

# KOBE UNIVERSITY LIAISON OFFICE AT JU

**Maria Kantor**

*International Relations Office*

During an official visit of the delegation of Kobe University, Japan, a Kobe University Liaison Office in Kraków was opened at the JU Faculty of Philosophy, the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations, on 22 October 2015. The Japanese delegation consisted of Prof. Hiroshi Takeda, President, Prof. Matsuto Ogawa, Executive Vice President in charge of research and industry-university co-operation, Prof. Noriyuki Inoue, Executive Vice President in charge of international

JU International Relations Office, also took part in the meeting. It is worth noting that during the EAIE Conference 2015 in Glasgow D. Maciejowska and Marta Ganobis-Bednarska, International Student Mobility Office, had already talked over the possibility of broadening bilateral co-operation with Prof. Kiyomitsu Yui, Director of the Center for EU Studies, and Eri Anno from Kobe University in the framework of the Erasmus+ Partner Countries Programme and within Jointly Supervised PhDs. These talks were continued during the visit of the Japanese delegation to Kraków. Soon an Erasmus+ Partner



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*M. Kudelska, M. Ogawa, S. Kistryn, H. Takeda, A. Mania, N. Inoue*

exchange and internal control, as well as Simon Yellin and Eri Anno, International Affairs Planning Division. The guests were greeted by Prof. Leszek Sosnowski from the JU Institute of Philosophy. It was Prof. Marta Kudelska, the Head of the Centre, that unveiled the office sign and handed Prof. Takeda a key to the office. As stressed by President Takeda, the Kobe University Liaison Office in Kraków will contribute to further development of Kobe University in international research and education.

The JU Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations is the only teaching-research unit of this type in Poland. It combines an interdisciplinary approach with practical knowledge of Oriental languages (Japanese, Tibetan, Arabic and Hindi) based on the classical traditions of historical and archaeological research as well as on the modern multidimensional approach to contemporary cultural phenomena. Its research embraces religion, ethnicity, literature, sociology, art and pop-culture.

After the opening ceremony the delegation of Kobe University was received by Prof. Andrzej Mania, Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs, and Prof. Stanisław Kistryn, Vice-Rector for Research and Structural Funds. The meeting was held in Collegium Novum. Dorota Maciejowska, Head of the

Countries agreement between the JU and Kobe University will be signed.

## Co-operation between JU and Kobe University

A five-year agreement of scientific co-operation was signed between the Jagiellonian University and Kobe University on 10 October 2013. The agreement was signed in Collegium Maius by the JU Rector Prof. Wojciech Nowak and the President of Kobe University Dr Hideki Fukuda, during the official visit of the delegation from Kobe to Kraków. The document assumes joint research, publications as well as faculty and student exchange.

The idea of signing a university-wide agreement was discussed for several years as the contacts between these two universities started in the late 1990s. It was the late Professor Andrzej Flis (1953-2009) who initiated the contacts when he was a visiting lecturer in sociology at Kobe University. Prof. Flis conducted research in a wide variety of subjects: the sociology of culture, theory of civilisations, cultures of the Far East as well as early Christian history (particularly in the Near East and Egypt), the history of European civilisation and its modern transformations.

The first agreement between the JU Faculty of Philosophy and the Faculty of Letters and Graduate School of Humanities of Kobe University was signed in November 1998 and then extended on 27 July 2012. It concerns exchange of students for a semester or a year.

In turn, in 2002, Prof. Kiyomitsu Yui lectured on the structure of the Japanese family and the specifics of the Japanese manga in the JU Institute of Sociology. In 2004, Prof. Flis took part in the seminar entitled 'Sociology of the body' held at the Kobe Centre of Excellence.

The scientific contacts were enlarged to embrace the JU Institute of History and the Faculty of International and Political Studies, which in 2013 joined the project 'EU-Japan Advanced Multidisciplinary Master Studies' managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The EU leading institution in the project is the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium. The JU partner in the project, the Institute of European Studies, sends two students to Kobe and receives three students from Kobe. As for the staff mobility, three faculty members are expected to go to Kobe and one will come to teach at the Jagiellonian University.



Prof. M. Kudelska unveiling the office sign

As for student exchange, in the 2014/15 academic year, five JU students went to Kobe University, while three Japanese students studied at the JU.

Kobe University comprises 14 graduate schools and 11 undergraduate faculties. In the 2014/15 academic year, it had 2,617 staff and 16,537 students, including 1,096 international students.

## Disability Support Service in new premises

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The Jagiellonian University Disability Support Service moved to its new facilities in the newly-opened building of Paderevianum II. The mission of the Disability Support Service is to provide equal opportunities for persons with disabilities through the development and implementation of reasonable adjustments aimed at ensuring their equal treatment in access to education. The Service assists not just people with physical disabilities, that is blind and partially sighted persons as well as those deaf and hard of hearing, with mobility disabilities and with learning difficulties, but also those students who experience mental-health and adaptation difficulties. It also assists University personnel who experience difficulties at work, excessive stress or various personal issues.

The opening ceremony, held on 7 October 2015 within the framework of an Open Day, gathered the JU authorities, including

the Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs Prof. Andrzej Mania, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Philology Ass. Prof. Władysław Witalisz, academics, the representative of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy Mr Krzysztof Kosiński and Prof. Willy Aastrup from Aarhus University, Denmark, with which the JU Disability Support Service has collaborated for 16 years. The host of the meeting was Mr Ireneusz Białek, Head of the Disability Support Service.

After official speeches which focused on the significance of the new premises, which will provide help and educational support for numerous students and staff, the participants of the ceremony visited the multimedia workshops (computers and interactive boards for learning foreign languages), training room (e-learning platform), support technologies workshop (Braille printer, speech synthesisers), counselling room and wellbeing area.

The Open Day ended with the lecture 'Chess in mediaeval culture' delivered by Dr Wiktor Szymborski from the JU Institute of History. The lecture was adapted for the needs of those with sight and hearing disabilities.

The next day was filled with workshops for foreign language teachers and employees of disability support offices from Polish universities. The workshops were organised in co-operation with the Jagiellonian Language Centre. The lectures concerned such issues as teaching English to the hard of hearing, methodology of teaching partially sighted people and modern technologies supporting the education of the disabled.

Finally, it should be stressed that currently the Jagiellonian University Disability Support Service is the most modern educational support centre in Poland. Inclusive education (a pairing of philosophy and pedagogical practices that allow each student to feel respected, confident and safe so he or she can learn and develop to his or her full potential) is a standard at the Jagiellonian University and the Service staff implement all the standards of support for persons with disabilities.



Training room

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