

## **President WASHIDA Kiyokazu, Entrance Ceremony Address**

April 2010

I'm very glad we can have this entrance ceremony today at Osaka Castle, the symbol of Osaka, in the midst of cherry blossoms at their height. First of all, permit me to extend my sincere congratulations to the 3,446 undergraduate and 3,037 graduate students entering Osaka University. You worked hard, won the strong competition, and are enrolling in Osaka University today. You must be filled with excitement, thinking of the many things you want to do at university. I also would like to express my admiration to your family members at this ceremony for their support to you.

However, I suspect, some students, especially some of our new undergraduates, are a little worried. "What we should start studying first? What kind of life will I lead in this unfamiliar place? Can I make friends? There are so many extracurricular activities — what shall I choose?" And so on.

However, as the phrase goes, "Look if you like, but you will have to leap." I recommend you to leap. Actually, what you want to do will likely change while in university. Rather, it should change because, actually, most people don't know what they really want to do until they do something.

Our viewpoints for seeing this world are not very big. 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 acquired. In addition to these, we are limited to thinking in the language, and usually only one, that we are familiar with. These worlds, these viewpoints, are much smaller than reality. In order to understand the world more correctly and have larger dreams, we must broaden our small perspectives on the world. 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.

To assist students in expanding their perspectives, Osaka University puts the emphasis on a liberal education coupled with specialized education. Specifically, not only a liberal education in the first year, but also a liberal education at the graduate school level is emphasized. The more we research in specialized fields, the greater our need for a liberal education becomes.

Let me explain why this is true. Following the discovery of BSE in American cattle, Japan suspended all American beef imports. Some time after this happened, the Communication Design Center in charge of liberal education had a class that went like this after American beef imports were provisionally resumed. Graduate students from various schools participated in this seminar. In response to the instructor's question as to what terms and conditions would be needed to fully resume U.S. beef imports, a long discussion started among graduate students. At this time, the BSE issue was not well-known, so there were no specialists.

Concerning the cause of BSE, graduate students from schools of medicine and biology made remarks from a pathological viewpoint. Graduate students from schools of politics and economics

listened to such discussions and countered their arguments. They said that when discussing resuming U.S. beef imports, Japan-U.S. diplomatic relationships and trade tactics were more important than arguments on causes. They insisted that they could not reach a conclusion unless the issue was considered in terms of political dynamics. However, then, graduate students majoring history and cultural anthropology insisted that, at the root of the BSE issue, was the food culture that humans keep livestock for meat. In order to get a large amount of meat, humans fed a vast quantity of cereals to animals. Humans eventually forced livestock to become carnivorous by feeding them bone-meal feed. They said that such a stock raising culture itself should be questioned. They said that the BSE issue was not a pathological, political, or economical issue; rather it should be discussed from a wider cultural viewpoint. Otherwise, they said, we cannot understand the real root of problem and carry out more in-depth discussions. Concerning this opinion, other students said that if the range of the problem would be expanded to include such, the ongoing issue of resuming imports would be postponed and we could never come to a conclusion. In this way, the discussion deepened.

I don't know how the seminar finished on that day. Also, this is only an example. What is important at a university is that persons with different interests and learning express their ideas about how they understand one issue and coordinate their different views. Why is coordinating such different views needed?

Whether the problem concerns the environment, finance, medicine, labor, food distribution, or whatever, so-called globalization is progressing and local problems have become intertwined with a complex world system. At such times, transnational political, economical, and cultural interests are involved even in domestic problems, although not visibly so on the surface. Therefore, there are no issues whose structure can be seen from one perspective alone. That's why a coordination of views is necessary. Therefore, in order to address issues in which such complex interests are intertwined and find approaches to problems, a very tough intellect is required. Our intellect must be tough enough to endure submerging without breathing.

Generally, to specialize in something, research, work, or whatever, means going into it in a more detailed way. When you enrolled in university, you chose a school, you chose a major in the school, and then you chose a project to study — you narrowed the object of your concern. In the process, you undoubtedly became acquainted with the world's advanced research standards and moved with them and tried hard to exceed them. You were struggling to be a professional in your field.

However, for professionals to make truly good use of their specialty, knowledge about that particular field alone is not enough because a specialty cannot be oriented to the real world unless it incorporates other specialties.

