

March 25, 2019

President's March Graduation Ceremony Address for AY 2018

Yuji Oie, President, Kyushu Institute of Technology

It is a joyous occasion for our university to hold the 2018 graduation ceremony today. First, I would like to congratulate all of you who are embarking on promising careers. I would also like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the proud parents, guardians and other family members in attendance who have provided the graduates with material and emotional support during their paths leading up to this point.

As we celebrate your graduation from Kyutech, I would like to take the opportunity today to reflect on the future that awaits you and on how to approach that future. To this end, I would like to touch on two topics. One is a report from the World Economic Forum, and the other relates to the Japan World Expo.

First of all, last year, the World Economic Forum released a report titled "The future of Jobs Report 2018." As the fourth industrial revolution progresses, the WEF continues to predict its future effects on work contents and workstyles, and there are hopes that information communication technologies, including high-speed mobile Internet services, AI, big data analysis, cloud-based technologies and more, will stimulate business growth throughout a broad range of sectors. A close examination of the roles assigned to humans and machines reveals that, as of 2018, humans still bear 71% of the workload. However, over the next ten years, machines are anticipated to execute an increasingly larger share of humanity's workload, and it is predicted that, by 2025, the situation will be reversed as AI and machines will have assumed responsibility for the lion's share of the workload. In addition, with the introduction of AI and robotics, a large number of jobs will cease to exist. Conversely, however, their proliferation is also predicted to generate an even greater number of new jobs.

Dealing with the increasingly diverse and complex issues of the coming age will require the ability to perceive, make judgments and execute on issues with objectivity. It goes without saying that acquiring the requisite knowledge and skills is a massively time-consuming endeavor. As such, it is vital that we remain devoted to self-improvement and the application of ingenuity.

Secondly, I would like to touch on the World Expo. As I am sure you are aware, the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in Tokyo, and the 2025 World Expo is scheduled to be held in Osaka. Following a similar pattern, the 1964 Olympics were held in Tokyo and the 1970 World Expo in Osaka. This Expo, held nearly 50 years ago, introduced a broad range of new technologies under

the slogan “Progress and Harmony for Mankind.” Visitors could experience state-of-the-art technologies hands-on such as monorails, moving sidewalks, and wireless telephones which later developed into portable phones. All of these technologies are now commonplace and taken for granted. Also, at the time of the Expo, a massive structure named Omatsuri Hiroba was erected, in the middle of which a tower symbolizing the Expo was built. The tower was designed by Taro Okamoto, who was still largely unknown at the time (Sakaiya, T., *Chijo Saidai no Gyoji – Bankokuhakurankai*, Kobunsha Shinsho). Its name was “Tower of the Sun.” Taro Okamoto felt that art should provide viewers with a certain feeling of tension and suspense by inspiring dramatic creativity, and in his 1954 book *Konnichi no Geijutsu* (Kobunsha, Chie no Mori Bunko), which translates as “Art Today,” he stated that,

“Art today should not be good.

It should not be pretty.

It should not be pleasant.”

He further expressed his opinion that, “Art is a matter of resolution.” And in relation to technology, he also said, “Technology is about constantly renouncing the old and discovering or creating the new. In other words, just as I have explained in regard to art, its fundamental essence is revolutionary.” He no doubt lived in anticipation that technology would promote innovation. While this was written 65 years ago, its message remains as fresh and passionate as ever.

Society and technology continue to mutually influence each other. The advent of new technologies alters not only social activities but also the very ways that we think and act. This, in turn, promotes the creation of further technologies needed to meet the new demands and expectations engendered by these altered social activities. Amidst this dynamically-changing future, you are sure to encounter numerous opportunities to put your knowledge, skills, imagination and firm resolution to good use. As such, I would very much like for you to make the utmost of the techniques and skills you have developed at our university as well as your own ability to pursue lifelong education.

To conclude my farewell address, I would like to wish you all great success as you embark on your future careers, drawing on the positive experiences and encounters that you have accumulated here at Kyutech. Once again, my heartiest congratulations.