

Chancellor, Executive members of the University, Staffs of the University, Distinguished guests, New Graduates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a big challenge for me, as a non-native English speaker and a scientist, to give a speech just after Prof. Gale Edwards, who is the Australia's best director of drama and theater, but I will try my best.

First of all, I would like to thank Flinders University for conferring me the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science. I also would like to congratulate students, who are graduating from Flinders University with various degrees today, and their families. I am particularly happy with this occasion as I am a Ph. D. of this University.

When I joined Flinders University in 1974, the University was only 8 years old and I should say it was not a well-known university. You must imagine there was no Google to search or even internet. You may wonder how I found this university and why I came here from Japan.

Here, I must mention my supervisor Prof. John Bockris. He was not only very famous in fundamental electrochemistry but also a leading figure in the application of science to address societal problems. He came to Flinders University from the University of Pennsylvania in 1971 and started recruiting students by sending letters to his former colleagues. One of them was at the Applied Chemistry Department of Osaka University, from which I had graduated with Degrees of Bachelor and Master of Engineering. In November 1972, when I was working in a Japanese Chemical company, my former supervisor asked me if I am interested in going to Australia. I replied "Why not" without hesitation without knowing the detail as I thought I might have chance to go to the US or Europe later on business, but not Australia. Later I was told that the name of the University is Flinders University of South Australia. Again there was no Google or internet and it was very difficult to find where the university is. So I went to a library to check an index of big map. There were 2 entries for Flinders. One was Flinders Ranges in South Australia and the other was Flinders Island in Tasmania. Without knowing Flinders is the name of an explorer, I really wondered if the University was in Flinders Ranges.

To make long story short, I was offered Flinders Research Scholarship, got leave from the company, and I and my wife, Emiko, who is attending this ceremony, arrived at Adelaide Airport in April 1974, 18months after the first suggestion. We were greeted by two Asian students at the airport and to our surprise one of them was a Japanese, Mamoru Mohri, who came to Flinders in 1972.

Studying in Flinders University and meeting with Prof. Bockris and Mamori Mohri changed my life completely. Prof. Bockris was very energetic and always ahead of other people not only in science but also on societal issues. When he was in Flinders, he published several books on the environment and energy. He pointed out the danger of the increase of CO₂ concentration and greenhouse effect and proposed the concept of “Solar-Hydrogen Economy” in his book “Solar-Hydrogen Alternatives” published in 1975. This concept is now very popular but he may have been too early to realize these problems. I really enjoyed the discussion with him and learned a lot. His tough training made me mentally very strong, improved my science and English, and I experienced the joy of doing world-class research. This experience led me to decide to quit from the company and go to Oxford University to become a post-doctoral fellow in October, 1978, just 2 years after I returned to Japan.

There were only 2 Japanese in Flinders at that time, I and Mamoru Mohri, and we became very close friends. He was a graduate of Hokkaido University and returned to Hokkaido to become a Research Associate after he got his PhD. He was the person who informed me in 1979 when I was in Oxford University that there was an opening of Associate Professorship in the Chemistry Department in Hokkaido University, to which I applied and was offered. He later left his job as Associate Professor of Hokkaido University became the 1st Japanese science astronaut working on a Space Shuttle mission. I was invited to visit Kennedy Space Center in September 1992 to see his launch to space with the Chancellor of Flinders at that time, Sister Jordan. He was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of the University by Flinders University and was appointed an Honorary Member of the Order of Australia.

By now you can understand that my carrier really started here in Flinders University with generous support, world-leading supervisor, and good friends. I am very happy to have played a role to establish relations both in research and graduate education between Flinders University and National Institute of Materials Science (NIMS), which I joined in 2010. Already 5 Flinders PhD students have completed their stay in NIMS for 6-12 months with 2 currently at NIMS as part of an agreement between the two institutions.

I mentioned that there were only 2 Japanese in Flinders in 1974 but the number has grown significantly over time. Guess how many Japanese Alumni. We had the first gathering of Flinders Alumni in Japan in November 2008 when the former Vice Chancellor, Prof. Michael Barber, visited Tokyo. More than 40 people out of 140 Japanese Alumni attended the meeting. I was surprised with these numbers. They are so

keen to continue the activity that Japan Chapter of Flinders Alumni Association was established in July 2010. Dr. Mohri is the Honorary President and I am President.

I may have talked too much on my personal experiences but with the examples of Prof. Bockris, Dr. Mohri, and myself, I would like to say to the new graduates that whenever you stand at a career crossroad, choose the way that which you would really like to do. In Japanese, a person's life is expressed in two Chinese characters, the first letter being the number one, followed by the second letter meaning to live or life, stressing that people's life is only once. You cannot come back to the crossroad and choose the other road. Even if you fail by choosing the way what you want, you can accept the outcome, but if you choose the other option and fail, you would regret you decision.

As young graduates, you may have anxiety for your future but you have possibilities. Believe your future and be a challenger. To conclude my speech, I wish you good luck. Thank you.