

## WELCOME TO NIIGATA

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I am pleased to welcome you to the International Symposium on Origins of Life and Astrobiology (ISOLAB '05). The Organizing Committee of ISOLAB '05 would like to thank all the distinguished scientists in the meeting here in Niigata. This venue is located at just about a geological center of Japan. We especially acknowledge Niigata Prefecture, Niigata Visitors & Convention Bureau and The Kao Foundation For Arts And Science for their financial support to ISOLAB '05. Their support enable the Organizing Committee to hold the meeting.

Origin of life has long been one of the challenging puzzles to be solved. A wide variety of approaches were proposed and attempted since early 20th century on. At the very end of the 20th century, a new science field -astrobiology- has emerged, that intends to address the origins, evolutions, distribution and destinies of terrestrial and extraterrestrial lives. An international scientific network in astrobiology was formed to promote inter- and trans-disciplinary research collaborations that involve astronomy, planetary and earth sciences, physics, chemistry, biological sciences and whatever else related to a coherent body of scientific knowledge under the common umbrella. A main objective of the symposium is to provide a forum for establishing milestones towards an integration of researches related to origins of life and astrobiology.

This symposium is jointly held with the 30th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Study of the Origin and Evolution of Life, Japan (SSOEL-Japan): SSOEL-Japan was established in 1974 as the first domestic Origin-of-Life society in the world. SSOEL-Japan and the Japanese Society for Biological Sciences in Space (JSBSS) would be a core of astrobiology in Japan in cooperation with related scientific societies. I am sure that ISOLAB '05 will be a good occasion to establish the core that is linked to the astrobiology network in the world.

Enjoy the meeting and your stay in Niigata.

Sincerely,

Kensei Kobayashi  
Chairperson, ISOLAB '05