

Entrance Ceremony Address

April 2011

President WASHIDA Kiyokazu

First of all, permit me to extend my sincere congratulations to you, the 3,555 undergraduate and 2,972 graduate students entering Osaka University. I also would like to express my admiration for your parents.

When you were preparing for your enrolment, an unprecedented and terrible earthquake hit the Tohoku area. Now, although cherry blossoms are blooming beautifully as they were a year ago, our hearts ache because of the ongoing suffering.

In the disaster-stricken areas, families have lost family members. While many victims need warm food, fuel for transportation, and space to maintain a minimum standard of living, other persons are working hard to support them both day and night. In the nuclear power plants, workers are involved in dangerous work to control and repair the facilities and to prevent increased damage and suffering. Countless numbers of people are striving to make it possible for themselves and others to rebuild their lives despite the future remaining unclear.

Here, in areas far from earthquake-stricken areas, we listen to news from the disaster areas knowing that our lives too are not unaffected. Many young people, not content to only gather and send money and relief supplies, anxiously await the opportunity to go to the disaster-stricken areas to assist victims as soon as possible.

The road to recovery is incredibly long and, therefore, some people are already thinking about policies needed in order to proceed with the recovery and of fundamental changes needed in Japan, in the way things have been done, that allowed this disaster to grow to such a level.

Doubtless, the earthquake and its aftermath have directly affected some of you. Perhaps family members are assisting others or are engaged in recovery efforts. Then there are persons who have moved, embarked on a new life in this area, far from their home, unable to stop thinking of the home they left. Perhaps for some of you this disaster brought back painful childhood memories of the Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake and you suffered flashbacks. Thus, for many persons, both here and there, this new spring seems somewhat darkened, the joy somewhat dampened.

In such a hard time, you have enrolled in this university. Looking back, you were born and have grown up in an era when the Japanese economy stalled and entered a long downward slide for the first time in 120 years, since the Meiji Restoration. Your generation has not yet experienced a time in which you could believe that tomorrow would be better than today. Thinking of the difficulty in finding employment or your future welfare, it may not be an exaggeration to say that many of you share a presentiment that tomorrow may be worse than today.

Facing such emotions, it will be up to you to design a society that is different from this one, this society driven by economic growth and affluence built on mass production and mass consumption.

Not a few people have faced such challenges from even before this disaster. In the recovery

process, changes needed by society must be promoted. Although we may not realize it, while the challenges remain the same, there may be a big difference between the people who have led society and those who next will lead it. All generations must work together on responding to these changes.

Permit me to ask, “What way of life brings happiness?” In what type of society can everyone live their life fully and die one day satisfied with the life they had? If we are to make fundamental changes in our society, we must first consider the question of what happiness is. We must design our society based on the answers to this question. Why?

Nobody will disagree that all human actions are undertaken ultimately for the sake of happiness. However, people are divided over the issue of what constitutes happiness. If you ask people, you’ll get a variety of answers — pleasure, honor, wealth, and so forth.... Pleasure, honor, wealth, and knowledge and skills for obtaining pleasure, honor, and wealth may contribute to obtaining happiness. However, the reverse is not true. That is, one does not need to be happy in order to get pleasure, honor, or wealth, or even to get knowledge or skills. Thinking of this, we should note Aristotle argued that happiness is self-sufficient. He said that happiness is pursued entirely for itself, and not for the sake of anything else. Happiness is self-sufficient; it never serves as an activity for some other end.

What is happiness? This question, paradoxically, deepens in proportion to the size of what one loses. Or, it deepens in proportion to the quality of your concern over what others lose or have lost. In that sense, I hope you will achieve the “ability to put yourself in the shoes of others.”

I remember the comment by MOTOYAMA Hikoichi, then president of Mainichi Newspapers in 1911, when Osaka Mainichi Newspaper’s charitable foundation was established. “An ache in the finger is a pain in an entire body. People tired of living and suffering from diseases in a corner of society should be an issue of the entire society.” Imagination that includes others is usually referred to as consideration for others. In a nutshell, it’s trying to understand others from the viewpoints of those others. In that sense, imagination should not just be an expanding image you envision, but the ability to see yourself from a separate, outer position. Thinking this way, consideration for others has something in common with the learning and sciences that you are going to dedicated yourselves to.

Pursuing the truth at university and caring about others in trouble as a citizen are not two different things because both of them need imagination. Imagination is a movement of mind toward what is not here. First of all, consideration for another is picturing the inner heart of that person, reaching for an experience we are not directly having. In science, research is logically finding out what is happening in accordance with invisible rules and structure. Also, religion can be said to understand this world from the other world. If we include art catching invisible but important things and giving them form, imagination can be said to be a deep basic power shaping our culture.

Thus, the mental attitude required in scientific research in order to discover phenomena in nature and society from invisible structures and the mental attitude required in achieving consideration for others are similar in nature in that one moves from a point of view inside oneself to outside, to the others’ side. In that sense, real science must be sympathetic of others.

