

Founding Philosophy of Sophia University

In 2013, Sophia University celebrated its 100th anniversary and incorporated its founding philosophy into its history and future mission: “Sophia: Bringing the World Together”.

Sophia University's founding philosophy can be seen in its history. Sophia University was founded in 1913 but its roots can be traced back to the aspirations of the Jesuit missionary St Francis Xavier. Learning that the Japanese people were guided by rational minds and had a thirst for knowledge, as well as of the high level of the academics and education that was then offered at Ashikaga Gakko and Gozan, he aspired to establish an institution of academics and higher education like those in Europe, in particular the University of Paris, in the capital city of Japan (Miyako) as a center for the exchange of culture and thought. It had looked as though this dream had been broken during the period of Christian prohibition, but more than 350 years later in 1906, Pope Pius X requested the Society of Jesus to establish a Catholic university in Japan based on the reports of the goodwill envoy that he had dispatched to Japan the previous year and was received in audience by the Meiji Emperor. In 1913, St. Xavier's aspirations were realized when Sophia University opened in Kioicho, Tokyo.

Sophia University has since developed through various changes of the times, but its founding spirit has remained consistent. It is a university rooted in “Christian Humanism” and walks with the people of the world with unchanged “neighborliness” and “cosmopolitanism”.

A “University is essentially a community of people who seek truth and value and strive for human development. This is the foundation and mission of Sophia University.

The mission of Sophia University, inherited from the Catholic tradition and the features of Jesuit education, is centered on human education based on "Christian Humanism". In other words, each member of the university recognizes the dignity of personality and basic human rights and aims to refine each other's personality with a sense of responsible solidarity and a humble attitude toward transcendent values, and to become a person who serves humanity and the world in his or her own field of endeavor. This also means that individual members should not take a bystander's position but have ownership of various issues and be conscious of their responsibility for social transformation, laying importance on the social dimension of interacting with people with respect for their critical spirit. To this end, it recognizes the diversity of thought, encourages the academic research of various thought, and respects their interconnectedness.

On the other hand, “neighborliness” founded upon “Christian humanism” is the way of life “For Others,

With Others". It means to proactively become a neighbor to others and to dedicate oneself to the realization of "justice and peace with love". In other words, Sophia University opens its windows widely to the turbulent modern world, values human interaction, shares the hopes and suffering of humanity in a contemporary world embracing poverty, environmental, educational, and ethical issues, and strives to nurture people who will serve the welfare and creative progress of the world. A "University" is essentially a community of people who seek truth and value and strive for human development. This is the foundation and mission of Sophia University.

Moreover, "cosmopolitanism" based on "Christian humanism" means to mutually acknowledge the diversity of ethnicity, culture, and religion, and through "dialogue" and "mutual cooperation," to help individual human beings and societies reach their full value. In other words, as St. Francis Xavier once aspired, Sophia University pursues a way for the entire world become a more sophisticated human family through the "exchange of wisdom between East and West" and through mutual encounter and dialogue among diverse people, and endeavors to provide opportunities for dialogue and learning in various fields in order to solve the problems that divide the modern world.

In this way, Sophia University will strive to realize the philosophy embodied in its mission, "Sophia: Bringing the World Together," guided by "neighborliness" and "cosmopolitanism" in all of its research and education activities.