When establishing one idea as a system, adopting one discovery to medical practice, or holding an exhibition to exhibit one artistic works, one needs to join forces with other professionals such as those in law, accounting, procurement, and public relations. In order to work on a project with professionals in other fields, it is necessary to be able to explain your own specialty in detail so that other specialists,

specialists who are amateurs in your specialty, will gain sight into your perception. Also, you need to motivate them. To this end, you have to understand their commitment to quality, talk with them in a way that will inspire them. In order to acquire such skills, you need to associate with people in different fields on a regular basis. Those wishing to be doctors, those wishing to work in a legal profession, those wishing to become teachers, researchers, or developers of technology, need to receive training in debating issues earnestly on a daily basis. One cannot communicate just using jargon from one's specialty because there are few issues worthy of real discussion that don't require a comprehensive viewpoint. Thus, specialists must position their knowledge in a compilation of scholarship; in other words, they must map their knowledge in the bigger framework of society. Having a proper understanding of what you know and what you don't know, what you can do and what you cannot do, is to be liberally educated.

In order to develop intelligence to meet such requirements, you should have more than one eye first of all. You need the ability to view a problem from different points to bring it into clear view. Knowing different ways of problem solving that were developed by many scholarships, learning from different cultures, and learning from history lead to viewing the current situation from different positions. With such compound sight, you can see depth of the world.

And being able to see this world with depth is to be liberally educated. The university exists for that purpose. A university has a huge amount of knowledge that you have not learned yet. This includes knowledge about space, nature, society, culture, and their respective histories. Expanding your world by having a dialogue with past thoughts and learning from others' different ways of seeing and thinking and by thinking about things from a different viewpoint is the most important thing in learning at university. As I said earlier, at a university, it is important not only to learn what we have wanted to know, but also to have questions about what we had never guessed, to encounter perspectives, questions, and thoughts that we didn't even know existed.

Through learning you can obtain the ability to classify things, which is the most important function of liberal education. The ability to perceive and classify things, in any situation, into four categories: what we must not lose sight of, what does neither good nor harm, what is unnecessary, and what is impermissible.

What is important in this world filled with uncertainty and the unknown, a world in which there are no correct answers, is not to make oneself feel one understands something new by applying a known formula or framework. To know what we don't know rather than what we know is also important. What really matters is to know that we don't know *this*, but we know that *this* is important. In other words, to value other persons' viewpoints is important. Not accepting media information without questioning, not being overwhelmed by popular sentiments, not responding to things emotionally, but viewing the world with more than one eye, continuously thinking, discussing with persons with other perspectives, and getting involved in forming public opinions is to be liberally educated.

In English, human nature and liberal arts are referred to as "humanity" and "humanities", respectively. There is only a difference between them; a singular form or a plural form. In the times of

globalization when local issues are intertwined with global issues beneath the surface, we need to learn, think, and talk with one another as human beings beyond race and nation, embracing the world rather than just the globe.

When talking about human beings and the world, the humanities serve as our stick. Basic science continues to provide the humanities with nutrients. In that sense, pursuing an academic field in university is not different from cultivating yourself. I hope you study various basic sciences and have many eye-opening experiences at university.

Since the change of its legal status to the national university corporation 6 years ago, Osaka University has called liberally educated person “a man of good sense” and has focused on providing education to nurture such graduates. In this case, the sense in the good sense does not refer to a sensation or sensibility alone. Here, the sense includes a “sense” in “common sense” in English, insight in Japanese and “le bon sens” in French, reason or the power of judgment. Osaka University has put an emphasis on liberal education in order to nurture people whom people say, “We can rely on him” or “Leave it to him. He can be trusted.” because he is a man of good sense. Concerning the good sense, former president, MIYAHARA Hideo used to say, “Be wise and behave.” Going back the history, in the 18th and 19th century, Osaka merchants committed themselves to be wise and behave more than we do now. Five merchants collected money and invited scholars and established a place of study called *Kaitokudo* for merchants 286 years ago. Also, in 1838, a private school called *Tekijuku* was opened, which produced many people, including FUKUZAWA Yukichi, who assumed great roles in Japan during the Meiji Period. These two were places where people did behave — two places of study that Osaka merchants built to nurture persons, tomorrow’s leaders, in learning and a liberal education. These are the spiritual origins of Osaka University.

I will talk about Osaka University’s roots in a common lecture, “Invitation to the Scholarship” on April 16. At this entrance ceremony, I need to tell that the university is committed to take over the ideas of “be wise” and “behave in a responsible and mature manner” together with you.

There are many humble successes at Osaka University, but many of our achievements shine. Looking at recent achievements, one can speak of advanced research by professors, Cultural Order Awards and other commendations, an award in the “Web pages that anyone can use” Contest by Osaka University’s Web Design Unit, the winning of the Mesena Award 2009 for activities in adult education at Kaitokudo for the 21st Century in university-industry-community cooperation, winning the grand prize of the National Rakugo Competitions last year, winning speech prizes in Chinese and Turkish at the National Student Speech Contest, achieving top-class results in national tournaments in *Go* and *Karuta*, outstanding performance in extracurricular activities, and so on... Osaka University is brilliant in a variety of fields!

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