

June 10, 2011

I am indeed honored to have been selected as the next president of Osaka University and, at the same time, undertaking such a great responsibility makes me a bit nervous. Currently, our country faces its greatest crisis since World War II. Universities also face severe conditions. In difficult times such as these, there are no magic solutions. In times such as these we need to reexamine our basics, the fundamentals. Thus, basically what is a university?

Fundamentally a university is a center for learning and education.

It is said that a 100-year national plan should focus on education. Japan's future depends on the development of our nation's human resources. Promoting scholarship and technological development is essential for Japan's survival. Universities have a mission to foster graduates possessing excellence, graduates who will take the lead in various fields and contribute to human welfare and prosperity.

Innovative technological development and development of a spiritually rich and peaceful society cannot be realized without advancement in the sciences. Society asks that universities promote basic academic research as a creative intellectual activity. I believe that the energy a university invests in basic academic research will result in fundamental strengths. I am resolved to laying a foundation that will not chase fads, but will strive to make Osaka University an outstanding center of learning.

Another mission of a university is to put forth proposals and positively implement recommendations both for the nation and society, rather than take a more passive approach to education and research. Beginning from the standpoint that a university is a center for learning and education, I hope to contribute to the development and welfare of the peoples of Japan and the world.

We Japanese have a saying that to achieve great things one needs a God-given opportunity, a geographical advantage, and harmony among people. Now, here in Osaka, with high hopes of becoming a world-leading center of learning and education, is the time to coalesce the wisdom of all members of the Osaka University community and lay a foundation on which Osaka University will continue to shine forth in the 21st and even into the 22nd century.

I ask for your understanding, support, and words of encouragement as we continue going forward.

HIRANO Toshio