

Wednesday, 1 May 2019

Commencement Ceremony of Institute of the Pacific United (IPU NZ)

Mr Hiroshi Ohashi, President, Soshi Gakuen New Zealand Incorporated
Dr Setsuko Ohashi, President, IPU New Zealand & IPU Japan
H.E. Mr Van Thong Ta, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Mr Robin Nair, Former Ambassador of the Republic of Fiji
H.W. Mr Grant Smith, Mayor of Palmerston North
Dr Nobuko Uchida, Professor of IPU Japan and Professor Emeritus of Ochanomizu University
Dr Kumiko Torikai, Professor Emeritus of Rikkyo University
Dr Hisanori Murakami, Vice President of IPU Japan
Mr Yasuhiro Tanigawa, Principal of Soshi Gakuen High School
Distinguished guests,
Teachers, staff, parents, and students

Kia ora Koutou.

It is a great pleasure for me to be with you all today for the Commencement Ceremony of IPU New Zealand. I have visited this campus once before, although this will be my first time giving a speech, and I am very grateful for the invitation. Please allow me to add my voice in congratulating you for the Commencement Ceremony

I believe that IPU is a good choice of educational institution, as it offers excellent faculty and staff, and a beautiful campus, which is the perfect environment for learning. I also believe that New Zealand itself is a good choice of country in which to study. Please allow me to elaborate a little on why I think this: I believe that both IPU and New Zealand value similar principles. They both are set on foundations of inclusiveness, i.e., to treat all people equally without exceptions, and they also have the courage to do the right thing, even in adversity. Both place faith in the importance of internationalism and understanding between cultures.

After the abhorrent terror attacks in Christchurch earlier this year, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had the courage to work towards inclusiveness. She did this by supporting those of the Muslim faith and by creating the opportunity for New Zealanders to unite, regardless of religion, colour or race. She also pushed through firearm laws within a matter of weeks, showing New Zealand's commitment to make things right through actions, which has resounded

internationally. This is, in my opinion, a wonderful example of New Zealand's dedication to upholding its law and order, and being true to its principles.

The Institute of the Pacific United, I believe also has shown similar principles. Established in 1990, IPU is the first and only Japanese private tertiary educational institution in New Zealand. It is my understanding that before this incredible campus was built, the land was just empty fields. The effort to create the first of its kind in New Zealand from scratch, while receiving great amount of support from Palmerston North city and the Ministry of Education of New Zealand, would have been immense. I am sure that it would have taken courage and dedication to start such a large project. Of course, looking around today, it is almost unnecessary to speak of the environment of inclusiveness that IPU has nurtured. I see students from around the world sitting before me, all with the equal opportunity to learn and develop skills for their future. IPU strives to educate students from all cultures without discrimination, showing an ideal international community.

During your time studying at IPU, I would like to encourage you all to study hard to go beyond your limits and work diligently toward your goals. If I were to speak in terms of time management, I recommend putting 80% of your time into your studies. The more knowledge and skills you have, the better equipped you will be to make your way in the real world once your years of education are over. The world we currently live in is not always fair, and there will be times when you struggle. You will find yourself in situations that are unexpected and perhaps undesirable, but if you prepare by adding to your strengths and skills now, you have a much better chance of pushing through and being successful in your future endeavours.

With the remaining part of your time, you should broaden your horizons with travel. Explore a new country or learn about a new culture; the international students especially are in the perfect position to do this. At the same time, I encourage you to make as many friends as possible while you are here. They are essential to your quality of life, and will be valuable assets for your future career. As human beings, the ability to continue to grow and learn is our unique trait. It is therefore something we should cherish and continue to do throughout our lives.

Thank you very much for your kind attention and I wish you all the best.
Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa.