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Opening Address for Akita International University

President Mineo Nakajima

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, good morning, everyone!

I have the greatest honor to declare that Akita International University has just started today. Therefore, April 8, 2004 is the Foundation Day of our university.

Dear freshmen and freshwomen! Congratulations on your success in the highly competitive examination to enter our university. As a result of your efforts, you became the first students of our university. You will be very proud of this fact in your future.

As you already know, Akita International University—Kokusaikyoyo Daigaku— has many unique characteristics. You will discover those aspects in your campus life. So I would like to explain my idea of 'kokusaikyoyo.' 'Kokusaikyoyo' is a new concept of higher education, which originated from ourselves. It can be called 'International Liberal Arts' in English. Then what is 'International Liberal Arts'? First of all, it should be based on sufficient ability of communication in foreign language, especially in English. Secondly, students of 'International Liberal Arts' should have profound understanding of arts and sciences. Thirdly, you have to master your own specialty in our advanced education course. I strongly believe that you all are able to overcome these three hurdles in order to make your future brilliant.

Finally let me recommend you a book in English which should be our common reading on campus. That is Bushido: The Soul of Japan by Inazo Nitobe. This famous little book is subtitled An Exposition of Japanese Thought and originally written in English in 1905. Inazo Nitobe was one of the first students who had entered the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages (Tokyo Gaikokugo Gakko, the former body of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies) in 1873 before he went to Sapporo Nogakko (Sapporo School of Agriculture, the former body of Hokkaido University). Nitobe learned his English in English taught by foreign English teachers. He studied with his classmates in the English department such as Kakuzou (Tenshin) Okakura, Kanzo Uchimura and others who would later become leading figures of Japanese intellectuals. By reading Nitobe's Bushido, you can learn refined manners and spiritual strength of the Japanese, which will be very important for your international activities as global citizens in the future.

Thank you very much.

April 8, 2004