

令和3年度 1学期始業式式辞

Starting Point of the 2021 Academic Year

Everyone, we are going to have our 76th Entrance Ceremony, and all of you must have been looking forward to seeing the new freshmen. And many of you have been planning to try to induce them to join in your club activities. There must be a lot of good things that you want to pass on to them. I hope you will tell them a lot about our school and its proud traditions.

At the starting point of the 2021 academic year, I would like to talk about two things.

First, as you know, the government may declare a state of emergency again, or at least, sooner or later, a state of prevention of infectious diseases. In such a case, the Metropolitan Board of Education might decide to restrain the educational activities of Metropolitan high schools. We have to be prepared for that. We have to create new ways of doing our curricular and extracurricular activities, ways in which will be possible for us to do them well even under emergency conditions.

The fundamental role of a high school is to give students a curriculum from which they will be able to learn things necessary to make themselves wiser and stronger. I know it will be hard for you, being restrained from doing various activities as you would have done them under the original curriculum, but we don't have time to spend complaining about the age that we live in.

There may also again be no training camps for club activities in the summer. And if the spread of the new coronavirus has not ceased by then, we might be forced to have the Gaien-sai in a new way: we might be forced to perform plays without audiences, or to create movie clips as we did last year. I'm not sure when or how the spread might cease, but it may take a year or more for all of us to be fully vaccinated. It seems almost an impossible hope that you will all have the fulfilling student lives at Aoyama High School that we would wish. I have to tell you again that this is still an emergency situation. We must be patient, wise, and strong enough to win a fight against any new surge of COVID-19.

As you know, humanity has been fighting against countless infectious diseases throughout its history, and that will surely continue. This outbreak of COVID-19 might just be a wake-up call. We are in the midst of a crisis. It's a good time for us to consider what

we think about our response to disease outbreaks. A disease in a remote part of the world can be in anyone's backyard tomorrow. Think about the SARS outbreak a few years ago. Think about the Ebola outbreak. The magazine *Newsweek* has said, "Speed is of the essence. Speed of detection, of reporting, and of response are all crucial, so that the global community can be as prepared as possible to address the threat and limit or prevent spread." We will be able to win this fight, and maybe the next one, if we can share information on unusual clusters of illnesses in any place in the world, from local to global.

I know how uncomfortable and inconvenient this will be for you. I know it must seem unfair that you have to experience this horrible nationwide and worldwide infectious disease outbreak. But I do hope you will understand the situation and will follow the rules that I have made.

Second, and last, many citizens in Myanmar have been killed in the conflict with their military that has continued since the coup d'état. I'm afraid we have been given only limited information about what has been happening in this East Asian country, which is much closer to our own country than European nations are. I hope they will be able to peacefully build a democratic nation. But it seems that, as in other Asian nations, they have been struggling to do that for many, many years. We should be concerned about that country and its people. We should think what we can do to help them develop their country and to help them achieve greater happiness. I hope many of you will be interested in what has been happening there.

Today I have told you two things: first, that we must be patient, wise, and strong enough to win a fight against any new surge of COVID-19 and, second, that we should think what we can do to help people in Myanmar develop their country and to help them achieve greater happiness.

One more thing—I hope all of you will be gentle and kind with one another, not ignoring your friends or speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. As I often tell you, diversity among students is very important. Any school without diversity would be unable to offer sufficient stimulation to students' curiosity. It is essential for you to spend your school lives in friendly rivalry with others who are better than you in certain fields. *Ad alta!* Aim high, everyone!

Thank you very much. 851 words

令和3年度 入学式式辞

令和3年度第76回入学式校長式辞

新入生の皆さん、入学おめでとうございます。

保護者の皆様、お子様のご入学まことにおめでとうございます。

新型コロナウイルス感染症が世界的に拡大してから1年以上が経ちました。我が国でも二度の緊急事態を経験し、今また第4波が押し寄せています。昨年の4月、全世界の感染者は10万人、死者はおおよそ5,000人でしたが、現在は1億3千万人近くが感染し、死者は281万人に達すると言われています。ようやくワクチンが始まり、感染の収束に希望がもてるようになりましたが、国民すべてに接種を終えるにはこれから1年程度はかかる見込みです。引き続き、私たち一人一人が正しい行動をとることが重要です。私たち教職員は皆さんと共に、保護者の皆様のご協力の下、強い意思と忍耐力で、気を緩めずにこの難局を乗り切っていきたいと思います。

