

2012 Commencement Ceremony Address by President Hirano

First of all, I'd like to extend my sincere congratulations to today's graduates upon the receipt of their degrees. I also would like to express my admiration of your families who have supported your learning and research to this day. Today you're graduating from this university with an advanced graduate degree. You must be filled with expectations for what lies ahead.

My hope is that you will pursue your interests in whatever field you have chosen and become a leader in that field. To that end, make use of your ability to see beyond, to see the essence of things as you've learned at Osaka University. Acquire knowledge and skills, accumulate experiences, and make every effort to achieve your goals.

What you've learned so far is only a portion of scholarship and science. In other words, you are just standing at the start line. I hope you will never stop developing your abilities and accepting new challenges in the paths that lie ahead.

The Great East Japan Earthquake took place last year and the accidents at the nuclear power plants added to the worries and suffering from the quake. Whether Japan can overcome this crisis—a disaster we must never forget—and find our way to a bright future depends on you young people. For our country to survive and develop, the advancement of scholarship and science and technology is essential. Furthermore, promotion of such science and technology must be worthy of the citizens' trust. Innovative technological development and nurturing a spiritually rich and peaceful society cannot be realized in society where the sciences are isolated.

Society asks that you promote fundamental academic research as a creative intellectual activity as you have learned at Osaka University and advance it as applied research while sharing the achievements with society in a visible way. It is only then you can become reliable leaders. You who have studied and conducted research at Osaka University can achieve this goal. I hope you will join society with your head held high as persons who have studied at Osaka University and fulfill your responsibilities.

Let's take a look at the history of Osaka University where you studied. I believe looking back on the history will assist you in thinking of your future.

Our university's roots reach back to Tekijuku, a private "place of learning" founded by OGATA Koan in 1838, 174 years ago. Some 1,000 students including FUKUZAWA Yukichi, HASHIMOTO Sanai, NAGAYO Sensai, OMURA Masujiro, SANO Tsunetami, and OTORI Keisuke gathered in Tekijuku and studied as if in competition with one another. Looking back on those days, NAGAYO Sensai, who contributed to our nation's modern medical administration, wrote that more than 100 students always studied at Tekijuku, the best school of Western learning at that time.

Away from their hometowns where established hierarchical relationships were the norm, they enjoyed their youth in Osaka in a free atmosphere. Unlike Edo, at that time

in Osaka there were no career paths for becoming officers nor were there feudal lords who assigned one work. Rather, they studied hard and enjoyed learning itself.

Tekijuku's free and unstructured academic atmosphere, its foresight and its spirit of "For people, for society, for the nation, and for benevolence," a slogan that Koan considered of greatest importance, is a fundamental foundation of Osaka University.

Tekijuku later developed into the School of Medicine of Osaka University. Under the leadership of the first president NAGAOKA Hantaro, the 6th imperial university, "Imperial Osaka University," with its two schools of Medicine and Science, was established in 1931, about 80 years ago. Imperial Osaka University was founded thanks to the enthusiastic support of the citizens of Osaka who wished for an imperial university in their city and persons involved in the university such as then President of Osaka Prefecture Medical School KUSUMOTO Chozaburo and then Osaka Prefecture Governor SHIBATA Zenzaburo.

Two years later, Osaka Industrial University became part of Osaka University, becoming the current School of Engineering. When the schools of Law, Economics, and Humanities were 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.

Kaitokudo was established by five Osaka merchants as a Cheng-Zhu school for merchants. They emphasized Neo-Confucianism morality, but they were also rational, giving no credence to superstitions and fierce gods with their great interest in the natural sciences. NAKAI Riken, a leading person in Kaitokudo looked at nature as an academic discipline and wrote books such as *Esso Rohitsu* with illustrations of human anatomy by ASADA Goryu, a scholar who was in Osaka in those days, and illustrations of the world seen through a microscope. Kaitokudo is considered to be the spiritual root of the School of Letters of Osaka University, but we should not miss its close relationship to the natural sciences.

After WWII, with the introduction of the new education system, the schools of Law, Economics, and Humanities were divided into the schools of Letters, Law, and Economics, establishing the structure of our current comprehensive university. Finally, in 2007, Osaka University merged with Osaka University of Foreign Studies. Through that merger, Osaka University became one of the largest comprehensive universities in Japan.

