Presidential Address Delivered at the Entrance Ceremony
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, Graduate School, April 2, 2013

Students, Parents, Chancellor Morita, Distinguished Guests, and Ladies and Gentlemen assembled here today on this most auspicious occasion.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and congratulate you on your success in gaining admission to the Graduate School of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies. And I sincerely thank you for choosing this graduate school as the setting for your important professional education.

As many of you are aware, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies was originally founded under the name of Kyoto School of Foreign Languages in May 1947, shortly after the tragic loss of life and the utter devastation of the Second World War. In the midst of confusion and uncertainty about the future, this university stepped forward and unfurled the banner of the global mission described by our motto, "***PAX MUNDI PER LINGUAS***, which means World Peace through Languages.

Our university's brave motto embraces the firm resolve and the genuine wish of the founders that war must be eliminated once and for all. With better communication, mutual international understanding will be achieved if the essential pathways that link the peoples of our world in brotherhood are ceaselessly maintained.

The great passion of the founder was the belief that this university would set out to teach not only foreign languages, but also the spirit and the values of the cultures treasured by the world's peoples.

This graduate school has put its whole heart into cultivating internationally-minded people with effective foreign language skills, a genuine respect for the diversity of humanity, and a determination to build and sustain peace in the world.

In this connection, I am pleased to report that this university proudly celebrated the 65th anniversary of its founding last year. Chancellor Morita's vision of the graduate school's future is reflected in his unwavering commitment to advancing scholarship at this university and to playing a creative role in the development of international mutual understanding on the global stage.

As graduate students, you are expected to obtain expertise knowledge of the chosen

discipline of your own, in addition to acquiring an all-around command of foreign languages.

Today these language skills and special knowledge are considered necessary for finding a satisfying job, but also essential for becoming a productive global citizen.

With this in mind and as a step to help you achieve your goals, I am announcing today the initiation of a project to improve the educational environment on our university campus.

I pledge to do my best to create the kind of campus community where students, both graduate and undergraduate, can put to practical use the strong language capabilities that are acquired through your classes and daily campus life here at this graduate school.

Therefore, I strongly urge each one of you to take every opportunity to experience a foreign atmosphere right here on our campus, either before you leave to study abroad, or without leaving Japan at all. You might want to learn to communicate in foreign languages logically, accurately, and persuasively, because globalization requires us to work with other peoples calmly, collaboratively, and harmoniously.

To go forward with putting into action our university's motto, however, there is a challenge that we must face. Today I would like to share with you what I intend to achieve in the coming years.

Namely, I want to call your attention to the importance of equality, and in particular, the foundation role of gender equality. I want to see gender studies developed and strengthened here at this university's graduate school.

Why do I regard gender equality an important issue? And why do I consider the development of gender studies an urgent task before us?

Here is the reason. We all take it for granted that all people are created equal. But, we find that the issues of gender equality have not necessarily been squarely addressed to when we look around our campus today.

For instance, of all the students who are enrolled at this university, female students occupy about 64 percent. And yet, it is sad but true that out of 1500 classes that are offered here on this campus, approximately 50 classes, that is to say, only 3 percent, are related to gender studies or women's studies.

I believe that this problem of unevenness in curriculum must be rectified quickly in practical ways. It is because the potential, yet unrealized, power of women holds the key to the revitalization of our university's graduate school.

Michelle Bachelet, the former Executive Director of United Nations Women, said, "Gender equality must become a lived reality." Many of you know that the United Nations Millennium Development Goal Number Three is gender equality. It is the key peace

building goal of the eight Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations. It is because gender equality is the key to reducing poverty and conflict.

Indeed, gender equality is essential in making Japanese society, as a whole, come alive again. Above all, what I want is that our female students, as well as our male students, will become much happier together and more productive in their collaboration by being exposed to gender studies.

In conclusion, please remember this: the root of all learning is curiosity. And when curiosity is combined with focused attention and efforts to understand, our minds grow rich and our lives, as global citizens, will become more meaningful.

As university President, I chose to deliver my speech in English at today's entrance ceremony with the genuine hope that I will encourage you to find in your own heart the confidence to believe that you can use a foreign language to make an important contribution to the betterment of the world in which we live.

Today I sincerely wish everyone the best of luck in your graduate studies throughout the coming years. I thank you very much for your kind attention.

Takeshi Matsuda
President