

CHAPTER III

TWENTY THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

CLOSING CEREMONY

August 20, 1997, 14.00
Kyoto International Conference Hall, Main Hall

Address by the President 1994-1997, Prof. L. Woltjer

Looking back over my six years on the Executive Committee, there are two sources of satisfaction: The divisional structure of the Union has become firmly implanted with its potential for greater effectiveness and representativity, and the integration of the Symposia into the General Assembly has greatly increased the scientific interest in this triennial event. The result is visible: At Buenos Aires there were a thousand attendees, here at Kyoto the double.

On this occasion, I would like to thank the General Secretary and Assistant General Secretary for a period characterized by cordial cooperation. The General Secretary has a very heavy task and Immo Appenzeller has executed his function with calm, judgement and effectiveness. Also the Paris Office with Monique Orine and Julie Saucedo has contributed much. It is not always easy to run a rather lonely office for an organization with nearly ten thousand members; it has been done well, with administrative expenses going down while the number of members went up.

This General Assembly has been resounding success thanks to the unceasing efforts of Daiichiro Sugimoto and Toshio Fukushima and their numerous collaborators. Our former President Yoshihide Kozai did much to raise funds, and I also wish to acknowledge the members of the Astronomical Society of Japan who made a substantial personal contribution.

Address by the President 1997-2000, Prof. R.P. Kraft

First of all, on behalf of all IAU members, spouses and friends, I want to express our sincere appreciation to those persons and organizations who made possible this especially productive General Assembly: to the members of the Advisory Board of the Host Organizations and its Chairperson, Dr. Yoshio Fujita, President of the Japan Academy, to the members of the National Organizing Committee and its Chairperson, Dr. Daiichiro Sugimoto, and to members of the Local Organizing Committee and its Chairperson, Dr. Toshio Fukushima. Their hard work and attention to many details have been the major factors in making this GA so exciting socially, culturally and scientifically.

As we approach the new millenium, our Union appears strong and, in my view, headed in the right direction. On the administrative level, the new Divisional structure admits of a close connection of the Division Presidents with the Executive Committee. This, for example, will greatly assist the EC in the process of rank-ordering proposals for future Symposia and Colloquia. On the scientific front, the integration of several timely Symposia with the GA yields an important new dividend: in what other venue could one explore, in the same assembly, an organized exposition of topics ranging from solar physics to cosmology? At the same time, the rule which insures a wide national representation on SOCs helps to maintain the truly international, and to a great extent unique, flavor of IAU sponsored Symposia and Colloquia.

Returning to affairs of this GA, it was very impressive to hear the many excellent papers presented by our Japanese colleagues, and to recognize the increasing importance of the work of Japanese astronomers on the world astronomical scene. We are all aware of significant advances made here in space sciences, mm wave astronomy, and nuclear astrophysics. The completion of the Subaru Telescope on Mauna Kea and the recent launch of HALCA will provide new and virtually unparalleled opportunities for Japanese observational astronomers. We wish them good luck and "happy hunting" with the new facilities.

Address by Robert J. Rubin, on behalf of the Registered Guests

We, the Registered Guests and Accompanying Persons wish to express our appreciation and thanks to Professor Fujita's Advisory Board, to the National Organizing Committee, to the Local Organizing Committee, their staffs and all the volunteers who have created and participated in our excellent program. Particularly for those of us from abroad, we have learned much about the history and culture of Kyoto and Japan.

We especially note the marvellous organization of the tour to Nara, the strategic placement of Japanese guides with cold drinking water (in plastic bags), their directions to and from the chartered trains, as well as the placement of guides in Nara Park. It all made for a memorable day.

Kyoto is one of the greatest cities in the world in which to be Registered Guest or Accompanying Person (and in which to a General Assembly).

Again, we thank you all. Domo arigato-o gozai masu.

