

Congratulations to the new students at Sophia University's undergraduate, graduate and the course of Nursing/Midwifery. I share my joy also to the parents, guarantors, and others concerned. I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to all of you to the Sophia Family, a community of Sophia's faculty and staff, students and alumni.

Sophia University celebrates its 110th anniversary this year. From its founding to today we have maintained our characteristic of an international university and have drawn on them in response to the changing needs of the times. A countless number of alumni work overseas and we can find Sophians wherever we go in the world. Alumni who studied at Sophia University as international students are also part of the Sophian network. Sophia bridges the world, bringing the world together through our students who come from various regions and cultures and through learning from each other, and graduating as people who live "For Others, With Others." This is Sophia's mission.

Sophia's internationality takes root in its traditions, which have continued since its founding. Sophia University was founded by the Society of Jesus, a Catholic congregation, by the request of Pope Pius X. The three Jesuit priests who were involved in its founding were from various backgrounds: German Fr. Joseph Dahlmann S.J., Englishman Fr. James Rockliff S.J., and Frenchman Fr. Henri Boucher S.J.. They were, respectively, an expert in Oriental Studies, a missionary from Saint Louis, and superior of the French Institute in Shanghai. The acknowledgement that Sophia University features internationality is also expressed in our alma mater, or school song, which was written in 1932, not long after its establishment. In the refrain, you will find the words, "Alma Mater," which means "reverend Mother." Only Western universities with tradition had used this phrase back then. I hope that you can feel the spirit of our founders when you sing Sophia's alma mater.

Sophia's school song was established in celebration of the completion of what is currently Building No. 1, constructed in place of our original building, which had been greatly damaged in the Great Kanto Earthquake. The university held a contest for the best lyrics and the lyrics written by students from the Department of Philosophy were chosen. Back then, Tokyo was still suffering from the aftermath of the Great Kanto Earthquake, which had occurred ten years before. Our new building was built with support from all over the world, including Germany and the United States. Then, our students

and professors started a movement to help the poor and those in need in Tokyo, instead of just being recipients of good will. This is how our tradition of living With Others in an internationally connected context was built.

Our international ties, mainly with countries in Europe and North America, characterized Sophia University during Japan's economic restoration after World War II. Jesuit priests were sent from tens of countries around the world to teach at Sophia University and promote students' international experience. Sophia University's beauty was in a campus that offered an exceptional experience of study abroad while being in Japan.

Sophia's internationality has expanded with the advancement of globalism across the world. An important milestone was the launching of activities to assist Indochina refugees in 1979. It allowed our international activities, which had been focused on Europe and the United States, to expand to Asia. It goes without saying that prior to this campaign, we were already engaged in pioneering research on Cambodia's Angkor Wat and all these activities have flourished. In the recent ten years, we have further broadened our global perspectives, promoting partnerships with various UN organizations and inviting professors from Africa.

Even amid concerns about fragmentation and confrontation, globalization will be further promoted worldwide. In such a world, we, as individuals and as members of human community, or inhabitants of "Earth, our common home" bear a common mission. Our mission is to become individuals who connect diverse people and societies and live "For Others, With Others." When we follow this mission, we can contribute to making the world a better place, for humans. I hope that by the time you finish your undergraduate, graduate or Nursing studies, all of you who are joining Sophia University today will have grown into Sophians graduating from your "alma mater" to leap into the world with a sense of mission.

Congratulations on your entrance to Sophia University.

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Tsutomu Sakuma,
Chancellor, Sophia School Corporation