Presidential Address Delivered at the Entrance Ceremony
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, April 1, 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 freshmen on your success in gaining admission to Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.

And I sincerely thank you for choosing this university as the setting for your higher education.

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.

This university 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 this connection, I am pleased to report that Kyoto University of Foreign Studies proudly celebrated the 65th anniversary of its founding last year. Chancellor Morita's vision of the university'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 students, you are expected to acquire both an all-round command of foreign languages and a broad knowledge of the history and cultures of the peoples who speak those languages. Today these skills and this knowledge are considered necessary not only for finding a satisfying job, but also essential for becoming a productive global citizen.

With this in mind, today I am announcing 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 can put to practical use right here on campus the strong language capabilities that are acquired through our classes.

Therefore, I earnestly urge you to take every opportunity to experience a foreign atmosphere here on our campus before you leave to study abroad, or without leaving Japan at all. I want you to experience a foreign atmosphere in your classrooms, during our National Weeks, at our special lectures, and in the activities of your clubs and circles.

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

I want to call your attention to the importance of equality, and in particular, the foundation role of gender equality. Let us develop and strengthen gender studies here at this university.

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.

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 I believe that the potential, yet unrealized, power of women holds the key to the revitalization of our university.

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 UN(MDGs), because it is the key to reducing poverty and conflict.

Women's Studies link naturally with Children's Studies. I know that many of you want to

study about Child Labor, Child Soldiers, Child Marriage and other children's issues because you want to help children, especially help children in developing countries have better lives.

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

In conclusion, 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 studies throughout the coming four years. I thank you very much for your kind attention.

Takeshi Matsuda
President