

## President HIRANO

2012 Entrance Ceremony Address

### *Reaching the top of mountains*

First of all, I would like to heartily welcome you to Osaka University. 3,529 of you are entering as undergraduates, and 2,983 as graduate students. All of you are embarking on a new life, a life full of promising prospects. For me as President of Osaka University, this is a supremely happy moment just as it is for your parents to whom I offer my sincere congratulations.

Let me now talk a little about Osaka University where you will spend the coming years. Osaka University was founded thanks to persons involved in the university and to the enthusiastic support of Osaka citizens wishing for an imperial university. Although officially the government set up the university, in actuality, local people arranged the funds and temporary operation expenses for its founding.

Osaka University's roots reach back to Tekijuku, a private "place of learning" founded in 1838 by the doctor and scholar of Western sciences, OGATA Koan. SHIBA Ryotaro, a graduate of Osaka School of Foreign Languages, the predecessor of Osaka University of Foreign Studies, wrote at the beginning of his novel *Kashin* that Teijuku was the predecessor of Osaka University and, thus, OGATA Koan was a founder of Osaka University. Under OGATA Koan, about 1,000 students came to Tekijuku from all over Japan and studied day and night.

FUKUZAWA Yukichi who served as a school chief and later founded Keio University said in his biography that the students enjoyed the difficulties they faced. Looking back those days, Fukuzawa noted "There was pleasure in pain. Toil itself was our pleasure." Unlike Edo, at that time in Osaka there were no career paths to become officers nor were there feudal lords to give work. Rather, they studied hard and enjoyed learning itself. Away from their hometowns where there were imperative hierarchical relationships, they enjoyed their youth in Osaka.

NAGAYO Sensai who served a school chief following FUKUZAWA and built the foundation of the Japanese medical care system and public health system, mentioned in his book *Shoko Shishi* that Tekijuku was the best school of Western learning at that time. His remark gives evidence of the excellent reputation Tekijuku had in those days.

TEZUKA Osamu, a graduate of Osaka University's School of Medicine and a manga artist famous for his works such as *Black Jack* and *Tetsuwan Atom* [Mighty Atom], wrote about his roots in his work *Hidamarinoki* [Trees in the Sun]. Osamu's great-grandfather, TEZUKA Ryoan, was the doctor of Western medicine in *Hidamarinoki* and studied under OGATA Koan with FUKUZAWA Yukichi.

TEZUKA Ryoan devoted himself to propagating vaccinations against smallpox and to curing cholera, a greatly feared deadly disease. He and his comrades adhered to the OGATA Koan's dictums: "The essence of the medical profession is to live life not for oneself but for others," "See patients as patients," and

“Don’t see rank and class in people.” That is, in a spirit of “For people, for society, for the nation, and for benevolence,” OGATA Koan’s students lived through an era of great reform, the Meiji Restoration, living up to their beliefs.

And thus, young people who had learned at Tekijuku with its free and unstructured academic atmosphere and foresight became the main driving force for carving out a path to a new era. Tekijuku’s forward-looking spirit gave birth to Osaka Temporary Hospital, Osaka Medical School, Osaka Prefecture Medical School. Later this spirit infused the founding of the 6th imperial university with the two schools, Medicine and Science, in 1931.

Later in 1933, Osaka Industrial University merged with Osaka University, becoming the 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 Kaitokudo book collections were symbolic of the original scholarship and "Osaka spirit" that our university inherited.

In 1949, with the introduction of the new education system, Osaka University was reborn as a national university. At that time the schools of Law, Economics, and Humanities were divided into the School of Letters and the School of Law and Economics, setting up a structure for our current comprehensive university.

Later, the School of Law and Economics was divided into the School of Law and the School of Economics. Additionally, schools of Dentistry, Pharmaceutical Sciences, Engineering Science, Engineering, and Human Science were added. Following the change of legal status into a national university corporation in 2004, Osaka University merged with Osaka University of Foreign Studies in 2007. Through the merger, Osaka University, with 11 schools, 16 graduate schools and 5 research institutes, became one of the largest comprehensive universities in Japan. At the time of start of our university in 1931, the freshmen of the Schools of Medicine and Science numbered 86. Now, 80 years later, Osaka University is top in undergraduate admissions in Japan with 3,529 students.

Osaka University with roots in Tekijuku and the spirit of Kaitokudo, supported by Osaka citizens as a leading comprehensive university, has continued to grow under the motto “Live Locally, Grow Globally.” It has produced many outstanding scholars, educators, intellectuals, as well as key government and business leaders. Today, you are going to write a new page in the history of Osaka University with us.

You have come from all over Japan and enrolled in this university with hopes and dreams in your mind. By the way, what is a university for you? You studied at elementary, middle and high schools. I’m sure you had something you wondered about as a child, but, as you grew up, you perhaps began to think, “That’s the way it is,” and stopped thinking about it. For example, “How was the universe was born?” “Why do people become ill?” “Why do butterflies look so beautiful?” “Why do Japan and other countries exist in the world?” — There are countless questions that we don't know the full answer for. Many people

just stop asking such questions.

A university is the place where you can find the answers for these questions, questions that we cannot solve through a knowledge-oriented approach. It is up to you to find answers. A university is the place where you share your doubts and find the answers. In other words, a university is the place to see beneath appearances and ascertain the true essence of all things.

If undergraduate school is the place to nurture the ability to ascertain the true essence of things, graduate school is the place to nurture true scholarship. In other words, graduate school is a place where you ascertain the true essence of things by strengthening your expertise.

