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President's Entrance Ceremony Address for October 2026

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On this fine day in October, I extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of you joining Kyushu Institute of Technology. Many of you have travelled a long way, from across Japan and from overseas, to be here today. I also extend my heartfelt thanks to your families, your teachers, and everyone who has supported you. On behalf of all our faculty and staff, I warmly welcome you to Kyutech.

Kyutech opened in 1909 as the private Meiji College of Technology, known as Meisen. At its opening, our first president, Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, set out our founding philosophy: “Educating gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology.” This philosophy still runs through Kyutech today. The original Japanese word for “gentlemen” is *shikunshi*, a term from classical Chinese texts such as the *Xunzi*. It describes a person of learning and integrity — someone society can trust. The pioneers of Meisen did not want only skilled technicians. They wanted people who would master technology deeply, and use it wisely for the good of society.

More than a century later, this founding spirit lives on in our Vision 2040: “*Impact the Next Industry.*” We aim to create new value through *monozukuri* and *hitozukuri* — making things and developing people — to put that value to work in society, and to drive innovation. But technology does not change industry — or society — on its own. What should we build? Why? And for whom? In every age, it is people who decide. That is why the idea of *shikunshi* has kept its meaning across generations — and matters more than ever today.

Let me now ask you a question: what is technology?

We often use the words “technology” and “skill” as if they meant the same thing. Here, let us distinguish between them for a moment. Skill is an ability built up within a person through practice.

A master craftsperson's hands know things that words cannot fully explain. That knowledge is valuable, but it is not easy to pass on to others, verify, or share. Technology, by contrast, is grounded in explicit knowledge: knowledge that can be explained in words, tested through principles, and shared with others. In fact, the Greek roots of "technology" are *technē*, meaning craft or skill, and *logos*, meaning account or reason — suggesting a reasoned account of craft. That is why technology can be taught, improved by others, and applied to new problems. Here lies the difference between skill and technology. This is also why you study at a university: not only to learn how to do something, but to understand why it works.

Building on that, make what you learn your own through experiments and practice, until it becomes skill: tacit knowledge that lives within you. Then share it with your colleagues through discussion in your laboratory and at conferences. Put it into words again, refine it into explicit knowledge, and develop it into technology that others can share.

You are beginning your studies at a time when AI is being integrated into many parts of society. AI can write code, summarize papers, and propose designs in seconds. Some people ask: if AI can give us the answers, what do we still need to learn?

Here is my own answer. AI offers possible answers. But it does not take responsibility for the answer you choose. Is that answer correct? Is it safe? Is it appropriate for this situation? Such decisions must be made by people whose thinking and judgment are grounded in knowledge and skill. The more powerful AI becomes, the more your own judgment matters.

That judgment begins with questions. What should I ask? Is this really the right question? What is missing from this answer? Why does it say this, and is there another way? Just as you ask your teachers and fellow students, use AI actively as a sparring partner, and keep challenging it with questions. But the quality of what comes back changes greatly depending on what you ask and how you ask it. In the age of AI, the power to keep asking, the power to question, is the foundation of all learning.

This brings me to research. Many of you will now face situations in which you must make your own judgments as you continue to learn. So where does the transition from student to researcher or engineer begin?

In classes that teach the foundations, a correct answer may be provided under given conditions and assumptions. In research, however, you must examine the conditions and assumptions themselves. Research means asking a question no one has yet answered, gathering evidence, and deciding: “This is what I conclude.” Along the way, you will face one judgment after another, and you will be responsible for each one. You must explain your judgment, show your evidence, engage with different views, and correct yourself when you are wrong. The engineering I hope you will learn is the practice of making judgments within constraints and taking responsibility for the outcomes. This judgment, and the responsibility that comes with it, is what drives your growth from students into researchers and engineers.

There is one more ability I hope you will develop: the power to generalize. Your research will be very specific — one material, one algorithm. But real impact comes when you step back and ask: What is the underlying principle? Where else could this apply? Generalizing your knowledge lets you connect with fields you never expected and collaborate with people from different disciplines. Here, too, it all begins with a question.

Finally, a word about the word “*profession*.” It comes from the Latin *profiteri*, meaning “to declare publicly.” A professional is someone who stands before society and declares: “I have this knowledge, and I take responsibility for using it well.” This image of a professional closely aligns with the ideal set out by the pioneers of Meisen: *shikunshi*, gentlemen with excellent knowledge and skills in technology. To explain judgments grounded in knowledge and to take responsibility for their consequences — this is the attitude expected of you in the age of AI.

So I have three requests for you.

First, build solid knowledge — the knowledge that transforms skill into technology.

Second, never stop asking questions — of your teachers, of your fellow students, of raw data, of AI, and of yourself.

And third, do not leave your judgments to others — make them yourself, and take responsibility for them.

If you do these three things, I believe you will not simply work in the next industry, and in the next society — you will help create them, and bring about innovation.

Once again, welcome to Kyutech. I look forward to seeing where your questions will take you.