Our viewpoints for seeing this world are not very broad. First of all, we are limited in that we can only see something from our own position. Next, we are limited to seeing things within our framework

of knowledge and practices that we have learned. In addition to these, we are limited to thinking in the language — usually only one— that we are familiar with. These worlds, these viewpoints, are much smaller and limiting than reality. If you would precisely grasp the world and go on to weave great dreams, you must lift your eyes from the small world around you.

Scholarship exists for that purpose. Through it we can expand our perspective on the world. Expanding our perspective does not primarily mean quantitatively increasing the knowledge that we already have. Rather, expanding one's perspective means learning how to see, how to understand, and how to think of something we may not even have known existed. Expanding our perspective is, in doing so, to see our situation, the situation in which we feel contained, objectively from a distance and develop the ability to understand the situation appropriately. I hope that you will become researchers and professionals having such a scientific spirit and full trust of society.

2011 marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of Osaka University. In celebration of its 80th anniversary, Osaka University has established the project “Reflecting on the origin... Looking to the future...” Osaka University's roots can be traced back to two private institutions of learning, *Tekijuku* and *Kaitokudo*. *Tekijuku* was established in Osaka in the 18th century and *Kaitokudo*, in the 19th. Osaka University, founded at Nakanoshima, Osaka, in 1931, became the sixth Imperial University. The university started with just two faculties: Medicine and Science.

Because an imperial national university was constructed in Kyoto, a city not far from Osaka, the government was not enthusiastic about establishing another university so nearby. However, the municipal government and private citizens of Osaka petitioned the government to establish another university in Osaka. The government approved the establishment on condition that the private sector bear the costs of construction and operation. This is why Osaka University's roots, unlike other national universities, come not from government schools, but from private learning places.

Kaitokudo is a learning place established in 1724 by five local merchants. It was a school where private citizens could study on their own. Once they entered the school building, all students, samurai warriors, general managers, and apprentices were treated equally. Students had to pay tuition fees based on their economic situation five times a year. If they had no money, they paid in kind — for example, a pair of brushes or a batch of paper. What merchants studied there was not management theory helpful for their daily job, but basic science, basic moral ethics based on Chinese classics. The basic of commerce lies in trust. In order to understand the fundamentals of trust, they studied principles and ethics.

Tekijuku was established by the doctor OGATA Koan in 1838. It too was a private place of learning. As a private place of learning, it differed totally from *Shoheiko*, a place of learning built by the Edo government. *Tekijuku* nurtured graduates who blazed paths for modern Japan, including OMURA Masujiro, known for building the foundation of Japan's modern military, FUKUZAWA Yukichi, the journalist, SANO Tsunetami, the founder of Japan Red Cross, and OTORI Keisuke, the leader of new industries.

OGATA Koan served as a doctor for the Edo government and president of the place of Western learning. Later, he died in Edo. In the Meiji Era, the Tokyo Medical School, based on this place of

learning, the predecessor of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Tokyo, was established. A place of Western learning in Edo opened by FUKUZAWA Yukichi, the director of *Tekijuku*, led to the establishment of Keio University. The root of the Faculty of Medicine of Osaka University is the Osaka School of Medicine, a school with roots back to *Tekijuku*. In that sense, *Tekijuku* is also the root of the modern university and of faculties of medicine in Japan. FUKUZAWA Yukichi wrote this concerning life at *Tekijuku* in his autobiography:

‘We never thought of what our future would be and didn’t dream of making our name. We enjoyed reading difficult books day and night. Our futures were unclear, but deep down in our hearts, we enjoyed ourselves. Why? Japanese did not have access to Western advanced books, but we did. However poor we were, however difficult our situation was, however weak our presence was, our pride in our advanced knowledge and scholarship was so high that we looked down on royalty and aristocracy although we were just poor students. We felt happy facing difficulties. At one point, Ogata was surely a struggling student, but he was happy studying for the joy of it. That’s why he could study harder than students in Edo. Thinking of that, if current students study hard while making plans for their future, their learning will suffer.’

The pride and uniqueness of education at *Tekijuku* lay in “Studying without goals.” Learning not for responding to needs of tomorrow and for thinking of one’s future, but learning in order to gain strength to envision the unknown society of tomorrow’s tomorrow – young people at *Tekijuku* were full of such spirit.

Some *Tekijuku* students returned home to become doctors or medical staff, but more students became leaders of Japan during the Meiji Era. Only two subjects, Dutch and medicine, were taught at *Tekijuku*. These two subjects seemed to teach them what was needed for their today and tomorrow. How could *Tekijuku* produce these leaders? Osaka University strives to learn a lot from the way of education at *Tekijuku*. The secret is nurturing the ability to see the world from other positions in addition to current needs. I think that education at *Tekijuku* lay in developing unfettered students through nurturing such a viewpoint.

In high schools under the old education system, students who later became doctors, lawyers, engineers, or foreign literary persons lived under the same roof and read the same books and discussed common themes. One senior economist said that this network was important and persons in this network knew that who was familiar with something and who was the right person to ask and the information was very accurate. Your ability to see farther and more deeply will be developed through cultivating friends with different interests.

I hope you will interact with persons in specialized fields other than your own and with those with different interest in order to develop your own unique viewpoints. And I hope you will become genuine professionals to be trusted and depended upon by others.

I’d like to conclude by wishing each and every one of you the very best in your future endeavors.