

President's Entrance Ceremony Address
April 3, 2019

It is with great pleasure that I hold the 26th Miyazaki International College Entrance Ceremony on this glorious spring day. I wish to express my gratitude to our many honored guests for making time in their busy private and official schedules to attend today's ceremony. I also offer my congratulations to all of the parents here today.

And congratulations to you, the 172 new students of the entering class. I can only imagine your anticipation on the advent of this magnificent day. I am happy to welcome students from Japan, Korea, Vietnam and Cameroon.

MIC is located in the place where Yasui Soshu, the father of the Confucian scholar, Yasui Sokken, decided at the end of the Edo Era that Kiyotake was in need of a place of learning and opened a private cram school called "Meikyodo" to teach Confucianism. In addition to Yasui Sokken, Shinobugaoka sent numerous individuals out to contribute to the realization of Japan's modernization in the early part of the Meiji Era, making this very location a true place of learning. The desire of our ancestors to promote learning from Shinobugaoka has been handed down uninterruptedly from generation to generation for 190 years.

In 1994, our founder, Dr. Hisayasu Otsubo, established Miyazaki International College to provide the optimal environment for pursuing the discipline of "Comparative Culture Studies", enabling students to observe anew the diverse cultures of the world from global perspectives. Today the School of International Liberal Arts boasts a 25-year history during which we have sent more than 1400 students out into the societies of Japan and the world. Our program of international liberal arts has been highly recognized as well as from the perspective of development of global human resource development. The members of this March's graduating class each left MIC with their individual dreams and strong language and critical thinking skills to enter society in occupations in the airline, hotel and other industries. And the members of the second graduating class of the School of Education, which was founded in 2014, boasts numerous successes on the elementary school teacher employment examination, making great achievements in employment as civil servant nursery school instructors, and as instructors in kindergartens, centers for childcare, and more.

In the spirit of "Respect", one should venerate the humanity of others and discipline oneself to observe things from the perspectives of others, while in the case of Diligence, one is to put his or her mind and body into applying positive efforts to the pursuit of all things. It is this image of human beings that you will aspire to as you engage in your studies.

I cannot help but wonder what kind of societies you will eventually make your marks in four years from now. Your world will see the end of the era of Heisei and herald the beginning of the era of Reiwa. It is the Reiwa era in which you will each play your leading roles. All across the world, in areas such as artificial intelligence, science and technology are developing rapidly, international competition is intensifying and world affairs are constantly changing. Japan itself suffers a range of issues, from genuine population decline and the advent of social polarization. How will you all make your livings in a climate that promises to become more severe and wrought with change? In the hope that you will spend your four year at MIC fruitfully, I will share my thoughts on the meaning of "role and mission".

As you sit here, you must be feeling finally free from all of the entrance exams and full of expectations for your new university lives. From today, your learning will greatly change. What was formerly an "education centered on remembering" will become an "education centered on thinking". MIC will provide you a liberal arts education in which you will acquire a wide range of knowledge and focus on basic literacy and the acquisition of logical thinking skills. Liberal arts is often translated as education that makes the learner free. What this means is to have the freedom to consider whether the things we think we know are actually real, to contemplate academically whether there are other ideas to consider and to see things from various perspectives. In thinking from diverse perspectives, you will be asked to find the best solutions that you can today. In order to do so, you will be required not only to learn academics, but to also take a closer look at yourselves and to mature. Growth as human being is the very thing to which Liberal Arts aspires. As we consider our growth as human beings, it is also important that we strive to obtain qualifications in your four years of college life. But even more important than obtaining qualifications is thinking about what roles we can play in society, our purposes in life, what we can do for others and for society, and our personal missions. Learn

through study, learn through practice, learn through volunteering, learn through communication with your classmates, and think about your roles and missions through the various experiences of your college lives. Each of you is different, each of you is an important person, and there are roles and missions that only each of you can do.

My area of specialization is music therapy psychological support for battered children and children with disorders. Mine has been a clinical journey without correct answers, trying to determine how to understand and support children with disabilities who cannot speak and cannot move their bodies. Faced with the short lives of the children I was in charge of, I often thought there was nothing I could do to help them. These children taught me, however, to "live today to the fullest." The Bible says, "Don't worry about tomorrow. Tomorrow will worry about itself. Today holds enough trials." The next four years will be the accumulation of your todays. I sincerely hope that you will make them an accumulation of the best that you can do, giving thought to the reasons why you are living and how to make the best of your lives, as you clarify your personal roles and missions.

Today marks the start of your education at MIC, one which is centered on thinking critically. At MIC, we will do our best to provide you a an education throuhg which you can all discover your potential. In the next four years, you will discover scenery you have never before encountered and discover a "you" that you have never before known. The faculty and staff will work effortlessly to support you in your new learning experience.

In closing, I will leave you with the words, "Be a Star." This is a phrase that has been passed down through the generations of MIC students. I hope that each of you play your own leading roles in the brilliant student lives you will spend here.

Finally, I hope from the bottom of my heart that your college life will be prosperous.

April 3, 2019
President Keiko Yamashita
Miyazaki International College