

What Did KIChE Contribute to the Korean Chemical Industries?

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Dear Dr. Kim, distinguished guests from overseas, and fellow members, it is a great honor for me to stand in front of you for an invited speech.

Up to date I have rarely stood in front of an audience except in the class rooms. I am that much inexperienced in this type of a speech. However, I consider this occasion is really a great honor particularly because we are now marking the tenth anniversary of the founding of the KIChE. I also want to express my most sincere gratitude to the great scientists and engineers who are attending our ceremony and the conference from our friendly countries.

Some of us and our guests have recently attended the similar type of a meeting held in Kyoto, Japan. The meeting was named the First Pacific Chemical Engineering Congress, and seemed to have been much greater in size and well organized than the one we are having now. I have to admit this as a fact.

But, I think that our meeting is a most genuine and cozy one of its kinds without being involved in a politics and motivated by a sort of national prestige. Dear audience, please remember that the First Pacific Chemical Engineering Congress was sponsored by the two richest countries in the world. It was prepared from three years ago by so many more people than ours. The meeting site is regarded by the host country as one of the most scenic spots of the nation and the building was built as a symbolic of the modern Japanese architecture designed purely for a big conference of an international scale. By turning the selector switch knob you can hear the translation of any designated official languages. The impact that I have received by facing such a luxury and grandeur

was really big. This is, probably, the point for them in having their guests invited in such an enormous conference hall.

But, I want to say that in such a huge hall, the presence of delegates from developing countries is often unnoticed or even neglected. No foreign guests, however, either from an advanced or a developing country, will be unnoticed by us here. This meeting is being held not to boast anything or show anything. The sincere purpose of the present meeting for us is to learn something from each other.

Yesterday, I saw Dr. Angus was so eagerly drawing some illustrative figures on the blackboard while Dr. Edwards was speaking to us. This could have been more modernized only if we had an overhead projector. But, I do not think we are ashamed of being poor. I rather think on the contrary. May I ask if anyone of you have ever learned the cooperative spirit as precisely as they have demonstrated yesterday? I think it was the most beautiful scene I have ever seen.

I did not learn anything more intensely in Kyoto than I do here. There, human beings have behaved to suit to the modern machineries. Man was a tool of the civilization because he just has to go along the course programmed by the machine. "Can technology solve the problems caused by technology?" was the catchphrase posted on the newspapers by the so widely known Chiyoda Engineering Co. I don't know if it can solve or not. I just want to say "Can man stay as a man without becoming the slave of the machineries?" Anyway, this is so much about the meeting in Kyoto.

Now, let me talk about the KIChE and its contribution to the Korean chemical industries. I don't

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think I am really qualified to comment on this topic because I would naturally lay my blame on the industry men if anything goes wrong, and on the contrary I would attribute any good to the university people since I am a university man.

The KIChE, like any other similar organizations, is simply a combination of the industry, university and research institute. Probably, the major theme is "Cooperation between or solidarity of the industry and science & engineering education". How far and well this theme has been realized is really a question. Generally speaking, the education in Korea has been cruising a separate course from that of the industry. The university education, which has been indiscriminately overextended to be properly handled, has been paid little attention by the government partly because of its tight policy for the five-year economic development plans. My feeling is the present status of the university education is lagging behind the industry. Particularly, the case of the national universities is very much more severe. At the present moment, the private universities, which have formerly been regarded as inadequate as higher educational institutes, are now surpassing national universities in buildings and facilities. What is to be done on the national universities constitutes a big current issue of the administration.

The KIChE had its founding ceremony in a small lecture room of the Medical College of Seoul National University on December 8, 1962. So, I should say that the KIChE has approximately the same age as the present Korean chemical industry. At the time of founding the KIChE, the only modern chemical industry we had was probably the Chungjoo Fertilizer Co., a few cement plants and a plate glass plant in Incheon. The Seoul National University held its sixteenth graduation ceremony that year, and the Department of Chemical Engineering had only ten years of history since it had adopted the US style chemical engineering curricula. This was the year we had our first three PhDs in chemical engineering back from the United States. Drs. T.H. Hahn, W.H. Park and W.K. Kang were they. I know two of them were present in this meeting. Besides,

we had quite a few people who were active in industry, universities and research institutes regarding themselves as chemical engineers.

One day in August of 1962, eighteen initiating members of the KIChE gathered at the Department of Chemical Engineering of Seoul National University to discuss whether or not an institute of a type of the present KIChE should be organized and separated from the Korean Chemical Society which was 16 years old by that time. The accord on having a new institute was of course unanimous largely influenced by the appearance of the Chungjoo Fertilizer Plant which served, at that time, as the symbolic of the future of chemical engineering.

The initiating members elected five executive committee members to let them push forward the agreement up to the general initiation meeting. I was very fortunately included in the five-member committee which consisted of Professor Y.H. Ra of Dankuk University, Mr. C.W. Lee, Chemistry Section Chief of the Ministry of Commerce at that time, Mr. M. C. Chon, President of Chon Engineering Co., Professor B. M. Lee of Han Yang University and myself.

Many of the leading members of the Korean Chemical Society came out to engage in man-to-man persuasion assault with each of us pleading not to split the society into two. Of course most of us were and still are the members of the Korean Chemical Society. However, the need for a new institute and also the determination of the initiation members were so firm that not even a single committee member gave way to them.

After all, the founding of the KIChE ended up as a good medicine to the Korean Chemical Society too because the impact felt by the society effected them to renovate their organization from the president-responsible system to the chief secretary-responsible system. The Journal of the Korean Chemical Society has become to be published regularly only from that time on.

The KIChE, after the founding, published four journals regularly until 1971 whereafter it publishes six journals a year. The institute runs five committees,

namely, Chemical Engineering Education Evaluation Committee, Technical Terms Enactment Committee, Industry Education Cooperative Committee, Research Cooperative Committee, and Editing Committee. I think it is not necessary to explain their functionings any further. The Institute, in this way, has been doing its best for the mutual benefit of members and nonmembers.

Particular emphasis must of course be placed on the cooperation between the industry and engineering education. Every year, the institute sponsors joint meetings for the people in industry, education, and research institutes to facilitate exchanging information. So far, the result is not explicit. But we certainly believe that after a long run a meeting of this type will become an utmost concern to every member.

Now just turn our attention to the three consecutive five year economic development plans of the government. We will immediately notice the fact that the major government effort has been placed on the chemical industries. Starting from our beloved member Mr. W. C. Oh, the presidential aid for the economics affairs and former deputy assistant minister of the Ministry of Commerce, and his aids, many other former officials of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and many other non-officials but

holding key positions in respective industries and actively associated with the institute, have to be credited for having drafted the initial plan of the entire Korean chemical industries in connection with the five-year plans.

No further mentionings on the chemical engineers in private firms would be necessary for their excellent contributions to and the achievements for their respective companies. Without their participation, the present firm status of the KIChE would have been a total impossibility.

I can not go more in detail as to who did what in where and how in a limited lecture time. But, I can say, in general, that the KIChE has at least achieved its aim of founding in 1962, and it is ever growing.

After another ten years of time, the KIChE will appear to you quite differently. We may though appear to be as cozy and genuine as today, but the Korean language will be beautifully translated into English, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, etc., simultaneously. More refined papers covering all spheres will be listed and presented. Foreign guests will then learn more from us like we learn from foreign countries. Let us look forward to having such time. Thank you very much for your attention.