October 2, 2017

President's Address
October 2017 Entrance Ceremony for
Masters and Doctoral Students

Yuji Oie, President of Kyushu Institute of Technology

Congratulations on your entrance to our university.

On the occasion of today's entrance ceremony, I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of you on this auspicious day, and also express my great respect for all of the efforts you made to arrive at this point. It is the ultimate pleasure for us to welcome you to the Kyushu Institute of Technology. On behalf of all the faculty members, again I congratulate you.

Let me also say that there is a total of 49 students entering the university today, including 44 students (or 90%) who are international students from 16 countries and regions. I am extremely pleased that we have so many students entering the university from other countries and regions.

I would like to begin today by briefly telling you about the history of the university where you will now be studying.

Kyutech was originally founded in 1909 as a private institution called the Meiji College of Technology. The founder, Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa, was a prominent figure in the business community of Kitakyushu and the Chikuho region, a foundation of our nation's industrial growth, where he established various businesses, such as YASKAWA Electric Corporation.

In the Meiji Period, Japan lagged far behind the great nations of the world industrially and economically, so it was vital to develop human resources to support the country. Based on his belief that "profits earned thanks to the country should be used for the country," Mr. Yasukawa donated a large part of his private fortune to found the Meiji College of Technology, with the aim of training engineers who could support the industrial advancement of Japan.

He entrusted education and research at the Meiji College of Technology to Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, then president of Tokyo Imperial University. At the opening ceremony of the college, Dr. Yamakawa declared that the Meiji College of Technology would be "a school that produces gentlemen well-versed in technological skills" and aim to develop human resources of quality and creativity. Dr. Yamakawa's aims have been preserved over the generations and still guide us today after more than 100 years in our university's founding principle of "instilling a

deep knowledge of science and engineering in high caliber students." I would ask our new students to learn this phrase by heart right now: "high caliber students with a deep knowledge of science and engineering."

In 1949, the Meiji College of Technology became the National University Kyushu Institute of Technology. In 2004, it then became the National University Corporation Kyushu Institute of Technology. During this time, the Faculty of Computer Science and Systems Engineering, which marked its 30th anniversary last year, was established in Iizuka City; the Graduate School of Life Science and Systems Engineering at the Kitakyushu Science and Research Park of Wakamatsu was founded 17 years ago; and Kyutech has become one of a select number of distinctive engineering universities in Japan, with two undergraduate schools and three graduate schools that serve approximately 5,700 students.

In the future when you finish your studies and complete your graduate degrees, you will apply what you have learned to the world in which we live, so I would like you to join me in thinking about how our world has changed and continues to change.

As we all know, startling progress is being made today in telecommunications, in bioengineering, and in new materials and other technologies. We are experiencing a major transformation in not only our social systems but our very humanity. Moreover, these changes are transcending national boundaries on a large regional scale. With the development of technologies in Big Data, AI, robotics and other fields, this transformation follows and builds upon the Third Industrial Revolution, the digital revolution, which began in the 1960s with the development and spread of semiconductors, computers and the internet. The scale of this transformation, however, is so great that the World Economic Forum founder, Klaus Schwab, has written that "A revolution worthy of being called the Fourth Industrial Revolution is currently under way" (Klaus Schwab, *The Fourth Industrial Revolution*, Nikkei Publishing Inc.).

Let me ask you: Can you imagine arranging to meet someone *without a smartphone*? Can you imagine doing work with someone overseas *without the internet*? Can you imagine a computer that is *not connected to the internet*? The Fourth Industrial Revolution will continue to create new routines of the everyday and new definitions of common sense. Indeed, it will ultimately transform our very thought processes. I encourage you to never lose interest in these changes.

In his book, Klaus Schwab also notes that "17% of the world population, or roughly 1.3 billion people, are without electricity; and around half of the world population, or roughly 4 billion people, have no internet access." At the same time, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit in September

2015, identifies 17 “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) that the world should achieve by 2030. These goals, the first of which is to “end poverty in all its forms everywhere,” include goals related to responsible production and responsible consumption, as well as the goal (Goal 17) to “strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.” Perspectives such as these are also extremely important.

http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/about/doukou/page23_000779.html

https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300

Soon you will begin acquiring a wide range of knowledge and skills in the field of engineering, and engage in research activities that will generate new insights. At first, your studies will stem from intellectual curiosity. Through study, your curiosity and inquisitiveness will lead to knowledge and skills that will then enable you to discover and solve problems. Moreover, none of us exists in isolation. We all belong to and are members of various networks. Such networks lead to reciprocal interactions and mutual influence that will further your learning. Through the mutual influence and growth that occurs within teams of people from various countries, you will achieve incomparable learning outcomes. During your time as a student, please hold on to your intellectual curiosity and inquisitiveness and learn as much as you can through these various reciprocal interactions. I assure you that the outcomes of your learning will enable you after graduation to continue to grow while responding to the needs of society and changes in science and technology.

Engineering is the academic discipline that creates tomorrow. It demands not only that you acquire a wide range of knowledge and skills and produce new insights in the field of engineering but that you also reflect on how to imagine tomorrow and on the kind of tomorrow to which you want to contribute. As I mentioned earlier, we have 49 students from 17 countries and regions entering our university. As various problems have become increasingly complex and involve many countries and regions, it is now extremely important that each country and region think on a global scale by eschewing isolation and instead pursuing exchange and mutual understanding. It is important that you think from the perspective of a global citizen first and that of an engineer second.

In conclusion, I encourage you, our new students, to be careful with your health and take advantage of the diverse study opportunities and environments at our university, so that you may lead a meaningful graduate life and ensure that your decision to attend our university was a good one. Once again, my sincere congratulations.