

23-9 Entrance Ceremony

To our new students, congratulations on your entrance to Sophia University. I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations to the parents and all others concerned. I am very happy to have you come together in this hall to share the joy of welcoming our new students today. We are living in an increasingly convenient world where we can connect with others online, but I am sure that this experience of sharing time and space with others will give significance to your school life at Sophia and to your life after graduation as members of society.

Our lives are full of opportunities to make choices. Each of these choices design our lives. In many cases, we have no way of knowing “what the outcome would have been if we had taken the other option.” We advance with our lives without ever having the opportunity to compare our decisions. Therefore, we cannot evaluate whether our choices were correct or not. What does this mean? There are many ways to interpret this, and I will introduce one example:

Our lives are composed of a combination of different choices, and we cannot debate whether or not we made the right choices based on comparisons with others. In other words, the correctness or incorrectness of our decisions can only be determined by our own Sense of Conviction or satisfaction. And while choices are made in the moment, our Sense of Conviction or satisfaction are acquired in the process of life following our decisions. This means that our choices themselves do not determine what is good or bad, but that depends on how we lead life after our decisions are made.

You are gathered here having made a large choice in life. Your current situation of acquiring a university education, pursuing a particular major, learning in Japan, and studying at Sophia University are all consequences of your choices. I am sure that you had many different options to choose from. The choices that have formed the current situation in which you stand today indeed have special meaning. Did you make the right decision? As I indicated before, you cannot evaluate your choices now, nor can you prove what could have happened had you chosen the other option. When we are faced with challenges in life, the grass always tends to be greener on the other side. However, the greenness of the grass on the other side is not proof of the righteousness of other options.

I am sure that you can already guess the conclusion that I am trying to explain. All of you possess the opportunity to turn your entrance into university or graduate school, your learnings in Japan, and your learnings at Sophia University and Graduate Schools into good choices. On the other hand, everyone faces the possibility of finding the grass

on the other side greener. I seek for Sophia University to be a university where we, faculty and staff, as well as you, students, constantly think about the significance that the fulfillment and satisfaction that you gain on this campus bears in relation to your choice of Sophia University

Fr. Firmansyah just introduced a passage from the Gospel of Matthew. As depicted by the old garments and old wineskin, when we learn about new values and ideas, we must renew ourselves. Human growth is achieved only if we are always prepared with a new self. I am sure that today, you have prepared a new self to implement your new choices.

Your choices of coming to Sophia University or Graduate School cannot be fully evaluated when you graduate. We greatly hope that ten, thirty, and fifty years later, you will be satisfied with your choice of coming to Sophia University. When you think about your fulfillment and satisfaction, please keep in mind the educational philosophy of Sophia University: “For Others, With Others”. I would like for you, as members of the Sophia Family, to think about how you will measure the goodness or righteousness of your choices, and what success or satisfaction in life represents, or what kind of contributions made by people to society can be described to be successful or satisfactory.

I would like to close my words of congratulations by saying that I hope you will be able to respect the choices made by others and to value your own choices at the same time, and that not only while you are at Sophia University but also across your entire life, you will look back on choosing Sophia University as an invaluable choice in life.

Congratulations on entering Sophia University.

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