

# President's Speech at the 2013 Graduation Ceremony and Graduate School Commencement Ceremony

*Know yourselves, enhance your abilities, and fly high in the world.*

First of all, I'd like to extend my sincere congratulations to the 3,385 undergraduates and 2,618 graduates on the receipt of their degrees today. I'd also like to congratulate the 57 recipients of professional degrees. I applaud your work and effort and express my sincere congratulations to all of you. I also would like to express my admiration for your parents who supported you in achieving these goals.

Today you're graduating from this university with an advanced degree. You must be filled with expectations for what lies ahead. You have had experiences in classes, laboratories, clubs, and social activities at Osaka University. Whatever field you go into, I want you to become a leader in that field and contribute to Japan's future as well as the human development and the improvement of society's welfare. I would like you to believe that you have the ability to be active in the world as leaders and move with grace.

Then, what does being active in the world as leaders mean? And what is necessary for persons who are active in the world? I believe one needs the ability to ascertain the true essence of things and the principles of "forgiveness, tolerance, and harmonious coexistence."

Civilization that emerged in locations such as Mesopotamia, the Indus River valley, and the Yellow River has made great progress, flourishing through the ages, and has spread throughout the world. As a result, people's activities have shifted from uniformity to diversity and problems can no longer be said to have a single cause. Problems such as global warming, the energy crisis, food problem, world population problems, and infectious diseases have multiple causes and it's become difficult to find solutions.

With this change from uniformity to diversity, our future does not look bright if we fail to have mutual understanding of and respect for different cultures and ways of thinking. Thus, more and more, seeing things from broader perspective is required.

A common saying speaks of not being able to see the woods for all the trees. Look at it this way, doing something good for one of the trees is not always good for the forest as a whole. Even if a measure for a particular tree is the best in the short term, if that measure causes adverse effects on the rest of the forest, such an action could lead to the destruction of the forest. In other words, when judging something, the ability to see the true essence of the entire matter is the most important thing and, in order to make the best decision, one must employ multiple and broad perspectives.

Furthermore, in order to realize a peaceful society, each of us must understand the other person, their situation, and feelings. Asked by his disciple, "What should we keep in our mind all our life

through?” Chinese philosopher Confucius answered, “Forgiveness.” His idea is represented in his saying, “Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you.” In other words, “tolerance.”

In the world of my specialty, immunology, there is a phenomenon called an “immune tolerance.” The immune system usually attacks foreign substances such as pathogenic microorganisms, but, in some cases, it’s better if the immune system backs off. This backing off is “immune tolerance.” In such cases, the “foreign” and “self” components coexist. The recognition of foreign particles in the immune system starts with knowing “self.” For the immune system to be able to respond to countless types of foreign organisms, it must know what its self is. It becomes possible to attack foreign organisms or forgive and coexist with them only when the immune system differentiates itself from others.

I think being able to live together harmoniously with others is essential for people who will be active in global society. For nations and people with different cultures and religions to harmoniously live and prosper, it’s critical to understand others and respect them. Based on such a way of thinking, people will be able to live together harmoniously. This is a necessary frame of mind for people living in a global society. To this end, it’s necessary that they know themselves, that they understand and respect their own culture. If one cannot love one’s self and one’s nation and be proud of them, how can such a person understand and respect other people, another nation?

In September last year, I had an opportunity to see the Daikin factory in Suzhou, China. Daikin Industries, Ltd. is a fast-growing manufacturer, recently becoming the number one global company in the manufacture of air-conditioners. I remember the remark by Mr. Tayano, a representative of Daikin’s China branch whom I met there. He said that for companies to win global competition, they have to strive to cut costs, to increase their market share as much as possible and have unique technology. However, he emphasized, the most important thing was to have a corporate culture. Culture dies hard. Thus, companies without their own culture perish. Corporations with their own culture can expand their culture and influence into businesses they are associated with as well. In culture, there is strength. It is now China who is accepting different cultures; diverse cultures coexist in the country.

The three flags of China, Japan, and Daikin waved in the wind at the Daikin plant in Suzhou. That was a very impressive sight.

For Japan and Japanese to be active in the world and make contribution to world peace and welfare on this earth, our being able to see the essence of complicated challenges from multiple viewpoints is important. Furthermore, I recognized again that Japanese and young people who studied in Japan understood and were proud of Japanese culture. This cultivation of minds that are able to understand and respect other nations is most basic and critical.

For any organization or human, the present condition of the organization or human comes from their roots. Their experiences are handed over as a kind of DNA. When speaking of future, you cannot neglect them. All of you share a common history that you learned at Osaka University.

Being graduates of Osaka University, you will be viewed as persons selected from society and you will have responsibilities to give back to society accordingly. To know yourselves, you need to know Osaka University. So, what is Osaka University where you have studied? Let's think about the Osaka University that has become and will remain an important part of your life.

Thanks to the enthusiastic support of the citizens of Osaka and persons involved in the university, including then president of Osaka Prefectural Medical University KUSUMOTO Chozaburo (you may recognize his name from Kusumoto Awards) and then governor of Osaka Prefecture SHIBATA Zenzaburo, Osaka Imperial University was founded in 1931 with two schools, Medicine and Science. It was the 6th imperial university and the first president was NAGAOKA Hantaro.

