



Seul le discours prononcé fait foi

**Visite d'État
S.A.R. le Grand-Duc au Japon
du 27 au 29 novembre 2017**

**Discours de S.A.R. le Grand-Duc lors de la cérémonie
de remise de titre de docteur *honoris causa* de l'université Sophia
le lundi 27 novembre 2017**

Mr President of the University,
Mr Chancellor,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The prestigious award that is conferred upon me today by “Sophia University” is a source of profound joy to me. I would like to share this feeling with others, my family, and especially my daughter, Princess Alexandra - who is also here today –, the members of my delegation and even more so with my fellow countrymen, in all their diversity.

In fact, I see this *honoris causa* diploma as a collective tribute that is paid to them, especially considering the ties that have been binding my country to your university since its inception. The prominent role played by Father Dahlmann, one of the founders of the university, who was of Luxembourgish nationality, has already been mentioned. I would also like to highlight the continuity ensured by other Luxembourg missionaries within your prestigious institution, such as Father François-Régis Muller or Father Ney, not to mention Sister Juttel, who had the honour of teaching French to Her Majesty, Empress Michiko at Sacred Heart.

I am very moved that Archbishop Hollerich is with us here today to keep this tradition alive. I would like to tell him how grateful I am for all his achievements as a Professor, then Vice-Rector of your university, for his current commitment at the head of the Catholic Church in Luxemburg, as well as for his efforts for student exchanges between Japan and Luxembourg.

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear students,

Besides its academic excellence, your university stands out in Japan as a result of its international nature and the diversity of its teachers. The University of Luxembourg, which opened less than 15 years ago, is in a similar situation. Luxembourg students are a minority, while over 113 nationalities are represented. The significance does not lie with figures, but with the fertilisation and flow of ideas that such diversity

implies. Being a student is not only about going forth with specialisation, it is essentially about reaching out to people by opening up to new mentalities and different cultures.

In Europe, we have the “Erasmus” programme, allowing the mobility of millions of students in higher education institutes across the entire continent. It is reminiscent of a “Europe of Universities” that already existed in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, “Erasmus” is the very soul of Europe for a whole generation of youth looking for new horizons.

In this regard, I am pleased to see that in your university, which is located in the very heart of Tokyo, student exchange is one of your top priorities, in accordance with your teaching principles. Indeed, it is appropriate to address the complexity of today’s world with curiosity and open-mindedness.

I come from a country undergoing profound changes, socially, economically and culturally speaking. Consider that Luxembourg’s population is experiencing record demographic growth among industrialised countries. In recent years, the economic development has attracted newcomers from surrounding countries and all around the world. I would like to emphasise that Luxembourg is a place where nationals and non-nationals are not far from balancing each other out, and constitutes a kind of laboratory for European integration.

I find deep satisfaction in the harmonious cohabitation within our society. Economic success has played a major role in this and I don’t want to deny the reality of certain problems. But what really matters is that Luxembourg’s society forms a whole. Luxembourg is cosmopolitan and open to Europe and the rest of the world, which is a very valuable asset in itself. We should do everything in our power to preserve it, as it is a key for success.

In 1996, Jacques Chirac, President of the French Republic, declared as part of a speech to Japanese youth during his state visit: “It’s because we are self-confident, confident in our cultures and roots, that we can go out and meet others, and build the future together.”

Now, just over two decades later, the dialogue between Europe and the Far East retains its full significance. The European continent has experienced major transformations, while economic globalisation has tipped numerous balances, but the issue of global governance arises on comparable terms. What comes to mind, for example, is the parallel that can be drawn between the 1997 Kyoto Conference on Global Warming and the UN Climate Change Conference that was just held in Bonn less than two weeks ago.

One cannot deny that significant progress has been made, over the course of two decades, regarding agreements and collective awareness. Nonetheless, at the same time, global warming has yet again significantly increased, undermining the very existence of dozens of Asia-Pacific states. In the face of such challenges, to name but one example, the various parts of the world must start a dialogue and adopt new governance practices.

When preparing tomorrow’s leaders “to go towards others, with others”, “Sophia University” performs a task that is utterly useful and generous in order to help build a fairer world. That’s why the diploma I’m awarded today means so much to me.

Thank you for your attention.