

President's Speech at the 2011 Graduation Ceremony and Graduate Schools Investiture Ceremony

First of all, I'd like to extend my sincere congratulations to the 3,507 undergraduates, 2,063 graduates, and 569 doctor's degree recipients. I also would like to express my admiration for your parents who have supported your learning and research to this day. Normally, I would next deliver my congratulatory message; however, today I can't help but mention about the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Words are not adequate for describing this horrendous disaster. I presume to guess that some of you have relatives or friends who lost family members or homes and are overwhelmed by anxiety, unable to think of much else.

Perhaps half of you experienced the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake 16 years ago. Those of you who are undergraduate students must have been in the lower grades in elementary school and the graduate students, in the higher grades at that time. When you heard of this terrible earthquake and tsunami, you may have trembled remembering the horror and hardships following the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake. I, as one such person, feel anxious at night and have to sleep with the lights on.

Two weeks have passed since that earthquake. Thinking of people spending nights in shelters without electricity or at homes in extraordinary quiet darkness, workers risking their lives to cool the nuclear power plants, victims working to rescue or provide medical treatment others, under these circumstances our celebrating your graduation and completion under these bright lights almost makes me feel guilty.

The distance between victims in the disaster-affected areas and us is all but unfathomable. We can't see all the mundane details of the disaster — all we can do is worrying about victims from afar.

There may be a bigger distance between victims and reporters covering the disaster on site and interviewing victims. It's just like the difference in the relationship between a caregiver helping feed a care-receiver and asking, "Does it taste good?" at a nursing-care facility and the relationship between a caregiver eating the same food as a care-receiver in a small group at a nursing-care facility while saying "This is good." to one another.

In other words, in affected areas or now far removed from such areas, the number of victims of this disaster thinking, "I'm still alive." is not small. However, many people don't feel they have survived the earthquake, but have been left behind. The fact that they suffered little or no loss makes them feel guilty. No one can fill this distance and negotiate it instantly.

In such a setting, what persons like us who live far away can do is limited. We can only do such things as send relief supplies and money, not block transportation and evacuation routes, and not hoard goods or hold off on purchasing things so that as many goods as possible can

reach all parts of disaster areas.

It will take a long time to restore the disaster-affected areas, but we will learn what we can do, including accepting victims or providing relief efforts in those areas. What we can do now is get ready for the time when we are needed.

Let me speak about this kind of distance. I said what we best might do now was live a modest life. On the other hand, some people say living as usual gives hope for recovery or economic assistance. The same may be true in disaster-stricken areas. Some people may be angered by the sound of media helicopters circling overhead, saying voices for help cannot be heard because of the sound, but others may feel that someone is keeping an eye on them. In this way people's feelings are different depending on their situation. People react differently.

In the aftermath of the Great Hanshin Awaji Earthquake, I learned the word "copresence" from Dr. NAKAI Hisao, a psychiatrist at Kobe University Hospital. Dr. Nakai interpreted it as meaning "being there for you," explaining that copresence had a great meaning in disaster-stricken areas.

Just after the earthquake, Dr. Nakai asked doctors from outlying areas for help. Many doctors rushed to the devastated areas, but staff members at Kobe University Hospital, including Dr. Nakai, were caught up in taking care of patients. To doctors standing by grumbling about being kept waiting for such a long time, Dr. Nakai said, "We can concentrate all our energy on treating patients because we have you waiting to assist us." He said, "You are in our side. You aren't helping as you'd like to, but just your presence means a lot to us."

Having someone who watches over us is really encouraging. This is true not only for disaster-stricken areas, but also for a child going to a kindergarten for the first time. When a young boy leaves his mother and goes to kindergarten for the first time, he feels anxiety. Everyone has experienced such feelings. The child turns around to look at his mother again and again to confirm she's watching. The child cautiously joins a group of unknown pupils, future friends. People sometimes cannot leave a guardian and act on their own if they are not aware of being watched by someone. What we can do now for disaster victims is to keep watching and sending them our sympathy.

You have now completed your studies and research in special fields at Osaka University and will enter the world of professionals. However, for professionals to make truly good use of their specialty, only knowledge about that particular field is not enough because a specialty cannot be oriented to the real world unless it incorporates other specialties.

When establishing one idea to 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,

can gain insight into your perception. Also, you need to motivate them.