However, our university's roots actually reach back to Tekijuku, a private "place of learning" founded in 1838 by the doctor and scholar of Western sciences OGATA Koan who worked to save people with then state-of-the-art knowledge. Tekijuku's open academic culture and forward-looking spirit gave birth to Osaka Prefecture Medical School and, eventually, to today's Schools of Medicine and Science at Osaka University.

In 1933, Osaka Industrial University merged with Osaka University, becoming the current 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, a "place of learning of Chinese and Japanese studies" for merchants, founded by merchants, in Osaka in the late Edo Period, were passed on to Osaka University. These book collections are symbolic of the original scholarship and the "Osaka spirit" that our university inherited with these tomes. With the introduction of the new education system, 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.

Osaka University continues to grow under the motto "Live Locally, Grow Globally." Moreover, after going through transitions such as the legal status change to that of a national university corporation in 2004 and the merger with Osaka University of Foreign Studies in 2007, Osaka University now represents our country as a genuine comprehensive university.

Let me explain about Tekijuku, one of the roots of Osaka University. More than 1,000 students came to Tekijuku from all over Japan and studied day and night. The students included FUKUZAWA Yukichi who served as a school chief and founded Keio University in later days, HASHIMOTO Sanai who died at the age of 25 in the Ansei Purge, SANO Tsunetame who found Hakuaisha, the predecessor of the Japan Red Cross, OMURA Masujiro who created a modern military system for the Meiji government, OTORI Keisuke who faced off against Western powers in diplomacy, and IKEDA Kensai who served as the first dean of the Faculty of Medicine at The University of Tokyo built in 1810. Thus, Tekijuku produced persons who were active as leaders in various fields. Tekijuku played a major role in the modernization of Japan in the early Meiji Period.

NAGAYO Sensai, who served as school chief following FUKUZAWA, built the foundation of the Japanese medical care system and public health system. After studying at Tekijuku, Sensai

became a doctor in Omura, Nagasaki, following to Koan's advice. However, he really felt that Japanese medical technology lagged far behind the West. Then he took part in the Iwakura Mission, a diplomatic journey to Europe and the United States. Modern medical care systems that he saw there were really eye-opening. In his biography, *Shokoshishi*, he wrote:

*"The East lacked even the concept of medical care. The medical care system was a totally new project and its operation would not be easy."*

*"The scope of the medical care system was too big and vague to see the whole picture."*

*"I was not very familiar with the situation in the West so it was not easy to understand the concrete details of the system."*

Although he decided to introduce a modern medical care system that he had seen for the first time, he was confused by the complexity and scope of the system. However, after returning to Japan, he steadily promoted the establishment of a broad foundation for the Japanese medical care system.

In education, he launched the reform of advanced medical education and established a system to provide a steady supply of doctors with advanced skills. He also created the Medical Affairs Bureau to manage doctor lists and spread the concept of health and hygiene in Japan. To prevent epidemics such as cholera, he encouraged the government to conduct civil engineering and sewage work. He succeeded in establishing in Japan in his generation the concept of health and hygiene that Western nations had developed over the years. He accomplished this great feat because he saw the true essence of things from a broad perspective.

In Osaka University, Tekijuku's spirit of "for the people, for society, for the nation, for the moral way," the great aspirations of young people who studied there, the passion for scholarship of Osaka merchants, and the eagerness to build an imperial university in Osaka, these have been handed down over the generations. I want you to carry with pride your graduation from Osaka University and make it the basis for your future.

Our future depends on you young people. Society asks you to fulfill your responsibilities as leaders in a variety of fields in society, for further promotion of inquiring minds obtained from basic and applied research as part of intellectual creative activities nurtured at Osaka University. You who have studied and conducted research at Osaka University can achieve this goal. Just like our predecessors who studied at Tekijuku brought new perspectives to Japan during a period of stagnation at the end of Edo Period, I want you to become a great aspiration for others.

You will lead your lives as working people active in the front lines of companies, as educators nurturing next-generation personnel in institutions, or as researchers exploring the future, and, above all, as human beings. I hope you will not lose the excitement of today. Cherish every moment and fly high in the world with your head held high. Osaka University will always support you. Please come back to see us.

Finally I conclude my speech the poem, *Youth* by Samuel Ullmann.

*Youth is not a time of life — it is a state of mind; it is a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a vigor of the emotions, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the*

*appetite for adventure over love of ease.*

*Nobody grows old by merely living a number of years; people grow old only by deserting their ideals.*

*Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul.*

*Worry, doubt, self-distrust, fear, and despair — these are the long, long years that bow the head and turn the growing spirit back to dust.*

*Whether sixteen or seventy, there is in every being's heart the love of wonder, the sweet amazement at the stars and the starlike things and thoughts, the undoubted challenge of events, the unfailing childlike appetite for what is to come next, and the joy and the game of life.*

*You are as young as your faith, as old as your doubt; as young as your self-confidence, as old as your fear; as young as your hope, as old as your despair.*

*So long as your heart receives messages of beauty, cheer, courage, grandeur, and power from the earth, from man and from the Infinite so long you are young.*

*When the wires are all down and all the innermost core of your heart is covered with the snows of pessimism and the ice of cynicism, then you are grown old indeed and may God have mercy on your soul.*

Allow me to close by wishing you all good fortune. May each of you live your life to the fullest! May you know yourself, enhance your abilities, and fly high in the world.  
Congratulations on your graduation!

March 25, 2013

**Toshio HIRANO**

President

Osaka University