

April 2, 2024
Entrance Ceremony (3rd)

Congratulatory Address

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To all the new students, congratulations on your entrance to Waseda University.

Today, you are all at the shiny new starting line, and it is a great honor to celebrate your new lives with your family members and other acquaintances.

Looking back on my own years in college, the time I spent at Waseda was invaluable in forming my life. I'm going to take this opportunity to give you some advice based on anecdotes from my own college life, things I gained during that time, and experiences I had leading up to joining a company.

I entered the School of Commerce at Waseda University in 1978, so it has already been 46 years. Almost half a century. Time goes quickly. I was raised in Oita Prefecture and in my third year of middle school I participated in a national kendo tournament. Other than this one trip to the Budokan, I really had no other connection with Tokyo. So including the entrance exam, it was my third trip to Tokyo when I started my school life. I had heard that many students commuted from condos and apartments, but I was on a limited budget so I looked for a cheap room and began my student life going to a public bath to bathe every other day.

At the south entrance to the university at that time, there was a coffee shop covered in ivy in a very old house called the Takada Barn; I always glanced at it as I entered the university. On the left was the School of Law and on the right a library that was also entwined with ivy. The look of it inspired a strong desire to study. Proceeding further, on the main passageway there was the statue of Okuma Shigenobu, and looking from the side of the School of Commerce, I loved the amazing contrast between the Okuma Auditorium and the statue. Every time I came to class each day, I felt proud of the fact that I had gone to Waseda.

At the time, in the School of Commerce, your grades in your first year were said to determine your seminar, so I thought I definitely needed to get good grades, and I seriously applied myself in class and for tests. Having said this though, when I entered the university, I made friends. Both class friends and club friends. At the time first semester exams were beginning, I was taught how to play mahjong and had fun playing, so my desire to play mahjong came into conflict with the time I needed to study

for the exams. I maintained a strong desire to definitely try my hardest in studying for the exams, but I also made time for having fun with mahjong, which was the real charm of my days as a student.

In my second year, for research on modern trade theory I entered a seminar with Prof. Kisuke Tanaka, who was known to be especially strict. Upon joining the seminar, Prof. Tanaka was especially strict with how the seminar was approached. “A good report on good paper written in good ink” were his instructions. Moreover, students who did not study hard would get kicked out of the seminar. So I was nervous each time the seminar met, but as a result I was trained very well. In my interview with Prof. Tanaka upon entering the seminar, he told me, “People who can’t eat rice properly have no business eating the other dishes,” but to be honest, I didn’t understand what he was saying. In other words, students with bad grades are not qualified to take this seminar. I had some classes with bad grades, so I gave up on passing the seminar, but to my surprise I lucked out and received a passing grade. I still don’t know the reason, but some strange power must have been at work.

In my third year, the seminar started. It was once a week, and required reading difficult classics on trade theory and writing a report. I always spent all night studying before each seminar meeting. The parts I didn’t understand, I read the text over and over again and wrote my report. I’ll never forget how nervous I felt at the time. Sometimes, after the seminar was over, the professor would take us out for dinner. My nervousness let up and I remember feeling like I’d been liberated; it felt really good. With difficult books, if you don’t understand at first, you can read the same passage over and over again and as you do, you may gain an insight into it—I enjoyed this aspect of it. I also learned how to write a report. To write a good report, I learned you first must understand the text and then make the meaning your own so you can use it.

In my fourth year, in the job-hunting process, previous graduates came to our seminars as recruiters and interviewed us. The recruiter from Mitsubishi Electric and my professor recommended that I take the company entrance exam. For the exam, I explained my graduation thesis and wrote a report on the given theme, but the report writing skills and presentation techniques I learned in the seminar I never thought they would help me as much. As a result, it was my good fortune to be able to join Mitsubishi Electric.

Thus far I’ve talked a little about my life at school, but having joined a company and had a variety of experiences, one conclusion that can be drawn is that in almost all cases a person’s fundamental characters is formed during their student years. All the new entrants here today, all the work you’ve done in high school and your four years starting now, it is no exaggeration to say that the basics of who you are as a human will be formed. There will be a lot of new things and problems and issues may

arise in your public and private lives. At such times, do not run away from the problem; think about it, and if you can't solve it, discuss it with someone you trust, make it your own and work on a solution. Through this process your fundamental character will be cultivated, and in the future, in your basic thinking when making a decision or judgment on something, without realizing it you will be able to rely on who you've become.

For this reason, I urge you to take on various challenges. In particular, we are said to be living in the VUCA age of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. We must navigate without a map. To cope, for things without answers, we must all discuss together and derive a certain way of thinking. It is important to make a habit of always thinking and seriously taking on things without answers and not run away from them. Team building means facing a lofty goal, showing respect for each other regardless of junior-senior hierarchies, helping one another and achieving the final goal.

At the same time, I would want you to have fun going out drinking with friends, going on trips and doing other extracurricular activities. The current times call for diversity, which is respect for diverse knowledge and ways of living. To interact with diverse cultures and ways of thinking, I think it is important to make friends with people from other countries if you can. I have eight years total experience working at overseas offices in Germany and the U.K., but in actually living in those places and not just taking a business trip there, I directly experienced that the way things are seen and thought about differed among different countries and regions even inside Europe. If you go overseas, the mentality differs greatly depending on the country and region, so I would want you to broaden your mind and point of view through interactions with friends who are not Japanese.

Next, I'm going to talk with you about ambition, while introducing some of the activities of the Mitsubishi Electric Group. In a broad range of business domains, from space to home appliances, the company carries out activities with the realization of sustainability positioned at the core of management. In fiscal 2024, we established a new organization to further accelerate reforms. We intend to further strengthen our business base and draw on the strengths of the Group to contribute to the realization of carbon neutrality, a circular economy and nature-positive through our business. Our corporate philosophy is to "contribute to the realization of a vibrant and sustainable society through continuous technological innovation and ceaseless creativity." This philosophy is the reason for our existence and who we want to be; it is our ambition.

Since last year, we have conducted activities to tie and overlap each employee's personal purpose and ambition with the company's purpose and ambition through what has been labeled "my purpose activities." If we can tie activities at the company with one's personal ambitions, day to day work becomes enjoyable and fulfilling. If there is ambition, it becomes a compass for living, including work, and you won't waver when pressed to make choices. Even if something does not go well, you won't

regret having chosen that path.

What I want to say, what I want to ask of you, is for everyone here to define an ambition by the time you graduate. If you have formulated an ambition, you will be able to overcome even difficult challenges. As the old adage says, a thousand days of training for one moment. Make continuous efforts day by day. Your efforts will not lie.

My own personal motto is *Jihanjinko*, which means to take responsibility and use all your resources; if things go well then give credit to everyone, but if things don't go well, take responsibility for it. Now you're just starting out at Waseda University. I would want you to value your time to study and to continue trying to find an ambition that you can rely on in your life. Waseda University is a wonderful university and school that will provide learning and encounters for you to formulate an ambition.

Finally, to all the new students, I hope that you take on various challenges and grow as people while maintaining a positive spirit throughout your four years. College life has many fruits and I hope it is an irreplaceable time in your lives. I give you a hearty yell of encouragement.

Truly, congratulations.