



Left: The summit discussion between Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) held at Stanford University. Condoleezza Rice (center), Director of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, served as moderator when Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio (right) and President YOON Suk Yeol of the ROK (left) exchanged opinions. Bottom: Prime Minister Kishida gave a speech at the beginning of the discussion.



STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION

BETWEEN JAPAN AND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA IN ADVANCED SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have been deepening their relationship as most important neighbors to each other—as well as “shuttle diplomacy” in which their leaders visit each other without being bound by formality—in earnest since last year. In November 2023, a Japan-ROK event was held at Stanford University in the United States, where the two leaders expressed their desire to strengthen cooperation both bilaterally and trilaterally with the United States in the field of advanced science and technology.

On November 17, 2023, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio visited Stanford University in the United States. There, he attended a summit discussion with President YOON Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on advanced science and technology.

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister Kishida said that, in the field of science and technology, “No one country alone can cause innovation that will change the world.” He cited “semiconductors, quantum technology, and AI” as specific examples, and said that for innovations in these fields, “Japan’s

component and materials technology, Korea’s mass production technology, and America’s AI chips are all required. And if there is one element missing, there will be no innovation.”

In particular, the prime minister noted that semiconductor performance improvement is reaching its physical limitations, and against this backdrop, attention to quantum technology is increasing, stating at the summit discussion that “Quantum technology is a complete game changer.” On the other hand, he expressed the view that

“This area is still under development, a work in progress.” Referring to the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Japanese and Korean national institutes in the field of quantum technology, the prime minister went on to say, “Currently, investment is being attracted to this area across the globe. Through cooperation among Japan, the U.S. and the ROK, we would like to lead in this technology-development competition.” President Yoon then said, “In the area of quantum technology, I believe that global cooperation is the most crucial factor, because there is no one country in the world that has a complete understanding of quantum technology and there is no one country that can develop all quantum technologies on its own.”

During the question-and-answer session that ensued, both leaders were asked about what efforts Japan and the ROK were making to ensure that the world is united in solving the global crisis that is climate change. In response, Prime Minister Kishida echoed President Yoon’s point that there is a global divide between developed and developing nations in terms of the impacts from climate change, saying, “I proposed the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) initiative and am injecting efforts into that initiative. In Southeast Asian countries, there are diverse situations, so there has to be something that achieves both economic growth and zero emissions. Therefore, I am working on setting up a mechanism to attract investments for transition to achieve both of these goals.”

Prime Minister Kishida also expressed the view that it was important to build a global ecosystem of startups, saying, “New ideas emerge through multilayered exchange between diverse people.” Taking part in a roundtable discussion on the same day as the summit discussion, attended by Japanese and Korean startup companies together with the leaders of both nations, MATSUOKA Yoko, founder of Yohana, said, “Participating in the roundtable made me hopeful for the future and all the ways in which technology can help people be who they want to be.” She then spoke of AI technology, elaborating on one of the key topics of the summit discussion, “AI without a doubt will change the world as we know it and will affect everyone’s lives in some way. On the other hand, AI is moving too fast and this concerns me. We need to approach AI responsibly and establish guidelines worldwide for its use.”

Resuming “shuttle diplomacy” for the first time in 12 years, and holding seven summit meetings in just 2023 alone, Japan and the ROK are expanding their cooperation while improving relations. In his speech, Prime Minister Kishida said, “Partnership in science and technology will become the symbol of the changing Japan-ROK relationship. Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK partnerships will change the world.” Strengthening cooperation among Japan, the ROK, and the United States in the field of advanced science and technology should go a long way toward helping to solve global issues and improve security. ●



Top: MATSUOKA Yoko, Executive Officer of Panasonic Holdings Corporation, is also the CEO of Panasonic WELL and Yohana, a startup that provides a family concierge service to help people organize and complete household tasks. Right: A roundtable between the leaders of Japan and the ROK and several startup companies.

