

President Toshio HIRANO's 2014 Entrance Ceremony speech

From "Tekijuku" to the "World Tekijuku"

First of all, I would like to heartily welcome you to Osaka University. I also offer my sincere congratulations to your families and related parties. With a life full of promising prospects, today all of you are embarking on a new life as a member of Osaka University. For me, as President of Osaka University, this is a supremely happy moment. We, Osaka University, extend a hearty welcome to you.

Tekijuku, the primary root of Osaka University

Our school's roots go back to Tekijuku. Let me now talk a little about Osaka University where you will spend the coming years. Although officially the government set up this university, in actuality, local people arranged the funds and temporary operational expenses for its founding. Thus, in essence, Osaka University was founded thanks to persons involved in the university and to the enthusiastic support of Osaka citizens wishing for an imperial university.

Osaka University's roots reach back to Tekijuku, a private "place of learning" founded in 1838 by the doctor and scholar of Western sciences OGATA Koan. SHIBA Ryotaro, a graduate of Osaka School of Foreign Studies, the predecessor Osaka University of Foreign Studies, the predecessor of the current School of Foreign Studies, wrote at the beginning of his novel *Kashin* that Teijuku was the predecessor of Osaka University and, thus, in this sense, OGATA Koan was the founder of Osaka University.

More than 1,000 students came to Tekijuku from all over Japan and studied day and night. These students included FUKUZAWA Yukichi who served as a school head and founded Keio University in later days, NAGAYO Sensai who served as a school head following FUKUZAWA and built the foundation of Japanese medical care system and public health system, HASHIMOTO Sanai who was killed at the age of 25 in the Ansei Purge, SANO Tsunetami who found Hakuaisha, the predecessor of the Japan Red Cross, OMURA Masujiro who created a modern military system for the Meiji government and the protagonist of the novel *Kashin*, OTORI Keisuke who diplomatically confronted the Western powers, and IKEDA Kensai who served as the first dean of the Faculty of Medicine at The University of Tokyo built in 1877.

Thus, Tekijuku produced persons who were active as leaders in various fields. FUKUZAWA Yukichi wrote in his autobiography *Fukuo Jiden*, "There was pleasure in pain. Toil itself was our pleasure." Unlike Edo, in Osaka at that time there were no career paths for becoming officers nor were there feudal lords who assigned jobs. Rather, Tekijuku students studied hard and enjoyed learning itself. Away from their hometowns where there were imperative hierarchical relationships, they enjoyed their youth in Osaka.

TEZUKA Osamu, a manga artist famous for his works such as *Black Jack* and *Tetsuwan Atom* [Mighty Atom] and a graduate of Osaka University's School of Medicine, wrote about his roots in his work, *Hidamarinoki* [Trees in the Sun]. Osamu's great-grandfather, TEZUKA Ryoan was the doctor of Western medicine in *Hidamarinoki* and he studied under OGATA Koan with FUKUZAWA Yukichi. TEZUKA Ryoan devoted himself to propagating vaccinations against smallpox and to curing cholera, a greatly feared deadly disease in those days.

OGATA Koan, the founder of Tekijuku, compiled *Fushi Ikai no Ryaku* consisting of 12 chapters as cautionary lessons for doctors. The first commandment says, "Doctors should live not for themselves but for others. You should not think of becoming famous. Do not pursue your own interests. Give up personal greed or self-interest. We should become persons who assist people's lives and understand others' suffering." Based on the "spirit for people, society, and ethical responsibilities," students who learned at Tekijuku, lived through the great change of Meiji Restoration sticking to their beliefs.

Young people who studied at Tekijuku were stimulated by the free and vigorous academic atmosphere and foresight of Tekijuku and became a driving force for carving the new era called the Meiji Restoration. Tekijuku's forward-looking spirit gave birth to Osaka Temporary Hospital, to Osaka Medical School, and to Osaka Prefecture Medical School. Later this spirit infused the founding of the 6th imperial university with the two schools, Medicine and Science, in 1931.

In 1933, Osaka Industrial University built in 1896 merged with Osaka University, becoming the School of Engineering. When the School of Law, Economics, and Letters was established following the end of World War II, collections of books regarding traditional Chinese and Japanese learning possessed by Kaitokudo were passed on to Osaka University. Founded by merchants in Osaka, Kaitokudo was a "place of learning" for merchants in the late Edo Period. These book collections were and are symbolic of the original scholarship and "Osaka spirit" that our university inherited.

