

## **2009 Center for Japanese Studies Fall Semester Entrance Ceremony**

Dear students, what I just said, in Japanese, is a little taste of what you can expect at the "Center for Japanese Studies." It is also, perhaps, a little bit like what I experienced when I visited Korea in 1984. It was my first time in that country and I still remember how shocked I was when I stepped out of the airport and realized that I couldn't read anything at all - street signs, billboards, even the names of the stations in the subway. All were written in Hangul, and there were no Chinese characters, and no alphabets.

I still can't read Hangul but I have learned a few things about it. What looks like a rather chaotic collection of strokes and circles, is actually a very unique and extremely logical method for converting spoken language into writing. [Compared with Hangul, the alphabet is nothing but a collection of arbitrary symbols!]

You may wonder why I'm singing the praises of the Korean language writing system at the entrance ceremony for Nanzan's Center for Japanese Studies. I do it to make a very simple point and there is one thing I can promise you right now: Japanese will be different, very different. The writing will not be simple, and the logic behind it is a far cry from the orderly structure of Hangul. I say this with conviction because I myself have put a lot of effort into memorizing Hiragana, Katakana, and Kanji. And I think that the Japanese expression I used most often was not an everyday greeting like "Ohaiyo Gozaimasu" but a very short and, at times rather desperate, "Wakarimasen."

"Wakarimasen" is a very useful word but it may also have a side effect that is, perhaps, a bit dangerous. The strange customs of another culture or the incomprehensible writing of a foreign language, anything I'm not used to, goes into this big drawer "Wakarimasen", allowing me to be undisturbed by things and thoughts that are different from myself.

Of course, there is also a positive side to "Wakarimasen", as it marks the beginning of a learning process, exactly the kind of learning that I would expect you to do at the Center for Japanese Studies. To say "Wakarimasen" is not a conclusion but the first step of opening up oneself to something that may be very different. I'm sure that all of you will come to realize that this difference is much more than just a different language or a different culture. Altogether you come from 21 different countries, speaking many different languages, I'm sure, you will realize that language and culture are only a small part of what makes you different from your fellow students and friends. In fact, I hope that, beneath the different languages and cultures of

your fellow CJS students (and the Japanese students at Nanzan!), you'll find many other things that will prompt you to make frequent use of "Wakarimasen".

An international community like Nanzan University is not made up of countries or cultures but it consists of people. In this lecture hall, there are people from 21 different countries. To put it more precisely, in this lecture hall there are 146 young persons who also belong to 21 different countries. Belonging to a country or culture is important but, it is only one side of the unique human person each of you and me happens to be.

The educational mission of Nanzan University, the only Catholic institution of higher education in this Tokai region, is expressed by a two-word Latin phrase, "Hominis Dignitati" - "For Human Dignity." I hope that your studies and activities here at Nanzan University will make a contribution to the realization of this ideal, while you're studying here and especially when you return to resume studies in your home countries. Studying at Nanzan University will become a real and lasting value for you if it leads you to an understanding that reaches beyond borders of language, culture, and religion. I don't think you'll find an answer to all your "Wakarimasen", but I surely hope you will discover what unites us across all cultural and personal differences - the richness of our common humanity and the discovery that human dignity becomes rich and beautiful because we are all so different.

President of Nanzan University  
Michael Calmano

## 2009 年度秋学期 外国人留学生別科入学式

### 学長式辞

留学生の皆様、南山大学外国人留学生別科へのご入学おめでとうございます。20 カ国の146 名の若者が南山大学を選んでくださったことを私は非常にうれしく思っております。歓迎の挨拶を兼ねて、南山大学の留学生別科について皆様に私の考えを話しておきたいと思っております。

25 年前、国際会議のため初めて韓国のソウルを訪れた時の話ですが、空港を出て、私は直ぐにショックを受けました。道路標識、店の看板、電車站の名前はすべてハングルだけ

でした。漢字もローマ字も使われていない、訳も分からない文字の洪水でした。とても一人で町に出ようと思う状況ではありませんでした。だいぶ後になって分かりましたが、話し言葉を文字にするためには、ハングルよりも分かりやすく合理的な方法はありません。ところで、別科で勉強していただく「ひらがな」「カタカナ」そして「漢字」になると、ハングルと違って、日本語を書くための文字を習得するためにはかなりの時間と努力が必要だということは、皆様に約束できます。自分の経験を踏まえて言えば、皆様はしばらく「分かりません」を連発する毎日を送るでしょう。

「分かりません」と言って、自分の無知を素直に認めることは学びの第一歩ですが、一つの危険性があります。直ぐに理解できないもの、自分が慣れてきて今まで当たり前だと考えてきたことに合わないものを拒否する言葉になる危険性です。ですから、別科に入学された皆様にお願ひがあります。「ちょっと分かりません」、「殆ど分かりません」、「さっぱり分かりません」と言いながら、思い切って違う言葉、違う文化、そしてこのような違う言葉と文化で育った友達に自分自身をぶつけて見てください。このような努力は必ず一つの発見につながると、私は確信しています。私達をそれぞれ違う人間にならしめるのは言葉と文化の違いだけではありません。むしろ、言葉と文化の違いの向こうには、私達をもっと驚かせる個人の違い、私達一人一人の人生を豊かにする個人の違いがあるという発見です。

「人間の尊厳のために」という言葉は、南山大学の教育理念を手短かに表す言葉です。別科生の皆様も是非この理想の実現を目指して勉学に励んでください。尊重すべき人間性を共有している私達は皆それぞれ違う人間ですが、協力し合って、言葉・文化・個人のそれぞれの違いこそ、私達一人ひとりの人生、そして社会全体をより豊かにする このメッセージを世界に向けて発信しましょう。

2009年9月3日 南山大学長 ミカエル・カルマノ