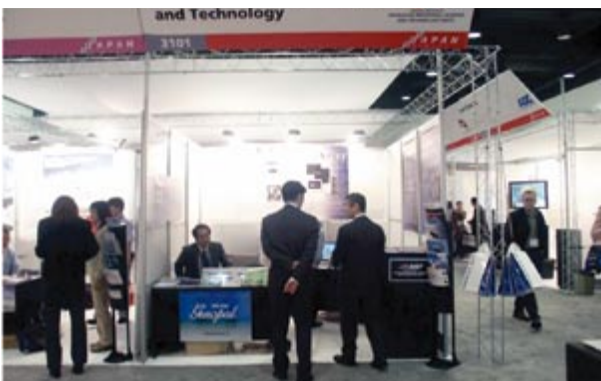
In his work Dr. Ohji has attempted to elucidate the characteristics of ceramics both experimentally and theoretically and to shed light on the mechanisms leading to their formation. He has made a particularly important contribution to confirming the longevity and reliability of such materials through studies into their long-term deformation properties and fracture life at high temperatures. Through his studies on the mechanism of toughness in composite materials, he has established clear guidelines for designing tougher materials. In addition, his studies on the microstructure of porous materials and their properties have revealed why their dynamic properties often surpass those of nonporous materials. Dr. Ohji's work has been hailed internationally for its wide-ranging and important findings.



## AIST Exhibits at BIO 2004

The BIO 2004 Annual International Convention is a biotech industry exposition attracting participants from all over the world. This year's event was held June 6–9 at the Moscone Center in the heart of San Francisco's downtown district. The AIST booth displayed publicity posters for the institute, as well as showing a video, and exhibiting products from InfoGenes Co, Ltd., the first bio-venture company of AIST.

The exhibition space was lavishly decorated



and divided into blocs by country and US state. The Japanese pavilion featured exhibits from 57 companies. The AIST booth was very popular with a large number of visitors, including individual visitors from Australia and Canada. It proved a powerful publicity tool, raising public awareness of AIST and its activities.

BIO 2004 attracted considerable attention in the United States, drawing some 17,000 participants. BIO 2005 will be held in Philadelphia.

## Industry and Agricultural Science Link up for ASEAN Biomass Meeting

On July 23, 2004, the first ASEAN Biomass Meeting was held at AIST Tsukuba heralding a partnership between industry and agricultural research organizations. The conference falls under the Science and Technology Promotion Program of the Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science, and Technology. It exists to allow Japan and the ASEAN countries to discover ways to cooperate in formulating a strategy and planning a research and development program which will lead to the effective use of biomass, an abundant resource in the ASEAN region.

AIST has been working on an industry-government-academia partnership to pursue the effective use of biomass from an engineering standpoint. By establishing an alliance between businesses on the one hand and research institutions and universities involved in agricultural research on the other, the recent meeting has set the stage for this topic to be tackled on a national basis. Participants were five agriculture research institutes including the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), as well as the Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE), the University of Tokyo, and various companies in related industries. Remarks by AIST Research Coordinator Masayuki Kamimoto, JIRCAS Vice-President Akinori Noguchi, and Program Officer Dr. Hiroshi Takahashi of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) were followed by an overview by Dr. Yoshiyuki Sasaki, Director of the Biomass Technology Research Laboratory (AIST), and reports from each of the participating institutions.

Future plans call for international workshops and similar events to strengthen partnerships with major ASEAN research institutions. There are also plans to consider the designation of a new category of R&D created through the partnership of engineering and agriculture science.