

What CSJ should do and what only CSJ can do



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The Chemical Society of Japan used to be two separate entities, the former Chemical Society of Japan and the Society of Chemical Industry. After World War II, they were merged into the present-day Chemical Society of Japan. There must have been various challenges in carrying out the merger. However, our predecessors put away minor differences and jointly established the current Chemical Society of Japan (CSJ) for the sake of Japanese chemistry. I feel genuinely grateful for their great achievement.

It is not necessary to re-emphasize the importance of having a chemical academy that represents Japan. For example, if there were still several separate chemical academies, negotiators would face various inconveniences at international conferences such as the Hawaii Annual Meeting and the IUPAC.

When appeals are made to the society, it is especially effective to take action as a comprehensive academy which covers the whole range of issues from basics to applications in chemistry. Back in the 1980s, the research environments in Japanese universities were of an extremely dangerously-poor standard. Awareness of this situation grew gradually, as CSJ took voluntary action and compiled an investigative report titled "*Nihon-no Kagaku-wo Torimaku Kenkyu Kankyo*" (Research Environments surrounding Chemistries in Japan), which was published in 1988. After that, the Science Council of Japan took action; political and bureaucratic circles were convinced as well; the Science and Technology Basic Law was enacted; and research and educational environments were actually improved at universities and research institutions. Having said that, it took more than 10 years before the results of this accomplishment could be seen.

On the occasion of the construction of *Kagaku-Kaikan* (Chemistry Hall), CSJ received large contributions from its members, chemical-related companies and foundations, which made it possible to build the wonderful building that now exists. On that occasion as well, the unified role of CSJ without any boundary between basics and applications made it easier to gain understanding and support. From CSJ's point of view, there have been great advantag-

es both financially and operationally in having its own building rather than renting. The unified role of CSJ has also been contributing to the smooth operation of chemistry education-related activities such as the Chemical Olympics.

In Japan, a great number of professional academies have been established and individually engaged in activities. Each academy rents its own office and has an administrative board. Such board members as well as committee members, who have been selected from universities and companies, spare their precious time to be involved in the respective activities. A typical faculty member reportedly belongs to 3.5 academies on average. Even if each academy is engaged in activities based on its important objectives, it is obvious that unnecessary costs are being spent due to a lot of operational duplications. There is also a potential managerial risk for any academy that has only a small number of members, because such a limited membership prevents adequate checking.

With regard to the issue of partnerships among academies, chemistry-related academies jointly set up the Japan Union of Chemical Science and Technology several years ago, in response to the call from "*Kagakusha-karano Message*" (Message from Chemists) reported by the Chemical Research Liaison Committee of the Science Council of Japan in 2003. Through this measure, the first step was taken toward solving the problem. It seems, however, that development toward a coalition has made little progress since then.

Is it right to leave the situation as it is without improvement? We should be able to do what our predecessors achieved for the sake of Japanese chemistry. I believe that now is the time for us to take concerted action toward close a coalition for the sake of the future of Japanese chemistry.

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