

■ News

Launch of the Photosynthesis Research Center at Okayama University

Okayama University held an inauguration ceremony on April 11th for the launch of its Photosynthesis Research Center located within the Graduate School of Natural Science and Technology. The Center—officially established on April 1st 2013—aims to elucidate the biochemical mechanisms of photosynthesis, especially that of the light-induced water-splitting reaction, and their applications to artificial photosynthesis that may lead to an unlimited source of clean energy.

Okayama University has a long history of research into photosynthesis, having produced world famous researchers including Dr. Hiroshi Fujishige and Dr. Kimiyuki Sato, both emeritus professors of Okayama University who are internationally renowned for their researches on the fundamental mechanisms of photosynthesis. Recently, the research results on the mechanisms of light-induced water-splitting by Professor Jian-Ren Shen, director of the center, were selected as one of the ten 'Breakthroughs of the Year 2011' by AAAS *Science Magazine*.

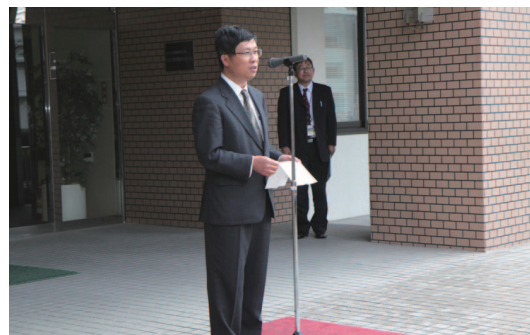
In his inauguration address President Kiyoshi Morita said that the center would be one of the core elements of Okayama University as a research-based university, and that the entire university would work to ensure the center becoming a driving force in innovation from natural to artificial photosynthesis.



(From left) Professor Shen, director of the center, Dean Seno, and President Morita hold up the sign of the university during the ceremony



President Morita giving his address.



Address by the Professor Shen, director of the center.

Professor Shen emphasized that his group will continue the cutting-edge research on elucidating all the mechanisms of photosynthetic water-splitting that lead to the evolution of oxygen and the conversion of light-energy into chemical energy. He also mentioned that the center will strengthen the already existing, and explore new, international collaborations, and to fully transfer the fruits of this research to society.

Fifty faculty members attended the opening ceremony of the center, including Professor Shinichi Yamamoto, Executive Director (research), Professor Masaharu Seno, Dean of the Graduate School of Natural Science and Technology, and Professor Yoko Yamamoto, Director of the Institute of Plant Science and Resources.



Members of the Center participating in at the inauguration ceremony.