さて、青山高校は、昭和15年に東京府立第15中学校として開校し、本年1月18日に創立81年を迎えた、伝統ある進学校です。11月には、昨年延期した創立80周年記念式典を行います。皆さんは、まさにこれまでの10年間とこれからの10年間の節目の年に青山高校に入学するわけです。

本校は、東京都教育委員会の「進学指導重点校」の指定を受けています。AD ALTA「高きを望め青山で」をスローガンに、一人一人の生徒が、知性と感性を磨き、心身の健康を培いながら、高みを目指す学校です。

学習の成果は、授業に臨む目的意識によって左右されます。授業の理解度も、学んだことを応用する力も、そして学力向上の実感も、目的意識をもっている生徒の方が圧倒的に高いことが証明されています。本校では、こうしたエビデンスに基づき、全ての教科・科目の学習到達目標を設定するとともに、授業のねらいを明確に示し、学んだことを活用する場面を与えることを通して、主体的に学ぶ力を育成しています。また、ホームルーム活動においても、発表や話し合い活動を重視して生徒の自主性を育むとともに、生徒に対して学校生活や将来の進路への期待を担任が定期的に表明することにより、主体的に学び続けようとする態度も培うよう努めています。

みなさんには、学ぶことは楽しいという実感がもてるようになってほしいと願っています。また、学校行事や部活動も、健康な心身をつくり、教養を高めるうえで極めて重要です。様々な体験や友人との切磋琢磨を通して、人間として大きく成長していくことを期待します。

本校は、都教育委員会指定の英語教育推進校でもあることから、少しでも皆さんに英語でお伝えします。

I would like to talk about two things at this starting point in your high school lives.

First, as you know, the government may declare a state of emergency again, or at least, sooner or later, a state of prevention of infectious diseases. In such a case, the Metropolitan Board of

Education might decide to restrain the educational activities of Metropolitan high schools. We have to be prepared for that. We have to create new ways of doing our curricular and extracurricular activities, ways in which will be possible for us to do them well even under emergency conditions.

Second, some economists say two-thirds of human jobs will be replaced by IoT and AI. It is hard to imagine how our society might change in the next ten years. That's why you all should be lifelong learners. I think we learn because we want to be happier. And to stop learning means to stop becoming happier. If you stop learning, you will not be able to adapt yourselves to changes in our society. If you can't be happy yourself, you won't be able to make our society better. You will learn critical thinking and methodology at our school. That will help you adapt yourselves to new realities.

I have told you two things: first, that we should create new ways of doing our activities, and, second, that you should become lifelong learners.

In closing my speech, I would like to tell you one more thing. Aoyama High School is a school in which each student lives in friendly rivalry with others. There will surely be hardships and, perhaps, bitter experiences. However, such things are necessary for you to become mature. But if it is hard striving to solve your problems all by yourselves, please talk to us. We will all do whatever we can to help out, and we will always be at your side, close to you.

Thank you very much.

本校では、授業評価や学校評価等の結果を随時学校ホームページに公表し、授業をはじめとする教育活動の充実・改善を保護者や生徒の皆さんと共に進めています。皆さんの青山高校での生活が充実したものとなり、ひいては、青山高校のさらなる発展につながることを期待しています。

令和3年4月7日

東京都立青山高等学校長 小澤 哲郎

令和3年度 1学期終業式式辞

At the end of the first trimester, 2021

First of all, I would like to express my sympathies to the families of those who died or are still missing because of the landslides that occurred on the third of July and were caused by heavy rain in the Tōkai area, especially in Shizuoka Prefecture. Residents there still are striving to restore the lives that they had been living before. We can only hope that they will be able to recover soon.

Natural disasters can occur anytime and anywhere in Japan. It's impossible to prevent them from occurring, but I believe we may be able to reduce the damage they produce. While it is not always easy for us to help people in need, we should think about them. Let's pray for their recovery. And let's prepare for such natural disasters as a large-scale earthquake directly underneath the Kantō Plain and a Nankai Trough earthquake, which are expected to occur in the relatively near future.

I would like to talk about three things at the end of the first trimester of the academic year 2021.