Last year's Great East Japan Earthquake and the ensuing accidents at the nuclear power plants, the economic crisis in Greece, political turmoil in the world, floods in Thailand — humans are facing unprecedented global-scale disasters. Modern society rooted in an affluent material civilization starting with the industrial revolution has rapidly changed everything on a global scale in return for human prosperity. The depletion of fossil fuels is now a real problem. Nuclear power had been regarded as the trump card in energy policy, but its risks are now clear. Environmental problems such as global warming and infection spread are recognized as new risks.

Furthermore, developments in medicine and improvements in the social environment resulted in an exploding world population. In addition to food problems, in developed countries in particular, a rapid response to super-aging societies is needed. We must give up the idea of conquering nature with science and technology as we have done in the past and we must think about living in harmony with nature.

Likewise, we have conducted research with the belief we somehow could sidestep unavoidable issues such as aging, diseases, and death through advances in bioscience and medicine. We must change such ways of thinking and review how to live a safe life while reconciling ourselves to living with these problems. There is no other time than now for us to see beneath appearances and ascertain the true essence of all things.

Simple stopgap measures cannot solve these challenges. The idea of overcoming these problems through the power of science and technology is only a fantasy. We need to see the true essence within these problems and think of measures to cope with them.

Then, how can we cultivate the ability to see the true essence? Needless to say, we need to obtain wider and deeper knowledge in our university studies. However, the most important thing is that you seek opportunities for obtaining such knowledge by yourselves. Besides classes, there are many opportunities to learn inside and outside of one's classes at university, for example, in club activities, NPO activities, overseas training in summer holidays, and more. Graduate school students will have a lot of opportunities to pursue the true essence in natural and social phenomenon through experiments and field studies. You must not let these chances pass you by.

Whether you will make use of such chances depends on your sensitivity, curiosity, powers of observation and investigation, persistence, concentration, and inspiration. Your teachers will not teach

you one by one as they may have in high school. Faculty members are themselves studying day and night to look for the answers for numerous issues.

Just listening, sitting in class will not enable you to see the true essence of matters. It's most unusual that the true essence of matters will come looking for you. True essences suddenly come to those who have been asking for and are ready to meet them. Let me explain why I think this way.

One is a saying by YAMAMURA Yuichi, the 11th president of Osaka University and a professor of immunology and internal medicine. Years ago, professor Yamamura gave me some calligraphy written on a paperboard that said: "Researchers conduct research with their dreams. After that, they can only pray for luck." This paperboard is, along with his kindness, filled with dreams and hopes for the future, the importance of the ability to take action, a humble feeling toward nature that surpasses human abilities, and a permanent prayer for life. Only thinking and collecting information cannot produce unique things. The feat of discovering something new by taking action with strong faith transcends human understanding. When I hit a wall in conducting research, this saying of his gave me peace of mind and hope.

I also like the remark by NAGAOKA Hantaro, the first president of Osaka University and the father of particle physics in Japan, who advocated the Nagaoka Rutherford atomic model. A scroll written by Professor Nagaoka that says, "Do not lick the sake lees" decorates the president's office at Osaka University. Sake lees are residue after making sake. They refer to something that is no longer needed, to spiritless remains. Therefore, "Do not lick the sake lees," means "Do not copy only the shape of a thing without understanding the passion of the creator." Do not spend your valuable university life passively. Look for your individuality, something different from others, and obtain the ability to see the true essence of things.

Finally, I have something to say about what I learned from my experience. As a student, I climbed many mountains in Japan. By comparing my life as a researcher to my mountaineering experience in my school days, I tell myself, "Reach the top of the mountain in your own way."

You are now on the top of a big mountain, your admission to Osaka University. What are you thinking about at the top of this mountain? You may look at the new view in front of you while looking back the long road that brought you to this day. Or you may look up at mountains in your way that you have yet to climb. Each of you must be looking at a different view. But what is common to all of you is that the view you're looking at is one that you've never seen before.

Whenever I talk with students or young people, I tell them the importance of climbing to the top of the mountain. By reaching the top of the mountain, we can get something that we cannot get by only climbing part way. I'm sure that there are many mountains in your way — challenges and difficulties that you must face and overcome to achieve dreams and goals you have.

With dreams and hopes in mind, people climb mountains — make efforts to get over troubles and difficulties. We don't know how high the mountains in our lives are before we reach the top of the

mountain. The most important thing is, however, even if the mountain that you have reached the top of is low, once you are at the top, you can see a view that you have never seen before. There, you can have a view of the path you came on and of the mountain that you are going to conquer next.

Suppose you are climbing Mt. Fuji. You've reached the 9th station of the mountain. There is a sign on the 9th station. Most people who reach the 9th station never fail to reach to the top of Mt. Fuji even if they are exhausted, approaching the limit of their strength, or whatever difficulties they have. However, in life there are no signs when we are climbing the mountains in our lives. Nobody knows how high he is – at the 9th station or the 1st. But, when he reaches the top of the mountain, then and only then he knows that he is on the top. The top of the mountain suddenly emerges in front of the person who has made efforts to reach it and believes in it. That is like an inspiration that strikes the person who is ready for it. Too often in climbing mountains in our lives, we give up climbing halfway.

I'm sure that now you feel the happiness and significance of being on the top of the mountain and you can see the view dominating the foreground – the future. There is a big difference between the person who, even once, reached the top of the mountain after difficult processes and the person who went down half way. I hope you will not forget this experience and make efforts to climb your mountains one by one and reach the top of the mountains that you decide to climb. We have ups and downs in life. Even if you fall to the bottom of a valley, you should think of it as a chance to climb the next mountain and aim for it.

I hope you will always have hope and dreams and reach to the top of your mountain. I believe you have infinite possibilities for your future. Your youth, the sparkle in your eyes, is the hope of the future. It is the possibilities that God has given to only the young. I hope you will not lose the excitement of today.

Make your dream come true with high aspiration. Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune.

April 3, 2012

President of Osaka University

*HIRANO Toshio*