

**Presidential Address Delivered at the Entrance Ceremony
Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, April 1, 2011**

Chancellor and Dr. Yoshikazu Morita, Distinguished Guests, Parents and Students, Ladies and Gentlemen assembled today in this hall.

First, let me congratulate *you*, freshmen, and your parents, on your success in gaining admission to Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.

On behalf of the faculty and staff of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, it is my distinct joy and privilege to welcome you all to our university.

And I would like to extend my sincere thanks to you for choosing Kyoto University of Foreign Studies as the setting for your higher education.

Kyoto University of Foreign Studies was originally founded under the name Kyoto School of Foreign Languages in May 1947, shortly after the great loss of life and devastation of the Second World War.

There and then, the university unfurled its mission with the motto, *Pax Mundi Per Linguas*, which means World Peace through Languages.

This motto embraces the firm resolve and genuine wish of the founders that war must not be allowed to happen again. Mutual international understanding, therefore, must be achieved, beyond all else, and the pathways that link the world must be maintained.

One of the requirements to accomplish this goal was and still is to develop young Japanese men and women who can not only master foreign languages, but also understand cultures, economies, and societies of the world.

In addition, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies emphasizes the importance of an indomitable spirit. This spirit is valued highly as a primary basis for education and research, because that is what the founders believed to be an essential quality for students of foreign languages to possess.

In this connection, it is a great pleasure for me to say that you have joined us at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies in our common pursuit of truth and world peace through languages. While you study here, please always keep in mind that you are a vital part of the founders' great project.

The best universities of foreign studies are unique in the sense that they are places where you can study other languages and cultures and, by doing so, become able to experience foreign countries and their cultures through your daily campus life, and then wherever you choose to go, or wherever life may take you.

As students, you are expected to acquire both an all-around command of foreign languages and a broad knowledge of history and cultures. These skills and this knowledge are today not only necessary for finding a decent job, but also essential for becoming an active and valued global citizen.

In this globalizing world in which we live, students like you, who will soon join society, must learn to grasp world events and trends from a wide perspective.

You must acquire the ability to open dialogues with people living in distant lands so that together you can solve mutual problems.

For this, even four well-spent years here at this university will not be enough, so please do not bring your studies to an end when you graduate from Kyoto University of Foreign Studies.

Lifelong learning, effort and self-cultivation are the sources of our enduring happiness in life. Thus, my earnest wish is for you to taste the joy and pleasure of learning — and to acquire study skills and know-how while you are still students here at this university, and then go on learning forever.

The faculty and staff of our schools are prepared and eager to help you enrich your minds so that you can become full-fledged participants in the international community.

In this connection, it is important not only to learn about other nations,

their languages and their people, but also to *take action* in order to make meaningful connections with people in nations around the globe.

Likewise, it is equally important to take action to make our world a safer and a better place for people to live. Our lives here in Japan depend on good communication with foreign peoples. Clear communication is what strengthens our systems of international peace and security.

It is said that people are as young as they feel. No doubt, as freshmen, you are young and full of energy and hope.

The American poet, Samuel Ullman once wrote, "Youth is not a time of life; it is a state of mind; it is a matter of the will, a quality of imagination, a vigor of the emotions; a temperamental predominance of courage over timidity of the appetite, for adventure over the love of ease."

As this meaningful poem suggests, I want every one of you to live as actively and vigorously as you possibly can, both while you are students here at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies and after you graduate. So, please do not let your youth fade away as one year follows another.

And it is my sincere hope that you will say, "I am very happy and pleased to be admitted to this university, and I am proud to be a student of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies."

For my part, let me assure you that I am firmly determined to make Kyoto University of Foreign Studies a valuable and even beloved place for you, and to make your student life worthwhile here in the city of Kyoto.

By the way, today is my first time to attend the entrance ceremony since I recently assumed the office of president of this university.

You students and I actually have some important things in common.

First of all, we are both relative newcomers. I began teaching here last year.

Secondly, about four decades ago I, just like you today, entered a certain university of foreign studies as a freshman. On the day of my entrance ceremony, I was filled with excitement. In my heart was the hope that someday in the future I might play an active part in society by making the best use of my proficiency in foreign language (in my case, this was English). I studied hard and with joy, and my dream came true.

And freshmen, I want you to know that I *continue* to make efforts to study today. I still enjoy learning, and I feel very grateful for the fact that I was able to study foreign languages when I was a university student.

In comparison with my good old student days, we are now living in a world where cultural interchanges with foreign countries have become much closer and more intimate, beyond anyone's imagination.

After all, we can sit face-to-face with foreigners with just a few clicks on a computer, usually free of charge. Isn't it astounding? But what will we say to these people we meet on the screen or in person? And will we understand each other's words and meaning?

I am pleased to inform you, in this regard, that Kyoto University of Foreign Studies devotes much of its time and energy to the education and research of foreign languages and cultures with the hope that after graduation, you *will* understand, you will be *understood*, and you will also have something of value to say.

Study well and you will be ready to start playing an active part in the international community.

As one of the leaders of Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, I chose to deliver my speech in English at today's entrance ceremony. I have spoken in English with the genuine hope of encouraging you.

I want to give you the confidence to believe that you will make a significant contribution, after studying at Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, to the betterment of the world in which we live.

I sincerely wish every one of you the best of luck in your studies, your life, and your future career.

Thank you very much for your attention.

Takeshi Matsuda
President