

Campus Life 2012

OSAKA UNIVERSITY
Campus Life



大阪大学
OSAKA UNIVERSITY

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A Message to Our New Students

Toshio Hirano,
President, Osaka University

Congratulations to all of you, our newest students, on entering this university.

Osaka University, born of “Tekijuku,” a private academy set up by OGATA Koan, also regards itself as the spiritual successor to “Kaitokudo,” an academy created long ago by the merchants of Osaka. As such, our university has inherited our predecessors’ sturdy resolve to change Japan’s way of life, of society, and continues in that resolve even today.

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the ensuing accidents at the nuclear power plants, and other disasters, our country now faces its greatest challenge since the end of World War II. The whole point of a university, I would argue, is to be able to offer some sort of strategy for dealing with social problems like these. However, we cannot solve problems just by waving a magic wand. The tougher the problem, the greater the need, surely, to go back to basics.

In 2011, to mark the 80th anniversary of the University’s founding, we launched a project called “Reflecting on the Origin, Looking to the Future.” Even as we looked back upon our roots, we resolved to move unflinchingly forward, to become the Tekijuku of the 21st century. Despite society’s recent tendency to seek instant results, universities do not exist only to impart skills that can be applied immediately after graduation. There is also room for research and education that may not be useful in the short term, but will certainly contribute to society in the long run. Herein lies the fundamental strength — unswayed by the tides of fashion — of our university. Unless scholarship is promoted, innovative technologies cannot be developed, and progress towards a peaceful society cannot be achieved. If mankind is to solve the world’s problems, it is vital that we pursue the kind of basic academic research and long-term technological development of which only a university is capable.

As the saying goes, “A 100-year national plan must focus on education.” Japan’s future



depends on the development of our nation's human resources. Our university has always produced large numbers of distinguished alumni, including world-leading researchers, educators and intellectuals. We intend to continue this tradition, and we want our students to be fully equipped to become citizens of the world, capable of taking up leading roles in various fields and contributing to the prosperity of mankind. We will spare no effort in creating the right environment to make this happen.

If our track record is to be equally brilliant in the 22nd century, it is vital that we keep our feet firmly on the ground and work to a timescale measured in centuries. This long-term perspective is the quintessence of Osaka University's contribution to society.

I often tell students how important it is to "climb all the way to the top of the mountain right in front of you." Everyone has a mountain right in front of them. It might be a goal to be reached, a mystery to be clarified, or some other endeavor. Even if your personal mountain is not very high, you should still climb to the summit. Only then will you be able to look out on new horizons and see the next peak you need to aim for. In other words, I am advising you to live as fully as you can, right now. Life is a succession of instants we call "now." From my own personal experience, I know how essential it is to live those instants to the utmost.

At Osaka University, research of all kinds is under way. This environment, where cutting-edge research may be taking place just next door, should provide you with plenty of stimulation. You will also be able to rub shoulders with world-class researchers and highly-ambitious classmates. So, hold fast to your dreams, and when you set yourself a challenge, never give up on it. I want you all, someday, to be the kind of people who look at things with keen insight. I want you all, someday, to spread your wings and soar away from Osaka University into the wide, wide world.

April 1, 2012



Kiyoshi Higashijima
(Director, Education Board)
Trustee and Vice-President, Osaka University

Let me start by congratulating everyone who has recently joined Osaka University, and wishing each and every one of you a cordial welcome.

To all those newly admitted to Osaka University, I would like to express my respect for your efforts so far, and my respect for your families and everyone else who has helped you along the way. As you heave a sigh of relief at your release from exam preparation, your hearts are no doubt swelling with the anticipation at the prospect of becoming a university student and tasting freedom to the full. On the other hand, this is the first time you have been apart from your family and friends, and you may be feeling a little uneasy at the thought of beginning a new life in an unfamiliar setting. In response to your hopes and your concerns, the University will be offering study guidance, and has prepared the “Course Registration Guidelines”, “Campus Life (*this handbook*)” and other helpful brochures. I urge you to pay careful attention to the study guidance available, and to take a look at those brochures, so that you can lead an enjoyable and worthwhile university life from now on. Along with the rest of Osaka University staff, I shall be doing my best to help you achieve the right mind-set for a student at this institution.

Besides generating world-class research results as befits a leading Japanese research university, Osaka University’s mission is to provide education based on those results, fostering human resources who will go on to achieve great things as leading figures in all sorts of fields. You have only just entered Osaka University, but when you graduate and go out into the world, it will be your turn to support society. What will society expect from you as a graduate of Osaka University? First, you will be required to have the knowledge and understanding listed below.

- Competence in Japanese, English and other languages, and the cosmopolitanism to understand many cultures different from your own



- A basic knowledge of human cultures and societies, and of the natural world
- The ability to analyze, understand and express natural and social phenomena in a quantitative way
- The ability to collect and analyze all sorts of information, and to make sound judgements, and to transmit information
- A high level of erudition in your particular specialist field

All these abilities can be mastered through the general and specialist education you will receive here. You will also be called upon to acquire the following general-purpose skills.

- The ability to listen to what someone says and summarize it, and the ability to think logically and write well
- The ability to identify a problem, collect, analyze and manage the information necessary to solve it, and then solve that problem
- The ability to express your own ideas clearly, and the skills needed to communicate with all sorts of people
- The ability to examine a complex problem from various perspectives

To help you master these skills at the preparatory stage, when you are embarking on your studies, the University will hold various seminars (discussion-based classes for small groups). Basic seminars and so on will also be provided in the general education courses, so it would be a good idea for you to attend as many as you can.

In recent years, the competencies required of graduates have been augmented with the following requirements concerning attitude and intentionality (as set out in the Central Council for Education's Report entitled "Towards the Enhancement of Undergraduate Education," published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in December 2008).

- The self-discipline to be able to act with self-control
- The ability to coordinate and cooperate with others as part of a team
- The leadership skills necessary to set a course of action for a team, and help the team achieve a goal
- The sense of morality to act in accordance with one's own conscience and the norms and rules of society
- A sense of social responsibility as a citizen working towards the advancement of society
- The capacity for lifelong learning required in order to continue learning autonomously and independently after graduating

Of course, these abilities can also be honed in the course of university lectures and extracurricular activities, and through friendly competition with classmates, seniors and juniors; above all, however, it is important that you set your sights on your own future and strive daily to keep your willpower high.

In your previous life at school, you lived under the protection of your families and your teachers. Between now and university graduation, you must learn how to take responsibility for your own present and future as an adult. Previously, you have been closely supervised, but from now on, your day-to-day life will be under your own management. If you fail to manage your life properly, you will find that it can fall to pieces very quickly. At Osaka University, counseling services are available in various locations, so if you find yourself in difficulties, please come forward and seek help. Youth can be a difficult time, and now and then you will have your own struggles; however, you will always be able to overcome them. May your studies at Osaka University turn you into robust students, ready to enter global society and acquit yourselves well among your contemporaries from other countries.

April 1, 2012