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Minasama konnichiwa,

I am honored to have this opportunity to speak to you today. It is a very important day in your lives. You step on a road that will define who you will be and what a person you will become. Some people spent time at the University just having fun. Some devote all efforts to hard study. Some direct all thoughts and strength to self-grow. In modern times it is important not just to learn, to get knowledge but to realize where this knowledge is coming from. All people want to achieve success, but everyone takes different roads. The choice is yours.

I am a happy person since I have lived two lives. In one I was a mathematician by education doing research and science, in another I have become a diplomat and that is what I have been doing for 30 years now. You can achieve everything you want. As I said the choice is yours.

It is very important that almost a hundred years of history of the Bunkyo Gakuin University began with establishment by Shimada Ishiko of Women's Academy with the aim of "providing women with the skills to become independent."

Simple analysis show that in modern societies women constitute a very important and strong force of social and economic development. My personal experience confirms that conclusion strongly. Upholding that core philosophy, the University has since evolved with the changing times and embarked on a new chapter in its legacy by adopting a fully coeducational framework in 2005. This is only natural development.

Another point I would like to stress is that this University attach special attention to study of co-existence. We must not forget in the 21st century the urgent need to ensure of“ co-existence” - between humans and the natural world, between humans of different cultures, between different religions, states and social systems. Co-existence is a path to the future, it is a path to peace.

I would like to say as well that exactly a year ago when Russia attacked Ukraine in a most brutal and aggressive manner this University adopted an official position condemning the aggression. It says

“the current aggression in Ukraine is an unforgivable act that shatters the learning and hopes of young people. Bunkyo Gakuin University, upholds its founding spirit of “independence and coexistence” and sincerely wishes to guarantee the education of the young generation and to protect the safety and peace of the citizens of Ukraine.”

Today young Ukrainians endure immense hardships. Dozens of University are destroyed, classes suspended, some are being conducted online, some in shelters. I would like to express our deepest gratitude to Japan for

accepting 460 Ukrainian students in 87 Universities and among them - first Ukrainian student here, in Bunkyo Gakuin. I hope that is just a beginning. And when you invite me next year on a Centennial celebration we will see more Ukrainians here in this hall.

We will win this war. The sun is always rising after dark. But as well we know that.

Katte Kabuto no o wo shimeyo.

Watashitachiwa busi desu

I wish you all peace, harmony and success.

Thank you.

Ganbatte kudasai!