

Autumn 2015 Graduation Ceremony

President's Address

It is on this day that I offer my sincerest congratulations as President of Osaka University to those undergraduate and graduate students who are about to take the next step from Osaka University. I'd like to praise each and every one of you on the hard work and diligence that led you to this day, the day of your graduation. I'd also like to express my deepest appreciation for the parents and family members who supported your studies and research on the long road to this graduation day.

Osaka University has been the lovable home ground for my efforts in education and research for nearly 30 years, and I recently became the 18th President of that very same Osaka University on August 26. Which means that today's ceremony is the first event that I will be holding as president, and I'm so happy and honored to have this opportunity to speak with you all.

Now, out of all the degree recipients here today, there is one individual in particular I'd like to introduce to you all: doctoral recipient (Human Sciences) ANEZAKI Shoji. At 73, Dr. Anezaki will be receiving his second doctorate degree, having already received a doctoral degree in Engineering from The University of Tokyo 30 years ago. After graduating from junior high school, Dr. Anezaki entered the Wakayama Steelworks of Sumitomo Metal Industries, Ltd. through mass employment, and after 27 years of independent research, his dream of receiving his doctoral degree came true, receiving a doctoral degree from the Graduate School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo. I hear that he "passed with a unanimous decision from the screening panel." After retirement from Sumitomo Metal Industries after reaching the retirement age, Dr. Anezaki entered the Foreign Languages Department of Osaka University of Foreign Studies as an adult student. While studying Spanish history and language, Dr. Anezaki matriculated to the Global Human Studies Doctoral Program of the Graduate School of Human Sciences at Osaka University. Here, he challenged interdisciplinary research on environmental issues, particularly problem solving which illustrates the sustainability of precious metal mining from

the viewpoint of sustainability science.

When I heard about these remarkable accomplishments, I felt a deep respect for Dr. Anezaki's insatiable desire for learning and discovery. Dr. Anezaki is a stellar example of the kind of human resource Osaka University is currently attempting to cultivate through Advanced Human Resource Programs: high-level doctoral human resources cultivated through the combination of different fields of study, particularly natural sciences and human sciences. Dr. Anezaki, I wish you the most heartfelt of congratulations.

Now then, after being chosen as the president-elect of Osaka University on June 12 of this year, I've been interviewed by a number of individuals from the media. And there's one question I'm asked every time: "What kind of students do you want to raise at OU?"

To this question, I answer, "The world '*glocal*' describes a combination of the terms 'global' and 'local.' This term gained temporary popularity, but to put it into practice is not easy. It's for this reason that I want to cultivate students in this image." For example, one day you could be communicating with residents of the mountainous regions of Japan, gaining the trust of the people and performing surveys and research, and the next day you could find yourself at an international conference in New York presenting your research. This kind of student, with a point of view both rooted in their community and incorporating a wider world view, are true to Osaka University's motto of "Live Locally, Grow Globally." When one simply says "global," I feel this is somewhat superficial. From this, I think you can easily understand just how important "communication skills" and "international-mindedness" are to this kind of ideal human resource.

Some of you will be active in business and government, or even at private research laboratories and think-tanks, while some of you will continue your research at universities. The time you will spend on the activity that has yet to come will be much longer than the time you spent on your studies at Osaka University. So what kind of ability is going to be required of you, in addition to the "communication skills" and "international-mindedness" that I mentioned earlier? I think it will be "creativity" and "refinement."

“Creativity” is the problem solving ability to arrive at an ideal solution for a particular problem under the environment and restraint conditions provided. For example, when designing a building, it’s the ability to plan the most appropriate building within the scope of the client’s intentions after considering the site area and budget, as well as statutory regulations, in addition to the ability to construct a network of personnel that are necessary for carrying out the task. That’s creativity.

On the other hand, the 16th President of Osaka University, WASHIDA Kiyokazu, said the following about “refinement.” “Being liberally educated means having the power to think of solutions just as drawing auxiliary lines helps when solving geometry problems. Put differently, it’s looking at problems with compound eyes, the ability to illuminate a problem from multiple, differing points of view. Through this, human intelligence can become something more objective.”

In other words, through acquiring creativity and refinement, one can tackle a problem from a multilateral point of view, and arrive at an ideal solution based on multilateral, objective barometers under the set of circumstances provided. Today, human resources who have acquired this kind of ability are unanimously sought after in the industrial realm, by administrative agencies, and by education and research institutions.

Actually, the “refinement, creativity, and international-mindedness” that I’ve been referring to are the educational objectives established by Osaka University in the face of the change in university’s legal status to a national university corporation in the 2004-2005 academic year. In addition, Osaka University took the initiative among universities in Japan and showed the importance of “communication skills” by establishing a center to cultivate those skills in OU undergraduate and graduate students. So no exaggeration to say that Osaka University recognized the education to acquire each of these four abilities before anyone else, and thus has displayed its individuality for quite a number of years.

I trust that the time spent under the educational policies of Osaka University have allowed the undergraduate and graduate students that will graduate today to acquire “refinement, creativity, international-mindedness and communication

skills.” I sincerely hope that, in the years to come, you can all make good use of these four abilities as well as the wisdom, knowledge, and skills that you acquired at OU. I also expect that no matter what field you enter, you will be trusted by those around you in that field in regions and countries around the world, and that you will display your leadership and contribute to the progress of development and welfare of your home country as well as human society.

Finally, I'd like to remind you all to hold a sense of gratitude for all the family, friends, and research partners that have supported you all on your path to graduation. And I pray that each and every one of you will live healthy and happy lives free of regret. So once again, congratulations.

September 25, 2015
NISHIO Shojiro
President, Osaka University