

THE MITO NUCLEAR DATA CONFERENCE,
AN IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL MEETING

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We arrived at the Mito Plaza Hotel at dusk on the Saturday before the conference was to start, I primarily to attend the meeting and my wife to be a tourist in a country new to us. We were, as travelers from the United State to Japan for the first time, looking forward to an enjoyable and educational week's stay. Our first surprise happened on Sunday morning when we went to breakfast. We found the hotel lobby already a very busy place. We learned that there were to be twelve marriages at the hotel that day!

The conference started on Monday. There were about 300 in attendance, and I met many colleagues, some of whom have been recent correspondents, many for the first time. It was enjoyable to renew old acquaintances. The conference proceeded right on schedule, and I found myself impressed with two aspects of this conference. The first impression was on how well organized it was and how smoothly the conference proceeded. The organizing committee did its job well. The second impression was on the maturity of the field of Nuclear Data in all its aspects; an impression, by the way, that was reflected in the Summary remarks of Drs. Harada and Smith on Friday afternoon.

The field has grown manifold during my career of thirty years of measurements of nuclear data. From the first needs of providing data for the basic understanding of nuclear physics, through the early years of needing nuclear data for fission reactor development, until today (as the list of Conference Topics developed by the Program Committee indicated) the need for nuclear data has expanded into many diverse fields. These include not only the field of fusion reactor development but also solid-state physics research, metallurgical research, biomedical research, industrial development, and geophysics and astrophysics. The field of Nuclear Data has become the backbone of much research and development being done today, and, as Dr. Salvatores observed in his Summary remarks, definitely requires international cooperation for its continued growth and utility. We have not forgotten our initial goals of providing data for a thorough understanding of the physics of the nucleus, and, in this regard, it was exciting to learn of new facilities and experiments designed to explore higher energy (greater than 20 MeV) neutron interactions with nuclei and also to learn of new theoretical developments leading toward a better understanding of the underlying physics.

Much new information was presented to the conference attendees in the large conference-banquet room of the Mito Plaza Hotel (where the ceiling lighting fixtures gave the appearance of being outdoors). I think, though, that the most important aspect of the Mito meeting was the bringing together of scientists from some 35 countries to share their experiences and information. For five days there was enthusiastic interaction by scientific researchers throughout the Conference areas and in the restaurants and parks of the beautiful city of Mito. Our Japanese hosts, in no small measure with a well-organized and smoothly run meeting, were instrumental in making this Conference a success.

We have a saying in my country, "All good things must come to an end." So on Saturday morning following the close of the meeting, we left the Mito Plaza Hotel with once again a full lobby. There were seven marriages scheduled for that day at the hotel, unions of families in the same surroundings that for five days had nurtured unions of ideas.