

## President's Address at the 2015 Saitama University Entrance Ceremony

To overseas students, I would like to express a cordial welcome to all of you on behalf of all the members of Saitama University. In addition, I sincerely express much respect to your families who have given support to you. It seems that cherry trees in our campus also congratulate you by coming into full bloom on this beautiful day with a full of hope.

About 40 years ago, my respected professor of SU, Dr. Shunzo Okamoto made a decision as the fifth President of Saitama University to plant many, various trees in this campus where there was nothing at the time. The trees have grown up, and this has resulted in the present, my favorite, and beautiful SU campus. This fact teaches us the importance of time axis as passage of time and also great importance of time axis origin corresponding to the first action. I am sure that each of you has now visions of your new life and study in the graduate school with your fresh resolve. Please keep the visions in your mind and make a progress smoothly along the new time axis with its origin, which is today.

Out of 540 new graduate students in total, the 90 of them are from globally distributed 10 overseas countries, which are Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Iran, Korea, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. Our Graduate Schools of Saitama University proudly offer education and research opportunities of high quality to your academic interests.

For some of overseas students here, this may be the first time to stay in Japan. And I am afraid if you might come across unexpected difficulties mostly because of the differences between the culture of your own country and that of this country. If it would be the case, please remember that all the faculty, staff and student of Saitama University are willing to help you to get rid of the troubles which you would be involved in.

Looking back on the history, human beings have always learned from tragedies, such as wars and natural disasters, and moved forward. Though our way of thinking is prone to be rigid, this history teaches us the importance of making our way of thinking flexible by facing the fact that immaturity of human society has led to tragedies.

This is also true of the individual. According to Dr. Takesi Yoro, a famous Japanese scholar, one can get his or her self-confidence through repeating a cycle of challenges and failure. As an individual, it is necessary to recognize enough the importance of bringing oneself up by repeating failure. Of course, one does not act knowing to fail, but one can never have confidence neither drive oneself forward if one does not act anything with fear of failure.

On the other hand, as one of the motives for the improvement of human, there is no doubt that competition is important. However, the competitors are not necessarily "others" but rather "oneself". If human beings forget the thought of improvement such as competing with the mind which is satisfied with the current situation, the human beings come to only trace the road to corruption. Aiming at "higher things" would be the essential motivation for human beings, as another famous Japanese scholar, Mr. Yoichiro Murakami says.

Dr. Robert S. Kaplan, Professor Emeritus of Harvard University Business School, explains about indispensability of passion for higher quality work in his book entitled *What you're Really Meant to Do*. The passion is born when one works with having great fun and strong purpose and is a kind of fuel which is indispensable for overcoming difficulties. One can continue aiming at "higher things" only with passion.

Through your graduate research at Saitama University, you will have an experience of what I have just talked about referring to three intellectuals. Yes, research is a repetition of challenge and failure aiming at "higher things", and an act that you cannot do without passion. You will also realize the immense values in making your way of thinking more flexible and more diverse through discussions with others, especially at the time of failure in your research. Research is similar to life, and therefore research is interesting.

In connection with failure, there is a word *Serendipity*. Serendipity means a lucky instance or experience that happened accidentally, unintentionally and unexpectedly, or an ability to find a valuable thing different from what one was looking for.

The first time when I got the word *Serendipity* was on the occasion of Dr. Hideki Shirakawa's talk in commemoration of winning the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2000 for his achievement of discovery and development of electro-conductive plastic. He made the new discovery from the accidental incidence caused by his failure of using a catalyst 1000 times denser than usual in the experiment. He said that the Nobel Prize is a result of serendipity, and that the one, who learns and experiences things as many as possible by holding interest in everything, could have serendipity.

It is generally said that both a standpoint of *Science for Knowledge* and another standpoint of *Science for Society* are important for researches. The graduate researches are highly flexible or diverse, and therefore the coexistence of researches from these two standpoints is possible. The important thing is that the graduate students, who conduct a variety of researches, think about what is their study for and reconsider the meaning of their study through experiencing research activities. To that end, you must keep your curiosity and tenacity of purpose. If you can add your passion and acquire an ability to be insightful, serendipity is ready for you. I do hope all of you to enjoy your researches and graduate student lives at Saitama University.

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