Address by Dr G. Cayrel de Strobel, on behalf of the Participants

President Woltjer, General Secretary Appenzeller, Assistant General Secretary Andersen, the IAU Secretariat with Monique and Julie, Prof. Fujita, Prof. Sugimoto, Dr Fukushima, all Members of the Executive Committee of the IAU, of the Japanese National Organizing Committee and of the Japanese Local Organizing Committee, on behalf of all Participants, I have the great honor of expressing our deep gratitude for the wonderful organisation of the XXIIIth General Assembly of the IAU.

Everything was perfect: from the breathtaking KICH Building to the choice of: 6 Symposia, 24 Joint Discussions, and 3 Special Sessions. All these scientific events have occurred smoothly, in an orderly manner. What we have learnt in the KICH Building will come back to us, once back in our respective countries.

In 1988, during the XXth IAU General Assembly in Baltimore, we had the feeling that something unique would happen in Astronomy soon. Nine years later the Space Telescope is distributing to all of us its marvellous scientific results.

The Invited Discourse of Prof. Williams has illustrated how far the eye of the Space Telescope can penetrate in the deep Universe, opening new puzzles, hopefully to be solved by its successor the Next Generation Space Telescope (NGST).

Prof. Warner in his Invited Discourse has given an impressive view of one of the most capricious astronomical objects: the well named Cataclysmic Variables.

Prof. Novikov has with great courage, in less than one hour, introduced us, with beautiful viewgraphs, in the most dramatic astronomical situation: that of the Black Holes.

I cannot finish this talk without expressing my deep gratitude to two Astronomers with whom I collaborated for many years: Jun Jugaku and Nobuo Arimoto. Arriving in Kyoto I heard that, surprisingly, they have changed activity: one is now Newspaper Editor, and everyone of us has enjoyed the sense of humour present in the "Sidereal Time", and one became Managing Director of the Local Finances of the IAU. I hope, however, that soon they will return to their original job: our dear Astronomy.

Again a very warm THANK YOU to all the Organizers of the XXIII IAU General Assembly.

Address by the retiring General Secretary, Prof. I. Appenzeller

Members of the Union, Dear Friends,

When I accepted the office of General Secretary three years ago I expected a fair amount of work, the pleasure of interacting with colleagues in many different countries, and the satisfaction of rendering a valuable service to the international astronomical community.

Looking back today I am pleased to state that all these expectations turned out to be correct.

There was, in fact, plenty of work to do. When I recently brought the part of my IAU correspondence which I had kept in Heidelberg to our archives in Paris I found that I had accumulated during the three years about 4000 letters, faxes and e-mails. But although there has been a lot of work - and although I am definitely not unhappy to hand over today this office to my successor - the last three years were also pleasant and satisfying.

Among the reasons why this office remained a pleasure and did not become a burden I would like to mention first the excellent cooperation with our President, with the Assistant General Secretary and with the other members of our Executive Committee. Therefore, many thanks to all of you here on the stage. Of course, much of the work in such an organisation goes on back-stage, behind the scenes. In the case of the IAU this means in our office in Paris. Hence I would like to express my special thanks to our Paris staff, Monique Orine and Julie Saucedo, for their hard and dedicated work and for the pleasant and cheerful atmosphere at the Paris office which I will surely miss in the future.

Another factor which made this work easy and pleasant was the very good cooperation which I received from all sections of our Union. This cooperative spirit is certainly one of the characteristics of our astronomical community, perhaps reflecting the fact that astronomers are particularly attached to their science and fascinated by the work which they are doing.

