

October 1, 2018

President's Address for the Master's and Doctoral
Programs Entrance Ceremony, October 2018

Yuji Oie, President, 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, I would like to deliver this celebratory address.

Out of the 69 students who are being admitted to our university today, 58 students, approximately 84%, are international students from 17 countries and regions. We are absolutely delighted to have so many students from such a large number of countries and regions.

Firstly, let me tell you a bit about our university's history.

Our university, Kyutech, where you now begin your studies, 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, and he established various businesses, such as YASKAWA Electric Corporation, that served as the foundation of our nation's industrial growth.

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. Next year will mark 110 years since the school's founding.

The Meiji Period began 150 years ago. The Edo Period that preceded it was an age of samurai governance that allowed virtually no exchange with any but a very limited number of foreign countries. With the Meiji Period, Japan fostered new industries and modernized rapidly as the country applied itself with great energy to developing railroads,

telegraphic communications, a postal system, compulsory education, and more. This required learning many things from foreign countries, which is why many of the central figures in the Meiji government traveled overseas. Their delegations also included many students. The first president of then Meiji College of Technology, Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, was himself born in the Edo Period and traveled overseas during the Meiji Period to study physics as an international student at Yale University in the U.S. He would subsequently serve as president of the University of Tokyo and Kyushu University, helping to build our Meiji Period foundations.

At the start of the Meiji Period, it would have been incredibly difficult to imagine what Japan would be like 150 years later. Yet, by beginning with social infrastructure-building—with transit, communications, power, the educational system, and so on—it was increasingly possible for people, things, and information to circulate. This created places and opportunities for people to learn and think, which in turn contributed significantly to our country's subsequent development.

Students like you are the ones who will build the future to come. That future will bring startling advances in technology and in transit and communications technology that will drive further globalization, causing people, organizations, and countries to interact rapidly on a planetary scale that will make our social issues even more complex. For that reason, it will be extremely important that we not isolate ourselves but rather exchange diverse viewpoints as we seek to understand one another and think on a planetary scale. No doubt, doing so will lead to numerous, new discoveries.

In closing, as you begin your studies, I hope you will be mindful of your health, remain intellectually curious, take advantage of the many learning opportunities and environments available here, pursue a meaningful life as a graduate student, and be confident that your decision to attend Kyutech was the right one. Once again, welcome and congratulations.