In 1949, with the introduction of the new education system, Osaka University was reborn as a national university. At that time the School of Law, Economics, and Letters was divided into the School of Letters and the School of Law and Economics, setting up a structure for our current comprehensive university. Later, the School of Law and Economics was divided into the School of Law and the School of Economics. Additionally, schools of Dentistry, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Engineering Science, Engineering, and Human Science were added.

Following the change of legal status into a national university corporation in 2004, in 2007, Osaka University merged with Osaka University of Foreign Studies built in 1921. Through the merger, Osaka University, with 11 schools, 16 graduate schools and 5 research institutes became one of the largest comprehensive universities in Japan. At the time of start of our university in 1931, the freshmen of the Schools of Medicine and Science numbered 86. Now, 80 years later, Osaka University is top in undergraduate admissions in Japanese national universities. Some 6,400 undergraduate students and graduate students enroll in our university every year.

Making our university the shining World Tekijuku

Osaka University with roots in Tekijuku and the spirit of Kaitokudo built 176 years ago, supported by Osaka citizens as a leading comprehensive university, will continue to grow under the motto “Live Locally, Grow Globally” as one of the largest comprehensive universities in Japan. Osaka University has produced many excellent scholars, educators, intellectuals, as well as key government and business leaders.

Osaka University will celebrate the 100th anniversary of its founding in 2031. As the World Tekijuku, Osaka University aspires for becoming one of the world's top 10 research universities by our 100th anniversary. 176 years ago, young people came to Tekijuku and studied hard. They spread throughout Japan with new knowledge and skills learned at Tekijuku and carved out the new age of Meiji Restoration.

Researchers, students, and individuals with an ardent passion for learning at home and abroad will gather together at Osaka University, the World Tekijuku, to learn and research, and they will fly from it. I believe that the time will come when people in the world will regard Osaka University as a world-class university. For that purpose, from this year, the first year as the “World Tekijuku,” we, all OU members, will work together. I hope you will keep in mind that you enroll in Osaka University in 2014, the first year as the “World Tekijuku.” You will begin to write a new page in the history of Osaka University with us in order to make our dream come true.

Now, today, I'd like to talk about three things.

The importance of asking why

First, I'd like to talk about the meaning of "asking why." You have come from all over Japan and enrolled in this university with hopes and dreams in your mind. By the way, what is a university for you? You studied at elementary, middle and high schools. I'm sure that you had something you wondered about as a child, but, as you grew up, you perhaps began to think, "That's the way it is," and stopped thinking about it.

For example, "How the universe was born?" "Where and how did life come about?", "Why do people die?", "Why do migratory birds migrate?", "Why do tropical fish look so beautiful?", "Why did Japan come to be and why do other countries and religions exist in the world?" and "How do these things influence the current world situation?" There are countless questions that we don't know the full answer for. I wonder if many people just stop asking questions because some questions may look too simple or common.

A university is a place where you can find the answers for these questions, questions that we cannot solve through a knowledge-oriented approach, where you can highlight causes hidden behind problems, or you can find solutions for questions that humans have no answers for. It is up to you to find answers. A university is the place where you can share your doubts and find answers.

In other words, the heart and essence of scholarship is the ascertaining of the true essence of things and the place to put such a belief into practice is a university. If undergraduate school is the place to nurture the ability to ascertain the true essence of things, graduate school is the place to nurture true scholarship. In other words, graduate school is a place where you ascertain the true essence of things by strengthening your expertise.

Antibiotics such as penicillin are absolutely necessary for treating infectious diseases such as pneumonia. Sir Alexander Fleming in the UK, who discovered the first antibiotic, penicillin, devoted himself to the development of drugs for infectious diseases at that time. He noticed that germs were prevented from growing in proximity to a fungus that it is thought was mixed in a culture dish by accident. In ordinary circumstances, researchers would think of this as a failure and get rid of it, but he thought that something in the fungus might have prevented the germs from growing and he named the component penicillin. This was in 1928.

Later Howard Walter Florey and Ernst Boris Chain read Fleming's thesis and succeeded in refining penicillin in 1940. Fleming, Florey, and Chain won the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1945. The discovery of penicillin saved incalculable lives in the world. This penicillin story is well known as a serendipitous discovery; however, this is not a chance discovery, but I think his excellent observation ability and open-mindedness full of intellectual curiosity led him to the discovery of penicillin.