As can be seen, thanks to the support of the citizens of Osaka, the spirit and roots of Osaka University reach back to Kaitokudo and Tekijuku, and Osaka University continues to develop under the motto "Live Locally, Grow Globally." Osaka University

has emerged as a comprehensive university more than capable of representing our country. And, Osaka University has produced many excellent scholars, educators, intellectuals, as well as key government and business leaders.

Since I became the president of Osaka University last year, I have emphasized that universities should, as their mission and contribution to society, conduct education and research in order to see the true essence of things. This May, as basic principles and an action plan for my tenure, Osaka University announced “the Institute for Academic Initiatives (IAI) (2012-2015) in order that Osaka University can become a university that shines forth even into the 22nd century.” (www.osaka-u.ac.jp) Eight principles were established in order to coalesce the wisdom of all members of the Osaka University community and lay the foundation on which Osaka University will continue to shine forth in the 21st century and even into the 22nd century as a world leader of learning and education.

I dream of an Osaka University where, in the 22nd century, young people will gather from all over the world and graduates of this university will be active all around the world. At that time, Osaka University will shine as a world leader of learning and education in pursuit of the essence of things. Today you are leaving and will spread your wings wide as graduates of this university.

This summer, the London Olympics and Paralympic Games made people in the world burst with joy and pride. Various dramas were played out in different sports, but the thing that was in common to all was the “single-minded determination.” In devoting oneself in doing one’s best in each moment, there was a kind of beauty of ultimate concentration. Such dedicated athletes reminded me of a saying of FUKUZAWA Yukichi. FUKUZAWA, who had learned at Tekijuku, left many famous statements including this: “Heaven doesn’t make a man better than others, nor does it make a man worse than others.” Another of his remarks is, “Do not only enjoy what suits your personal taste; rather enjoy being true to yourself. Perseverance wins in the end.” Especially the last part of this saying —“Perseverance wins in the end.”— can be said for the athletes who were fighting the good fight.

I think that people applaud and are moved by athletes’ hard work behind their wonderful records. The athletes demonstrate the results of their intense daily training through their bodies. They put their all into those moments with sincerity, passion, and technique. In order to win, they could not think about winning or losing, but of doing their ultimate, single-minded best. This is “Perseverance wins in the end.” I think people are moved by such an approach.

The adventurer UEMURA Naomi, the first person to reach the tops of the five continents and who died tragically during a solo ascent on North America’s Mt. McKinley, once told children, “Never forget your dreams. If you hold fast to your dreams, one day, for sure, you can make them come true.” One day, he murmured,

“Never give up. No matter what situation you face, don’t give up. Maybe that’s all I have ever really done.”

As children, we all had dreams and had ideals. However, a dream is very different from reality and cannot be achieved easily. We even think that achieving dreams is impossible. And that’s why it is a dream, an ideal. As people grow and experience harsh reality, they realize the difference between their dreams and reality. In that process, they lose the innocence and luster in their eyes they had as children. And perhaps they find themselves to be ordinary persons.

Now your long life lies before you. Some of you will be active in companies, government offices, or nurture next generations at educational institutes, while others will explore the future through research. I hope you will not lose your dreams that you had with hope as children throughout your long lives. Appreciate every second and address challenges with a great vision for the future. I hope you ponder the meaning of Fukuzawa’s remark, “Perseverance wins in the end.”

I believe you have infinite possibilities for your future. Osaka University will continue to be present here. When you have been active in the world, you are always welcome to return here to refresh yourself. Your activities are proof of our existence as well.

After you have gone out into the world, please remember to take the time to look back upon your alma mater Osaka University from time to time as the years go by. Watch over your alma mater and lend what support you are able to the future students climbing some of the paths you have blazed just as you were able to pursue your dreams with the affection of countless predecessors at Osaka University. Be proud of the days that you spent at your alma mater. Go ahead step by step with affection for the future of Osaka University.

Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune. May each of you live your life each day to the fullest! My sincerest congratulations to you all!

September 25, 2012

Osaka University

President

HIRANO Toshio