

I am Masanori Namba, President of Jissen Women's University in Japan and a professor of American literature and culture in the Department of English at the university.

Today, I am honored to participate in the signing ceremony of our agreement with your esteemed institution. I sincerely thank everyone here for this wonderful opportunity and for allowing us to meet such outstanding individuals.

I also express gratitude for our collaboration with University of Cambridge Hughes Hall College and thank Professor Shinichi Onuma of the University of London and Senior Fellow Peter Dudley of Hughes Hall College for their efforts.

Now, let me introduce Jissen Women's Educational Institute. I will begin with an overview of the institute and its founder, then explain our future directions in education and research.

Our founder, Utako Shimoda, spent two years in Europe from 1893 studying women's education, visiting institutions like the Cambridge Training College for Women Teachers and Oxford University. This historical connection inspires our collaboration today.

Utako Shimoda significantly modernized women's education in early 1900s Japan. Now, I'll talk a bit about her history and that of Jissen Women's Educational Institute, which traces back to Jissen Girls' School founded by Shimoda in 1899.

Firstly, let me introduce Utako Shimoda herself. Her roles as an educator, poet, scholar, and advocate for social welfare highlight her as a dynamic figure in Japanese history.

Utako Shimoda was born during Japan's transition from centuries of isolation. Despite women facing low social status and harsh conditions, she came from a scholarly family and pursued education fervently in Japanese and Chinese through self-study.

Facing family poverty during this time, her grandmother and mother taught her skills deemed appropriate for women of that era, laying the groundwork for her career as a poet and educator. She strongly advocated for women's education, driven by her personal experiences.

At 16, she moved to Tokyo and later served as an attendant to Empress Haruko at the Imperial Palace from age 18. Despite leaving court service upon marriage, she established the Touyou School for upper-class daughters and later helped found the Peeresses' School with imperial support.

In 1893, Shimoda oversaw the education of Emperor Meiji's daughters and embarked on an educational tour of Europe and the USA, facilitated by Elizabeth Anna Gordon, a prominent scholar and friend of Japan.

During her European stay, Shimoda studied women's social status and education across eight countries, influencing her vision for women's education in Japan after experiences at Cambridge and Oxford.

In May 1895, Shimoda met Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace in traditional Japanese attire, the visit receiving wide-spread coverage in newspapers like the London Times.

Originally planned for one year, Shimoda extended her European tour to two, convinced of women's pivotal role in Japan's modernization upon her return.

Driven by her belief that "women can change society," Shimoda founded educational institutions nationwide, including Jissen Women's Educational Institute, which has nurtured independent women across all educational levels for 125 years, emphasizing self-reliance and societal contribution.

Jissen Women's Educational Institute, founded in 1899 by Utako Shimoda under the motto "When women change society, they change the world," has been a trailblazer in women's education in Japan. Since its inception, the institute has aimed to foster independent and self-directed women, a principle it remains committed to today. Celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2024, it has graduated over 160,000 students across various fields.

Jissen Women's University, with approximately 5,000 students, offers both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. It stands as a medium-sized women's university in Tokyo, emphasizing practical application of knowledge and societal contribution.

The university has two campuses: the Hino Campus in western Tokyo, focused on community engagement, and the Shibuya Campus in central Tokyo, fostering partnerships with international companies and organizations.

To bridge theory and practice, Jissen Women's University prioritizes

"social collaboration" and "global learning" in its education and research. This approach not only imparts broad knowledge and deep expertise but also hones practical skills that can effect change locally and globally.

Under the banner of "Social Collaboration," students engage with societal issues through proactive learning, both on and off campus, fostering their role as active members of society.

In "Global Learning," the university has expanded its international exchanges, including study abroad programs and overseas internships. With agreements in place with 55 universities across 21 countries and regions, Jissen Women's University is a leader among women's universities in Japan in international education initiatives.

Offering diverse fields of study such as contemporary and traditional Japanese culture, nutrition, and food safety, the university actively welcomes international students. This diversity enriches campus life, nurturing an environment where students naturally develop their global perspectives alongside their academic pursuits.

Let me introduce Jissen Joshi Gakuen Junior and Senior High Schools. Our school educates female students aged 12 to 18, with the junior high section serving ages 12 to 15 while the senior high section caters to those aged 15 to 18. Guided by the founding spirit of "When women change society, they change the world," we prioritize cultivating sound judgment, practical experience, and responsibility in our students.

Our educational approach integrates core subjects like Japanese, English,

mathematics, science, and social studies with three distinct focuses:

The first focus is on Creative Expression Education. Starting from junior high, students engage in traditional Japanese arts like tea ceremony and koto music. This fosters respect for diverse cultures and values through understanding one's own traditions. Specialized classes on etiquette in junior and senior years emphasize respect and consideration for others.

The next focus is on Inquiry-Based Education. Students explore topics aligned with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), grappling with complex issues where multiple perspectives are considered. Through research, discussion, and presentations, they develop global awareness and a sense of personal responsibility, empowering them to be pro-active in their communities.

Global Education focuses on integrating creative and inquiry-based learning, incorporating intercultural exchange programs and collaborative fieldwork in Shibuya with international students. Our students' achievements, such as winning the Outstanding Ambassador Award at the national Model United Nations, reflect their commitment to addressing global challenges. This dedication was further demonstrated when they were invited to the United Nations Headquarters in New York City to discuss global issues.

Our commitment to creating a supportive environment where students can excel and challenge themselves is underscored by our UNESCO School certification in November 2022. We are proud of our students' politeness and their ability to articulate kindness through words and actions, traits that

are deeply cherished and nurtured at our school.

A verse from our school song, composed by Utako Shimoda, reads "to the farthest islands beyond," embodying our founder's vision of nurturing individuals who contribute to the world's brightness. This overview outlines our educational and research goals for the future of our university, high school, and junior high schools.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to establish this wonderful collaboration agreement, rooted in Utako Shimoda's visit to your esteemed institution 130 years ago. Moving forward, Jissen Women's Educational Institute remains committed to cultivating global talent through practical learning experiences that emphasize "global" and "community engagement."

Collaborating with Hughes Hall College, we strive to advance initiatives for world peace, such as the UCL Japan Youth Challenge, and to develop leaders who will guide the world toward a brighter future.

Thank you for your time and attention.