

## 2012 Okayama University Graduation Ceremony Congratulatory Speech

On behalf of Okayama University, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate all 55 students who have completed doctoral degrees, all 17 with Masters degrees, all 7 with professional degrees and all 47 undergraduate students, on their successful graduation.

Today, every graduating student has been rewarded for their hard work and perseverance in mastering and overcoming many educational challenges in their respective fields. Their endless efforts have been well evaluated and today they have been awarded for their well-deserved and brilliant accomplishment.

From now onwards, every graduating student, including Bachelors, Masters, PhD graduates; students who wish to pursue higher studies and also students who plan to return to their homeland and serve their countries, will all be facing a new environment.

On the dawn of your new journey in life, my advice is, when we obtain a university degree, we need to embrace the deserved respect that society gives us for our degree and work accordingly for our society, as responsible members of society. The University that awards the degree and everyone who receives a degree from the university has the responsibility and obligation to take reasonable action where necessary.

As you all know, last year was a sad year for Japan. On March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011, the Tohoku region or northeast Japan was struck by an unprecedented earthquake and massive tsunami, which led to the irreversible accident at the Fukushima Nuclear power plant. All this was beyond our imagination. Even today, almost one and a half years after the incident, there still remain many affected victims, missing persons and an unresolved nuclear plant damage, which cannot be solved explicitly. Both Japan and the Japanese people were suddenly confronted with a challenge of which we had no previous experience.

The other day, I too had the opportunity to witness the aftermath of the disaster in the Tohoku region, with my own eyes. One and a half years later, superficially, the disaster stricken area appears to be calm, covered with green grass, as if nothing had ever happened there. But when we look closely, underneath all this green and calmness is a huge pile of rubble. Seeing all this, I felt, nothing has been really solved yet.

At present, Japan's revival after the Tohoku earthquake is receiving a lot of world attention and, help is pouring out from all corners of the world. People from all over the world are reaching out to us. In this situation, we Japanese need to show the world, our ability to grow as a dignified nation.

Recently, there are many ongoing conflicts worldwide, whether national or ethnic, or conflicts between different religions, and a number of other challenges, all of which need immediate attention. Even our neighboring Asian countries are facing huge problems. In order to collectively solve these problems, we expect your help in the innovation of global knowledge and fostering a global sensibility. Every graduating student here today needs to develop a global consciousness and promote international cooperation.

For academics like us, who work to expand knowledge, we need to respond to the demands of society and everyone's strong leadership is very essential. All students who have studied at Okayama University need to cultivate the knowledge and education they have received here, in solving the global challenges that the world faces right now. I would like to create awareness in everyone here today that we all have a mission, to resolve the global challenges facing us.

Lastly, I want everyone to be proud of their education at Okayama University and their respective degrees. Your ongoing success will set an example for the next generation. In this way, Okayama University will continue to expand forever through the contribution, knowledge, experience, and hope that all graduating

students pass on to their juniors.

I once again express my heartiest congratulations to everyone on your graduation, today.

Kiyoshi Morita,  
President,  
Okayama University  
National University Corporation  
September, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2012