

President Hirano's Speech at
the Graduate School Commencement Ceremony
Noblesse Oblige

First of all, please permit me to extend my sincere congratulations to each and every one of you on reaching this day, the day on which you receive your master's or doctor's degree. I also would like to express my respect for your families who have supported your learning and research to this day.

You have made steady efforts and obtained a degree as a testament to the research you have completed. Your blood, sweat, and tears are also a valuable asset for Osaka University. Thus far, some 60,000 individuals have obtained a master's degree and some 25,000 individuals a doctor's degree at Osaka University. Their efforts in education and research have formed a strong backbone for research at Osaka University.

Today you're graduating from this university with an advanced graduate degree. You must be filled with expectations for what lies ahead. I'm placing my hope in you. I hope you will pursue your interest in whatever fields you choose and become a leader in that field.

For that purpose, you must maximize your ability to see the essence of all you've learned at Osaka University. You also need to continue to make efforts to increase your knowledge and experience, acquire skills, and achieve significant results. I encourage you to work hard night and day to reach the summit with the hope that your efforts will bear fruit.

At this time, may I request you hold on to the phrase *noblesse oblige* in your heart. *Noblesse oblige*, the essence of British aristocracy, implies that privilege entails responsibility. I hope you will join society and reach for the sky with your head held high as graduates of Osaka University. I entreat you to discharge your duty to society as a member of it, keeping in mind the concept *noblesse oblige* (privilege entails responsibility).

Let's look back over the history of Osaka University where you have studied. Osaka University's roots reach back to Tekijuku, a private "place of Western learning" founded by OGATA Koan in 1838 in Kawaramachi, Osaka, currently, the area near Kitahama, Kita-ku.

After the inauguration of Koan's second son Koreyoshi as a director, Koan's students established Osaka Temporary Hospital in 1869. This hospital was originally a smallpox vaccination center affiliated with Tekijuku.

Later, Osaka Temporary Hospital developed into Osaka Prefecture Medical School, and then, in 1931, it officially became Osaka Imperial University — the 6th imperial university. 2013 is the 175th anniversary of Tekijuku. I might add that 2013 is, coincidentally, 150 years since OGATA Koan passed away. So, this year is a historical year for Osaka University. I hope that you ponder the significance of your Commencement Ceremony taking place in this historical year.

Outstanding young people across the nation came to Tekijuku in order to learn the latest scholarship of that era. Those years were a great transition from the end of the Edo Era to the beginning of the Meiji Era. Including FUKUZAWA Yukichi, HASHIMOTO Sanai, NAGAYO Sensai, OMURA Masujiro, SANO Tsunetami, and OTORI Keisuke, more than 1,000 students from around the country came to Tekijuku and, filled with ambition and strong belief, competed with others in studying.

NAGAYO Sensai who built the foundation of the Japanese modern medical care system looked back those days, saying, “This place of learning was called Tekijuku. At all times, more than 100 students from all over the nation studied there. They made presentations in groups throughout the year. It was the best learning place for acquiring Western learning.”

Away from their hometowns where established hierarchical relationships were the norm, they enjoyed their youth in Osaka in a free atmosphere. 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. In other words, while people in Edo studied so they could get a successful career, people in Osaka studied for joy of learning. The spirit of Tekijuku, responsible ethics, concern for people, society, as well as Tekijuku’s unfettered academic atmosphere, has been passed on ever since.

Under the leadership of our first president, NAGAOKA Hantaro, the 6th imperial university, “Osaka Imperial University,” was established in 1931. Osaka Imperial 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 (later 2nd president of Osaka University) and then Osaka Prefecture Governor SHIBATA Zenzaburo.

Osaka Imperial University was not a politically charged imperial university founded by the government, but a university founded by the wishes of the people in Osaka. Two years later, Osaka Industrial University became part of Osaka University as the School of Engineering. When the School of Law, Economics, and Humanities 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. Kaitokudo, founded by merchants in Osaka in 1742, was a “place of learning” for merchants. These book collections were and are symbolic of the original scholarship and “Osaka spirit” that our university inherited.

