

2014 Okayama University Graduation Ceremony Congratulatory Speech

On behalf of Okayama University, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate all 46 students who have completed doctoral degrees, all 8 with Masters degrees, all 1 with professional degrees and all 33 undergraduate students, on their successful graduation.

Today, every graduating student has been rewarded for their hard work and perseverance in mastering and overcoming many educational challenges in their respective fields. Their endless efforts have been well evaluated and today they have been awarded for their well-deserved and brilliant accomplishment.

From now onwards, every graduating student, including Bachelors, Masters, PhD graduates; students who wish to pursue higher studies and also students who plan to return to their homeland and serve their countries, will all be facing a new environment.

On the dawn of your new journey in life, my advice is, when we obtain a university degree, we need to embrace the deserved respect that society gives us for our degree and work accordingly for our society, as responsible members of society. The University that awards the degree and everyone who receives a degree from the university has the responsibility and obligation to take reasonable action where necessary.

At present, Japan's revival after the Tohoku earthquake is receiving a lot of world attention and, help is pouring out from all corners of the world. People from all over the world are reaching out to us. In this situation, we Japanese need to show the world, our ability to grow as a dignified nation.

Japanese society is presently facing numerous difficulties such as population decline, low birthrate and longevity. At the same time, economically, we have been fighting against deflation for

all these years. All together we are striving for the better at this challenging turning point in the history. On the other hand, the changes in the climate are happening on a mass global scale and overwhelming phenomena such as the Hiroshima landslide last month caused by torrential rain and the phreatomagmatic eruption of Mount Kiso Ontake last weekend are beyond our knowledge and prediction.

Universities all over Japan are also going over a period of major shakeup. However, I am privileged to mention that last year, Okayama University has been selected by the Government for the prestigious program on “Strengthening of Research Universities”. Also Okayama University Hospital has been chosen as a “Clinical Study Core Hospital”. With these events, we are sure to make a big leap toward Japanese Top-ten as well as Global Top 100 universities. On top of this, last week, Okayama University has been selected for governmental Super Global University program to enhance globalization of the university as well as the community. I do expect international students graduating from our university today to play important roles in this project.

I would also like to mention that Okayama University has embarked on a project to establish 50 alumni associations all over the world. We have already established 20 of them. Through these associations, we would like to strengthen the ties between Okayama graduates around the globe. Let’s work hard together for the better Okayama University in the future.

Recently, there are many ongoing conflicts worldwide, whether national or ethnic, or conflicts between different religions, and a number of other challenges, all of which need immediate attention. Even our neighboring Asian countries are facing huge problems. In order to collectively solve these problems, we expect your help in the innovation of global knowledge and fostering a global sensibility. Every graduating student here today needs to develop a global consciousness and promote international cooperation.

For academics like us, who work to expand knowledge, we need to respond to the demands of society and everyone's strong leadership is very essential. All students who have studied at Okayama University need to cultivate the knowledge and education they have received here, in solving the global challenges that the world faces right now. I would like to create awareness in everyone here today that we all have a mission, to resolve the global challenges facing us.

Lastly, I want everyone to be proud of their education at Okayama University and their respective degrees. Your ongoing success will set an example for the next generation. In this way, Okayama University will continue to expand forever through the contribution, knowledge, experience, and hope that all graduating students pass on to their juniors.

I once again express my heartiest congratulations to everyone on your graduation, today.

Kiyoshi Morita,
President,
Okayama University
National University Corporation
September, 30th, 2014