

April 5th, 2023

Congratulatory Address in the 2023 Spring Entrance Ceremony

Congratulations to all new students, as well as their families and relatives. It is a great pleasure for our staff, current students, and many people involved with us to welcome you to Kyushu Institute of Technology (Kyutech) today. On behalf of Kyutech, I would like to offer my congratulations for not only the new students but also the families and relatives who have supported the new students, and I am certain that they are very happy as much as the new students.

For the past three years, our daily lives have been at the mercy of the new coronavirus infection, but we are now finally approaching to the way out. There was a time we could not have the entrance ceremony, today I cannot be happier to hold the ceremony to welcome you.

I am sure that all of you have experienced various hardships over the past three years, and therefore, I would like to express my respect for the efforts of all of you for making this day possible. During this time, the virtual communication technology and system has advanced for remote lectures for online classes, online meetings, and many other technologies have quickly been developed to support our daily lives. Your university, Kyutech is located in the area where there are many unique companies with outstanding technological capabilities such as digital transformation and green transformation technologies are integrated and embedded with satisfactory support and cooperation by the municipality here. I hope we can appreciate this geographical and environmental advantage when you study at Kyutech from now on.

Kyutech was originally established as a private school called “Meiji College of Technology” which opened in 1909 by Mr. Keiichiro Yasukawa, who started a coal-mining business in Chikuho district, where Kyutech Iizuka campus is located, and was involved in the establishment of a number of related companies such as Yaskawa Electric, which is headquartered in Kitakyushu City, where the Tobata and Wakamatsu campuses are located. Our founder, with his private investment,

established Kyutech to train and produce engineers who support Japanese industrial development such as engineering operation and support of the Higashida No. 1 Blast Furnace started operation in 1901, supporting the related technology of the government-owned Yawata Steel Works since 1901 which was positioned at the top of the national industrial policy at the time.

Our school's founding spirit was to "educate a student to become a person of learning and virtue with excellent technology proficiency" and when Kyutech became a national university, this spirit has been carried on by enrichment of education programs, research, and social contribution. More than 70,000 graduates have been produced so far, and they are playing active roles not only in Japan but also on the global stage.

Dr. Kenjiro Yamakawa, who served as the first president of the Meiji College of Technology, spend his youth in the turbulent Aizu region, mobilized as a member of the Byakkotai (White Tiger) military unit in the late years of the Tokugawa Shogunate through to the early years of the Meiji era. After various escapades and close encounters with death he decided to pursue a career in science, and had the opportunity to study in the United States, where after he overcame various difficulties in his studies he became the first-ever Japanese to earn a Doctor of Science Degree. There is no doubt that the time he spent studying in a foreign country had an enormous impact on Dr. Yamakawa's life and career, and it is definitely an important opportunity for personality development when you pursue to know the real world outside.

The covid-19 pandemic has taken away our opportunities to travel around the world since 2020. Before the pandemic, for example around 700 Kyutech students in 2019 travelled overseas to experience study and research abroad. In the past 3 years, while overseas travel has been restricted, remote communication systems have been providing students with opportunities to connect and exchange with other countries; and some of our students decided to take chances on long-term study abroad for various physical international experiences. As the old adage says, "To see

is to believe,” and being able to go or not does make a big different experience. By seeing and experiencing the real world with your own eyes, you can encounter events that will transform your outlook on life and develop your personality. I and our staff have been inspired by these pioneering students who have reopened the door to the world so that the number of real activities overseas has gradually been increasing, and this has given us a great deal of courage. All new students of Kyutech are encouraged to try various things. We are waiting for you with a wide variety of opportunities you can try at Kyutech.

Currently, with the aim of becoming a “campus where you can encounter future technologies,” we have prepared some facilities for learning and interaction that creates interaction on the campus, and a test environment for national projects related to Beyond 5G, the next-generation communication technology after 5G. We are waiting for you by sequentially building various mechanisms such as a co-creation space that means a place where people gather and create together. These many mechanisms will make it possible for not only students and academic staff, but also entrepreneurs and enthusiastic people to enhance start-up activities together on campus and share some role models for you when you think about your future career.

The interactions of people and technologies in different fields creates innovation and challenges advance technology; and technological progress also creates new challenges whereas Japanese industry is now getting behind the rest of the world in terms of new market scheme development despite of still-being superior in technology. Whenever I go abroad, I see that the young people, including students, are actively involved in thinking and working on creating various new business models and they are playing active roles to vitalize industries. It is important for you to interact with many people, create new technologies and methods based on flexible thinking, and solve them.

I hope you will study and experience many things during your life with Kyutech to learn to accept diverse thinking, share wisdom, discern the risks

behind technology, and contribute to problem solving that overcomes risks and creates social values since we have such environment to welcome you all.

Last but not least, the covid-19 still leaves its risks, however there can be no zero risk in the real world. Therefore I would like to express my sincere hope that all of you who are jointing Kyutech today will be able to manage risks well in your life, appreciate your irreplaceable daily life, be mindful of your own health, and enjoy living and learning with your new friends and Kyutech.

Once again, congratulations.

Yasunori Mitani

President

Kyushu Institute of Technology