The passion of the local people for Osaka and the university’s desire to respond to expectations of the industrial circle in Osaka are represented in our motto, “Live Locally, Grow Globally.” After WWII, with the introduction of the new education system, the School of Law, Economics, and Humanities was divided into the School of Letters and the School of Law and Economics, establishing the structure of our current comprehensive university. Finally, in 2007, Osaka University merged with Osaka University of Foreign Studies making Osaka University one of the largest comprehensive universities in Japan.

Inheriting the spirit of Osaka merchants and supported by the enthusiasm of the common citizen, Osaka University has developed as world-class comprehensive university. Osaka University has produced many excellent scholars, educators, intellectuals, as well as key government and business leaders. As I said earlier, I hope you will visit Tekijuku which is celebrating its 175th anniversary so that you can picture the history of Osaka University and recognize the greatness of our predecessors. You will surely feel something and be inspired. I trust you will also feel your responsibility, *noblesse oblige*.

In June, the Emperor and Empress visited Osaka University in order to view historical materials possessed by Tekijuku. Actually, the Emperor and Empress had previously visited Tekijuku when they were the Crown Prince and Princess. They were that much interested in education at Tekijuku and the pioneers of that era who were taught by OGATA Koan. I do hope you will visit Tekijuku. For your information, Tekijuku will be closed for

seismic retrofitting from October 7 through the end of March next year. So I hope you will visit there as soon as possible.

AKAHORI Shiro, the 7th President, quoted a Chinese poem: "Snow can hide plum blossoms but not their fragrance." This can be interpreted to be referring to adapting one's method of searching for something to the situation at hand, not to the way it is usually accomplished. Similar too is the situation of a scientist who tries to find unknown truth using tiny clues. In other words, even if you are struggling to achieve things and nobody acknowledges it, someone will surely acknowledge your efforts one day. Therefore, don't pay attention to those around you, but keep yourself focused on what you want to pursue.

Dr. Akahori is a world-class organic chemist and was awarded the Order of Cultural Merit for his achievements in protein research in 1965. He studied things not only in his specialty, but also in a wide range of disciplines such as medicine, pharmacy, and biochemistry. He mentioned later that it had helped him achieve great success as a researcher.

YAMAMURA Yuichi, the 11th president of Osaka University and my mentor, wrote that he had been attracted by Dr. Akahori's zeal for study. Dr. Yamamura, a graduate from the School of Medicine, visited Dr. Akahori, a graduate from the School of Science, to ask for his instruction.

Dr. Yamamura has left us with this saying, "Dream, then think, act, and pray." We can interpret this as follows: "Work hard every day in order to achieve you dream. Look into what you have done and think of what lies behind your results. Results may not be acknowledged soon, but if the truth is discovered, the results will be acknowledged eventually. So only pray humbly."

Since I took the presidency, I have worked hard under the principle that universities must be centers of scholarship and education and contribute to the development and peace in society. I have a dream to make Osaka University one of the world's top 10 research universities by its 100th anniversary in 2031. To this end, Osaka University has drawn up a document outlining Osaka University Academic Initiatives for 2012~2015 and implemented concrete measures step by step.

Even so, you may think making Osaka University one of the world's top 10 research universities is just a dream. 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 Mount 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 added, murmuring, "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 ideals. 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. However, if you give up a dream and do not make efforts to achieve it, it will remain a dream. There is no magic that will realize dreams. You must make the effort to climb your mountains one by one until you achieve your dream. I believe dreams are meant to be realized.

Now your long life lies before you. Some of you will be active in companies, government offices, or nurture the next generations at educational institutes, while others will explore the future in research. I hope you will not

lose the dreams that you had as children. Appreciate every second and address challenges with a great vision for the future.

After you go into the world, please remember to look back upon your alma mater, Osaka University.

You have *Osaka University NewsLetter 2011-2013* in your hands. We published it with the intention to make the university shine forth even into the 22nd century and leave a legacy for the next generations. I hope you will read it and join our cause. Please consider joining the fund-raising campaign for the 100th Anniversary of Osaka University's founding with the Osaka University Future Funds. Even a 500 yen-coin contribution will be fine. We appreciate your cooperation.

Finally, I hope you keep *noblesse oblige* in mind and overcome obstacles, one by one, in order to achieve your dreams. Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune. May each of you live your life to the fullest! Congratulations to you all!

HIRANO Toshio
President
Osaka University