

## Nozomi Kariyasu's Speech at the Opening Ceremony of ICV 23 Yokohama

Mr. Michel Lupant, President of the International Federation of Vexillological Associations (FIAV), Delegates from around the world, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning, I am President of the Japanese Vexillological Association, Nozomi Kariyasu.

It is my great pleasure to welcome everyone here today to the Opening Ceremony of the 23<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Vexillology in Yokohama, Japan. My dream becomes a reality. I would like to extend a special and very warm welcome to the visiting representatives of all FIAV member countries and thank you all for the decision to come to Yokohama despite a world-wide recession. It is truly a great honor for us to be able to hold an internationally recognized event here in Yokohama, Japan's largest international shipping port and an international city celebrating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the port and a country to the world.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> International Congress of Vexillology is the first Congress held in the continent of Asia. We will present several lectures on flags of Japan and other East Asia countries not published before. We also sell flags, Samurai banners, Kamon-related Japanese books at our booth in the Congress Venue which we believe will be a great convenience to Congress Participants. At the booth we will display East Asian flag books as well.

We have heard that most of Congress participants have not visited Japan before. So we strongly recommend that you to travel around beautiful Japan after the Congress. Our association does not have enough staff members to make sufficient preparation of the Congress, so some inconvenience might occur during the Congress period. However, I trust we are able to strengthen our friendships through lecture presentations and exchange of flag information, and have both an enjoyable and rewarding five days.

I would like to close my speech by specially thanking the executives from FIAV, The Flag Society of Australia, and the North American Vexillological Association, including our best supporter, the late Mr. Harry Oswald, for their advice, support, and encouragement in connection with hosting this Congress. I hope you all will enjoy five days of talking about flags all day long!

Now Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me invite the President of FIAV, Mr. Michel Lupant, to give his welcome speech.