Continuously conducting basic research out of intellectual curiosity and in defiance of the common wisdom results in technological innovation in human society, produces innovative products and advanced medical care, returning the results to society.

Furthermore, basic research plays an important role in giving dreams and hope to society. People cannot be satisfied by merely having clothes to wear, food to eat, and a roof over their heads. As art enriches people's mind, basic research pursuing the truth with intellectual curiosity gives people dreams and hope. The power of a university resides in its ability to open paths to the future and inspiring people to dream. The source of this is your intellectual curiosity that urges you never to stop asking why.

Ascertaining the true essence of things and flying high in the world

Second, I'd like to talk about "ascertaining the true essence of things and flying high in the world."

Three years ago, we had the Great East Japan Earthquake and the ensuing accidents at the nuclear power plants. Japan faces declining population, aging society, and a growing national deficit. The world also faces a variety of population problems, environmental problems, global warming, climatic anomalies, the energy crisis, infectious diseases, economic crisis, and political turmoil. Now humans face such unprecedented global-scale changes.

Modern society rooted in affluent material civilization that began with the start of the industrial revolution has rapidly changed everything on a global scale in return for human prosperity. The depletion of fossil fuels is now a real problem. Nuclear power had been regarded as the trump card in energy policy, but its risks are now clear. Environmental problems such as global warming and the spread of infectious diseases are recognized as new risks.

Furthermore, developments in medicine and improvements in the social environment have resulted in an exploding world population. In addition to food problems, in the developed countries in particular, a rapid response to aging societies is needed.

You need to see both Japan and the world and learn how to respond to social changes. Then, what type of personnel and capabilities does modern society look for? Determination, ability to take action, and communication ability including language proficiency are often listed as requirements for leaders. Surely you need to acquire these abilities; however, these are not enough in this rapidly changing society.

I think society needs people who ascertain the true essence of things hidden in pluralistic problems, people who can take initiative in solving problems in ways that are not tied to traditional approaches. The ability to ascertain the true essence of things is the ability to find key factors and mechanisms in perceptible phenomenon.

There is a common saying that one excelling at one thing can get to the truth in other things. The basis of this power is the expertise, great skill or knowledge from a particular field. That's why universities conduct advanced research and provide highly specialized education based on research.

Furthermore, the way of viewing things needs to be changed. We must give up the idea of conquering nature with science and technology and we must think about living in harmony with nature. Likewise, we have conducted research with the belief we somehow could sidestep unavoidable issues such as aging, diseases, and death through advances in bioscience and medicine. We must change such ways of thinking and review how to live a safe life while reconciling ourselves to these problems. In this way, we need to see things not from one aspect but from a various viewpoints.

Also, a broad viewpoint capturing the entire picture is important. A common saying speaks of not being able to see the woods for all the trees. Look at it this way: doing something good for one of the trees is not always good for the forest as a whole. Even if a measure for a particular tree is the best in a short term, if that measure causes adverse effects to the rest of the forest, such an action could lead to the destruction of the forest. Broad cultural education cultivates such viewpoints. Broad cultural education is important in that it assists students in acquiring a broad and flexible viewpoint.

In a greatly globalized world in the future, human activities will further expand. We will need to build relationships with people of different languages, cultures, religions, races, and nationalities and cooperate with them. In order to adequately respond to such situations, it's

important to have the "openness" advocated by Confucius. I mean, one must need to make judgment by imagining oneself in other people's shoes. And it is important to nurture the mindset of sharing in order to understand and respect different cultures and ways of thinking.

To this end, it's necessary that people know themselves. For people to live together and prosper, they must first know themselves and understand and respect their own culture. If one cannot love one's self and one's nation and not be proud of them, how can such a person understand and respect other people, other nations?

Creating harmonious diversity through scholarship

Third, let me talk about "creating harmonious diversity through scholarship."

Regarding Tekijuku, SHIBA Ryotaro, in his work, *Koan no Taimatsu* [Koan's Torches], noted, "It was a great school. There were no entrance exams. Every young man came all the way from far regions in order to study. Class discrimination existed in the Edo Period; however, in that school, everyone was equally treated. Children born to samurai, ones born to doctors, and ones born to farmers and more were connected together with the sole purpose of studying."

