

Kanna Kaiya

Graduation Speech 3/23

Fellow graduates, alumni, professors and TAs, families, friends and honored guests. It is my greatest honor to be able to stand in front of you here today and to deliver to you this commencement speech.

For everyone, as much of a cliché as it may sound, it marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another. A university graduation is one, if not the biggest, milestone of our lives. Let me start by congratulating you all and myself for completing the four years of our university life. I hope that your degree will allow you to pursue your lifelong dreams and help you overcome your future challenges.

Members of the PCP are made up of a variety of people who come from all over the world and have their share of international and domestic challenges. Although it is a program primarily intended for the Faculty of Economics, I, myself am from the Faculty of Law as is our representative, who is from the Faculty of Law and Science. When we became 9th members of the PCP community, I am sure all of our hearts were filled with hopes and dreams to thrive in the global field. Most of us can say, that our international backgrounds, our interest in economics, and the universal language of English have brought us together.

As a PCP student, I strongly believe that having the ability to speak both English and Japanese and having had the privilege of living outside of Japan is a rare gift. However, at times, some of us may have felt burdened by the difficulties of understanding the international and intercultural obstacles we had to experience. We may have even come across problems such as identifying who we truly are.

For me, growing up outside of Japan for 17 years and embracing different cultures and values in 3 different countries, I could never fully grasp my Japanese nationality. In fact I felt out of place, like I really didn't belong anywhere. Although I was Japanese, I was raised in a culture outside of my parents' culture for a significant part of my adolescent years. I was a third culture identity; I was confused with patriotism and values and also felt ignorant about my home culture when asked by other people. I lacked knowledge about my home nation, practices, traditions, and culture. I couldn't identify where I felt "home" was.

That's why coming back to Japan and applying to Keio University was a huge leap for me to find out who I really was. And though it may differ from time and place, at one time or another, we have all experienced this sense of loss and emptiness and looked for a place to belong.

But throughout time, I've come to realize, this loss of identity came from me "trying to fit into" my ethnicity and distinguishing others and myself from a place they were born in. There is no need for me to conform to a certain group or society. I am who I am. And the PCP community led me to these answers. With so many students from all over the world, I could relate to their circumstances and their strong individuality and character have taught me confidence and inner strength. And they've provided me with honesty. They were honest about themselves, about me, and the world we live in. And I consider giving and receiving brutally honest feedback to each other is what makes true friendship.

And now, as we walk pass Hiyoshi campus' Gingko Trees and we each begin the next chapter of our lives, we must ask ourselves: As Keio students, as third culture identities, and mostly importantly, as PCP students, what are our strengths to challenge ourselves in the real world?

Firstly, we have an expanded global perspective.

Living and growing up in different countries, we have an understanding that there is more than one way to look at situations that we are exposed to or experience. While others may see one thing in concrete, we are flexible to different ideas and opinions. We don't judge others and view honesty as a threat; it's always welcomed because honesty leads to new discoveries.

Second, we have the power to overcome obstacles.

I am confident that my fellow classmates here with me today have the power and vitality to overcome any obstacles. Diligence and perseverance is a Japanese trait that even the world acknowledges. When we are faced with challenges, we don't just sit back and watch but try to find a way to break those barriers down.

And finally, we are not afraid of change, or breaking down traditions and practices.

The world is changing but we're not afraid to divide into those uncharted waters. We can accept change and adapt to it. Your identity is your strength, not a burden.

Nonetheless, let's face it; we will all face challenges once we leave this campus. No more running around drunk and screaming at the top of our lungs.

To borrow a phrase from Sheryl Sandberg, "There is no straight path from your seat today to where you are going. Careers are not ladders but a jungle gym; you can't just look up and down but also sideways and corners. Stops and zig zags."

Because in times of globalization, there is the reality of interconnected social, economic, and political factors that will pose as a challenge. You never really know what will happen tomorrow. And may feel threatened by new emergent societies and individuals. You have to adapt to new situations and places and that makes it more difficult for individuals to consolidate and construct their identity and to find their place in society.

Life, as we know it, may at times be unfair.

But it's not. Because no matter how bad of a situation anything is, there is always good that comes with it. There will always be good to anything we do, as long as we keep believing in the positivity that comes with life. Do not hesitate because in between the gaps are where the opportunities and the chances lie.

Let our failures and mistakes, be our lessons for the future. Don't look away from the problems but tackle them because it's your problems. And when you are faced with these problems, look them in the eye and that is when your experience and past comes in handy. What each one of you has experienced throughout your life, *your past*, is what makes you who you are today and what will lead you to the future. Let our history, our heritage, our experiences fill us with confidence in our purpose and welcome upcoming challenges and opportunities. Since the world we live in is permanently changing, so is our identity, or at least it should be.

Our generation can be said to be the most challenging; because we must adapt to the outer world while maintaining our uniqueness and originality.

Globalization can be a great experience and can help us grow in so many ways. It can offer us a great insight towards the world and can lead us to discover unexpected sides to our personalities and help us build new identities. Still, in order to enjoy this, we have to previously hold a well-consolidated identity, a set of standards and principals that we are not so willing to give up upon and that will help us to get the most of the exterior world, while holding onto our selves. So never let go of how you got here

today.

And as Keio graduates and 9th members of the PCP, our identity is intertwined to those who have come and gone before us, and they remind us of what is possible and serve as role models for us all. It's not just our surroundings that have mold us into who we are today; but our family and friends, the people you see around you, have also guided us to the right path in life and led you to where you are today. As we embrace our past and identity, we must contribute, motivate and inspire not just ourselves in the present and tomorrow but also for the next generation, those to come for decades and even centuries to come.

Thank you Class of 2015, 9th members of the PCP and congratulations.