

President Nishio's Speech at the 2016 Graduation Ceremony and Graduate School
Commencement Ceremony
The Times Need Paradigm Shift
A question from the world's 'poorest' leader

My hearty congratulations

It is our pleasure to hold the 2016 Graduation Ceremony and Graduate School Commencement Ceremony with executive vice presidents, auditors, deans, faculty and staff in attendance.

Please permit me to extend my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you who completed your studies at your respective schools and are embarking on a new life. As the president of Osaka University, I'd like to heartily congratulate you on your efforts.

I also would like to express my admiration for your parents who supported your achievement of these goals.

I became the 18th president on August 26 of last year, so this will be my first graduation ceremony and graduate school commencement ceremony as president. I'm very honored and pleased to have the opportunity to speak with you in person.

Four powers supporting you -- critical thinking, design prowess, international mindedness, and transcultural communicability

At the time of its change of legal status into a national university corporation in 2004, Osaka University set an education objective; to cultivate personnel who have critical thinking for making judgements, design prowess to nurture a free imagination, and international mindedness to be able to be active in globalized society.

Additionally, regarding communicability, Osaka University took the initiative in advocating its importance by establishing a center to nurture OU students. Therefore, it's not too much to say that Osaka University has taken the initiative in education for cultivating these four powers and displayed its uniqueness for a long time.

I'm sure that you have equipped yourselves with critical thinking, design prowess, international mindedness, and transcultural communicability under our educational concept.

I hope that each one of you will demonstrate these four powers and abilities, as well as the wisdom, knowledge and skills that you've cultivated at Osaka University. I also expect that whatever goal you aim for, you will become reliable leaders in that field and contribute to the future of Japan as well as the development of human society and

improved welfare.

The times need a paradigm shift

By the way, my expertise is in information science. Looking back at technology innovation in information and telecommunications in the last 50 years, there have been dramatic changes that would not happen in other fields of study. Take transportation for example: even Shinkansen bullet trains have not doubled their speed since its opening in 1964; the fuel consumption has just improved to some extent.

On the other hand, in the field of information and telecommunications, in the half-century since 1960, along with the development of hardware and software, the performance index has increased 10 billion times and the price has dropped to one 100,000th of its original, which is said to be a change comparable to the cost performance of more than 1 trillion times.

However, affirming without any argument that this technology innovation has enriched our minds and lives is questionable. We often hear people say that technology innovation develops too fast to catch up with. Are people really satisfied with current information devices? Do these devices contribute to building a comfortable society? Just as a familiar example, we often see passengers on train single-mindedly looking into smartphones. Is that really a good thing? People cast doubt on these situations.

Electric energy consumed by the latest information devices has also been a problem. There is the world's fastest supercomputer named K computer on Port Island, Kobe. It is said that if it is run at full capacity, the electricity equivalent to the overall consumption of Awaji Island will be consumed.

If this goes on, people will start to think that it is also important to shift the paradigm to research and development of information devices which the elderly can easily use and support their daily life even though the performance of these devices is not ~~so~~ very high.

A question cast from the world's 'poorest' leader: What is happiness?

While I was considering this, I happened to see an eye-opening book, a picture book entitled *The Speech by the World's 'Poorest' President* (written by KUSABA Yoshimi, pictured by NAKAGAWA Manabu.)

The president of Uruguay José Alberto Mujica Cordano, now 80 years old, served until the end of February last year. He donated most of his salary to programs sponsored by the government and foundations, and all he owned was a used car given to him by his friend. During his term of office, he declined to live in the luxurious house

provided by the government and opted to stay at his wife's farmhouse in the suburbs. He drove a tractor, worked on a farm, and raised chickens in between his official duties. He was known as the world's 'poorest' leader.

During his term, in June 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The speech about happiness he delivered at the conference became a topic of discussion. The picture book I saw was based on this speech. At the conference discussing the global environment's crisis and poverty issues, President Mujica delivered a speech, saying, "Our civilization has developed by pursuing convenient and better things. As a result, disposable products and mass consumption have become commonplace, and we are influenced by relentless competitions." President Mujica asked us "We were supposed to have been born to be happy, but are we happy now? What do you derive happiness from?" He warned by saying that a poor person was not someone who had little but one who needed infinitely more, and more and more.

He also said that human happiness lay not in possessing materials but in cherishing living things and love. Specifically, he defined it lay in establishing happy human relationships, caring for children, having friends, and having love on Earth.

He didn't suggest returning to a life in the primitive age, but rather called for us to review what happiness we envision, our way of living, and our lifestyle.

He concluded his speech by saying that development cannot go against happiness; it has to contribute to human happiness.

Spark a wider debate with your four powers

Some of you will be active in companies, administration, private research institutes, or think tanks, while others will continue to research at university. This period will become far longer than the one that you spent at Osaka University.

I want you at any one time of your life to remember, consider, and exchange opinions with individuals around you regarding these questions from President Mujica. These things refer to the critical thinking and transcultural communicability that Osaka University emphasizes. I want you to view things from different perspectives, incorporate different opinions into your consideration, explain your opinions to those with different ideas so that they can understand, and discuss with people with different positions and perspectives without rejecting them outright.

On that basis, in order to make the whole earth sustainable, we need to drastically change recognition, ideas, and sense of value of society that people have taken for granted. In other words, we are facing a time of paradigm shift. I hope that you will

take action to make our society happy by making use of the critical thinking, design prowess, international mindedness, and transcultural communicability that you have cultivated at Osaka University

Here, I'd like to add something: your position in society. Now you consider yourself as a professional going into the workforce. But at the same time, you should think of your place in the family. What I mean is, your role of son/daughter will change that of husband/ father or wife/mother. I hope you have such a point of view as well as a strong belief that you, not others, are going to make the world a place of happiness.

Live in a state of constant gratitude

Last but certainly not least, keep in mind that your family, friends, peers, and many people have supported you. I hope you will recall a sense of gratitude to them. Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune. May each of you live a long life filled with health and happiness. My sincerest congratulations to you all!

March 28, 2016

Osaka University President
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