There are diversities in language, race, culture, religion, and politics in our global society. These diversities have been driving force in the development of human society and have enriched it. Diversity sometimes is a big obstacle to global society and may lead to conflicts, or even wars. However, as SHIBA pointed out, at universities, there is a "scholarship," a kind of language common to all humankind that can overcome such barriers.

Academic scholarship and art both have the power to overcome barriers. You can make friends with people with different languages, cultures, and religions through scholarship and expand the circle of people in the world. Bonds which individuals form with those from different backgrounds in a community at a university will develop with experience and interpersonal exchange and bring harmony to society. This is what global society in the 21st century expects from you university students.

Through academic exchanges with the outside and the cultivation of personnel, universities must explore the possibilities of a new community where people live in harmony despite differences in gender, race, and faith. This is a role that only universities possessing scholarship, the human common language, can play and is a great mission

imposed on universities in the 21st century. Through these activities, universities must take initiative in creating multicultural society maintaining diversity, and in contributing to society.

I hope you will take a look at the world as well while studying at Osaka University. And I hope you will actively go overseas and interact with people in different countries. Osaka University provides you with a variety of programs for that purpose. I hope you will take a look at global society by making use of such opportunities. And I hope you will contribute to the creation of harmonious diversity in our global society. That is the important role that you are expected to play.

Finally, I have something to say about what I learned from my experiences in life.

Reaching the top of a mountain

You are now at the top of a big mountain, your admission to Osaka University. What are you thinking as you stand at the top of this mountain? You may look at the new view in front of you or look back the long road that brought you to this day. Or you may look up at mountains before you that you have yet to climb. Each of you sees a somewhat different view, but what is common to all of you is that the scene you see is one that you've never seen before.

Whenever I talk with students or young people, I tell the importance of climbing to the top of a mountain. By reaching the top of a mountain, we become able to see something that we cannot obtain by only climbing part way. I'm sure that there will be many mountains in the path you take — challenges and difficulties that you must overcome, desires and dreams that you hope will come true. Filled with dreams and hopes, people climb mountains, make efforts to conquer troubles and difficulties.

We don't know how high the mountains in our lives are before we reach the top. The most important thing is, however, even if the mountain that you have reached the top of is low, once you are at the top, you can see a view that you have never seen before. There, you can have a view of the path you came on and the mountain that awaits you next.

Suppose you are climbing Mt. Fuji. You've reached the 9th station of the mountain. There is a sign on the 9th station. Most people who reach the 9th station never fail to reach the top of Mt. Fuji even if they are exhausted, approaching the limit of their strength, or whatever difficulties they have. However, in life there are no signs when we are climbing the mountains in our lives. Nobody knows how high he is — at the 9th station or the 3rd.

However, once we reach the top, then and only then do we know we have reached it. The top of the mountain suddenly unfolds in front of us, the person who has believed in climbing on and on and made the effort, similar to the inspiration that strikes the person who is ready to receive — like the discovery of penicillin by Fleming 86 years ago.

I'm sure that now you feel the happiness and significance of being on the top of this mountain as you survey the view dominating the foreground — the future. There is a big difference between the person who, even if only once, reached the top of the mountain after a difficult climb and the person who never went farther than half way.

I hope you will not forget that you have overcome a challenge in university entrance exams and make the efforts to climb new mountains one by one and reach the top of every mountain that you decide to climb. We have ups and downs in life. Even when you fall to the bottom of a valley, you should think of it as a chance to climb the next mountain and aim for it. I hope you will always have hope and dreams and reach to the top of your mountain.

Dreams are for achieving!

I believe you have infinite possibilities for your future. I hope you will not lose the excitement of today. Make your dreams come true with high aspiration. At the 100th anniversary of Osaka University's founding in 2031, the major players will be you. I hope you make every effort to achieve our great dream to make Osaka University one of the top ten research universities in the world as the World Tekijuku.

Achieving dreams is difficult. That's why they are called dreams. A dream is not reality and cannot be achieved easily. So it's only too easy to think that achieving a dream is impossible and, thus, give up. However, if we hold on to our dreams and continue to make every effort to achieve them, one day, someday, those dreams just might come true.

Dreams are meant to be achieved.

Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune.

April 2, 2014
President of Osaka University
Toshio HIRANO