To this end, you have to understand their commitment to quality and talk with them in a way that will inspire them. Persons who don't try to understand other professionals' viewpoints and concerns and try to quash opposing viewpoints using jargon from their specialty are not qualified to be professionals. Here, it's important to look at differences. This applies also to medical staff. Medical staff that cannot imagine the feelings of patients and their families are not fully qualified as professionals.

You have achieved good results in your studies. You may aim to be an excellent leader in a variety of settings in society. Of course, this is not wrong. However, we should never forget that a society in which everyone wants to be the leader is easily broken.

In order to achieve a goal, in addition to a leader, supporting players are also needed. Many books regarding leadership are sold in bookstores these days. This may sound cynical, but a person who follows a leader unquestioningly cannot become a leader. Leaders should not follow precedent, but carve their own paths.

I was impressed with a thoughtful remark on leadership by MATSUSHITA Konosuke, the founder of Panasonic. In front of managerial staff, Mr. Matsushita listed three extraordinary factors necessary for success: an attractive personality, an aura of good fortune, and the image of walking on ahead. He didn't mention reasons why he chose these three factors, but I like to think about his choices this way.

A pleasant person lowers his guard. He/she may act impetuously and change his/her mind. Moved by other's affection, he/she feels depressed. Such a person keeps others around in suspense as to what he/she'll do next, making them feel they must do their best.

When you're around a person blessed with good fortune, you feel things will go well. Taken in by this person's temperament, you feel able to take on challenges you might not otherwise.

When the image of someone walking away has been burned into your memory, your watching the person has caused a ripple. Your imagination is excited with passion to follow. You find yourself thinking of what the person is trying to do and what they're sticking with.

Such a person makes onlookers not passive but active. That person's vulnerable unstrained character attracts the concern of others. Having a firm commitment, leadership, and being open to others' opinions — such an attitude is surely important. However, being defenseless, being laidback draws the interest of others.

Needless to say, an organization is a cluster of people. When each person does not wait for instructions, but demonstrates their best capacities on their own, the organization is filled with energy and positive tension. The organization in which each member does not wait for instructions from supervisors and thinks on their own, facing challenges, has a lot of energy. "Getting things done by others." In that sense, a leader who can make an organization that does

not require a leader is a great leader.

What you will be asked to do after graduation is to polish your techniques as professionals and to be mature and clever citizens. There are no specific leaders in leading one's daily life in society. Since each citizen channels all their energies into their roles, everyone cannot always fill the role of leader.

Thus, in the things or events affecting a group, a community, or a society, one hears persons saying to one another, "Now I'm busy with my work, so could you take my place today?" or "You're concerned about what you have to do, aren't you? I'll fill in for you for the time being." That is, when it comes down to the group or organization being faced with a challenge, each person does their part when and where they can. I'm sure that groups consisting of such members can be very strong.

In other words, members complete their normal tasks. However, when faced with a crisis affecting the whole, each member becomes his/her own leader and acts as "one of them" — it becomes a flexible organization in which leaders easily step forward. In that sense, followership has the potential to be and supply leaders when needed, following the leader they chose, but not blindly doing so. While supporting him/her and checking if he/she misses something, they follow. Such followership is needed. In order to be a good follower who supports the leader, the follower must have a "perspective of value." The perspective of value is the ability to differentiate between the following four things: what we must not lose sight of, what doesn't matter one way or the other, what we're better off without, and what must never be.

In the words by KAWASE Naomi, the movie director, perspective of value is the ability to classify things into what it's all right to forget, what we must not forget, and what we must forget. People have called this ability refinement, comprehensive worldview.

UMESAO Tadao, the cultural anthropologist who died last year, in the interview just before his death, talked about comprehensive worldview followership as enabling one to take responsibility for what one can do while not losing sight of the whole. He concluded his remarks with this message, "Become one who can dance the dance handed you."

This means you should be prepared for fulfilling your responsibilities when events call you as the leader.

I hope you will become persons about whom people will say, "We can rely on you," or "We wish you were here at a time like this." Yes, I want you to be professionals with a truly comprehensive worldview. If you feel the need to formally study again, please come back. Osaka University keeps its doors open for those of you who wish to study.

I would like to close by wishing you all good fortune. May you live your life to the fullest!