My term of office ends here in Kyoto during the first IAU General Assembly taking place in Japan. I am sure that this meeting will be remembered for a long time not only for its beautiful venue, for attracting a record number of participants, but also for an exceptionally efficient and smooth local organisation. Thus, I would like to conclude this address with a few personal words to our Japanese hosts:

今回、日本で開催される第一回国際天文学連合総会の組織委員に参加させて頂くことができ、大変光栄に思います。多くの方はご存知かもしれませんが、私が日本の天文学界に関わるようになったのは、25年以上も前に宇野わさぶろう、上条ふみお両教授に東京大学に招かれのりがきっかけでした。それ以来、私は日本における天文学に多大な関心を寄せ続け、そのすばらしい進歩にはただただ敬服するばかりです。今日、天文学の分野においては日本は重要な役割を果たしており、その意味でもIAU総会がここ日本で開催されるのは当然かと思われま。期待した通り、杉本だいいちろう教授のNational Organizing Committeeと福島としお教授のLocal Organizing Committeeの働きによって、総会の準備も整い、すばらしく組織されたものになりました。

お二人をはじめメンバーのみなさまのすばらしい働きに感謝いたします。

Address by the incoming General Secretary, Dr. J. Andersen

Fellow members of the IAU, dear colleagues and friends,

It is with considerable trepidation that I venture to fill the last place of the century in the long line of IAU General Secretaries, which includes so many of the most distinguished astronomers of their time. Yet, like in astronomical research, there are useful functions for people of many kinds. So, with the guidance of the Executive Committee, perhaps even someone like I might be of the useful kind. Et à mes amis français: Je ferai mon mieux pour utiliser les deux langues officielles de l'Union selon les circonstances de la situation!

I suppose my predecessors have also been asked the question, "What attracts a person to the job of IAU General Secretary?". Apart from the opportunity to help our science flourish by international cooperation, an attractive challenge in itself, a quality of the IAU which I find particularly charming is what might be called "constructive disobedience". Maybe because astronomy is such a wholly peaceful, inherently apolitical, and generally non-lucrative enterprise, the IAU has had the opportunity, from time to time, to circumvent political conventions to some extent and help penetrate or undermine the political walls that still separate some of our communities. As a recent example I was delighted to see, at the Asian-Pacific Regional Meeting in Korea last year, how astronomers from both parts of China were happily discussing the results of their ongoing joint research projects. And the very successful International School for Young Astronomers in Iran which Don Wentzel and his team have just held, is another small, but significant step in the same direction: It is good to remember that walls are torn down the same way they are built, stone by stone.

In practical terms, I often think of the IAU as a ship: On the bridge, the Officers (the Executive Committee) set out the course, and down below the Chief Engineer (the General Secretary) and the crew try to maneuver the machinery to make the ship actually move in that direction. To someone on the shore the ship may seem to move very slowly, but below deck a lot of activity is going on.

Similarly, to some of you the IAU may seem to move frustratingly slowly on your favourite issues. Yet, despite the fact that we are running on very limited supplies of fuel (=money), there is indeed "evolution on human time scales", as the working title of one Joint Discussion was at one time: In The Hague, the new format of the General Assemblies was introduced, and while some fine tuning may remain, this is essentially a great and undisputed improvement. The pooling of Symposium and General Assembly travel funds that has allowed such a large attendance at this General Assembly is one of the ways in which we try to maximise the scientific returns of our funds.

Moreover, under my predecessor, the new Division structure was introduced on an trial basis that has led to its formal acceptance at this General Assembly. I look forward to working with the Division Presidents to turn the Division structure into a real "turbo charger" for the IAU machinery. And finally, Saturday's Joint Discussion showed that the IAU is finding a useful place as a forum for early, informal discussions of possible future large-scale facilities much sooner than I would have dared hope even a year ago.

You will be able to judge the progress in these matters for yourself when we meet again in Manchester in the year 2000. I look forward to working with our British friends to make the XXIVth General Assembly another memorable event. Our Japanese hosts at this General Assembly have set the standards by which we shall be judged extremely high, but we shall take their example as our best inspiration.

Finally, I look forward to working, on the one hand with the new Executive Committee and with you, the Members, and on the other hand with our small, but very capable staff, Monique Orine and Julie Saucedo. Many of you have already expressed your appreciation for their always kind and efficient help, as I shall do again three years from now.

My last words must go to my predecessor, Immo Appenzeller, whose kind and diplomatic instruction over the last three years to the intricacies of the job of General Secretary of the IAU will be my compass over the next three years.