First, even though vaccinations started in June, we are still in the midst of a fourth or, maybe fifth, surge of COVID-19. Nearly 80% of the people over 65 have been vaccinated at least once, and nearly half of them have been vaccinated twice. On the other hand, only one quarter of the rest of us have been vaccinated even once. Even with a million shots a day, it would still take almost 100 days to finish vaccinating all of us once, and 210 days to finish it twice. That would be almost 7 months. We may be able to finish it by the end of January, 2022. We have still a long way to go. Please don't do anything reckless. All of you are wise enough to help win this long-term fight against this notorious infectious disease. We have to protect ourselves medically. Avoid the “three Cs” —closed spaces with poor ventilation, crowded places with many people nearby, and close-contact settings in which close-range conversations take place—where clusters of COVID-19 cases tend to be found. It is very important for all of us—you and your families, my fellow teachers and myself—not to get infected with COVID-19. I know how uncomfortable and inconvenient this will be for you. I know it must seem unfair that you have to experience this horrible nationwide and worldwide infectious disease outbreak. Despite all the difficulties which must surely still lie ahead, I believe it will be possible to maintain the high Aoyama High School standards while creating valuable new traditions for the future, and it is my most fervent hope that we do just that.

Second, since the government has lowered the voting age, 79 of the twelfth-graders had the chance to vote in the Metropolitan Assembly Election on July 4th. And more of them will have a chance to vote in the House of Representatives election in September. I hope all of you who will have gained the right to vote will go to the polls. Voting is one of the most important rights guaranteed to us under the Constitution, and it is also a civic duty. I have a great interest in the voting rate among the young, ages 18 and 19. The House of Representatives election will be a very good chance for you to think about some of the political issues we face in our society today. I think we should all take an interest in political issues in order to try to help make our society better. It is essential for you to have critical ways of thinking, to compare campaign promises, and to learn about candidates and their political parties. It is you who can change the world.

Third, and last, with too much similarity in terms of culture and historical background, people are likely to be reluctant to accept new things, and it may take a longer time to improve their lives. While similarity may contribute to stability, it is obviously impossible for a nation today to live alone, separated from other countries economically, politically, and culturally. We need to understand other value systems, other ways of thinking, and other ways of living. We have to cooperate with one another and have mutual respect for our different cultural backgrounds. Diversity gives us a good chance to improve our society—a good chance to create new things and new values. A society without diversity would be unable to produce many things that would be helpful to it. While Japan may not yet be a country that generally values diversity, we can certainly learn from the benefits that the great cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe and in the U.S. have produced. We should be willing to accept diversity in order to improve our society.

Today I have talked about three things: first, that you should protect yourselves medically, second, that you should take an interest in political issues, and third, that you should accept diversity in order to improve our society.

One more thing—I hope all of you will be gentle and kind with one another, not ignoring your friends or speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. As I often tell you, diversity among students is very important. Any school without diversity would be unable to offer sufficient stimulation to students' curiosity. It is essential for you to spend your school lives in friendly rivalry with others who are better than you in certain fields. Believe in yourselves. You should both study hard and create new traditions in your extra-curricular activities, such as in the Gaien-sai.

Take good care of yourself, everyone. Enjoy your summer vacation.

Thank you very much.

令和3年度 2学期始業式式辞

The Tokyo 2020 Olympic games are over now. Japan won a total of 58 medals, including 27 gold medals, which is the largest number ever for Japan at an Olympic Games. There were number of new events, such as BMX and skateboarding, as well as mixed-gender events in table tennis, judo, badminton, and swimming. Younger athletes, especially those under 20, attracted much attention. They seemed to enjoy being in the limelight. The youngest medalist ever was a 12-year-old girl in skateboarding. All the athletes who participated in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic games deserve praise, whether they won a medal or not. What matters most is the process through which they struggled to become representatives of their own countries.

As you know, the government has extended again the period of the fourth state of emergency until the 12th of September, which means that it will include two days of the *Gaien-sai*, and the Metropolitan Board of Education has decided to restrain the activities of Metropolitan high schools during the extended period. That means that the festival will not be open to your guardians or the general public. You will be able to perform plays on stage, but without the usual audiences. You will have to wear face masks on stage. We could have created movie clips of our plays, as we did last summer, and enjoy watching them online, but you did not choose that way. We have to accept the new rules for our school festival, and we should be thankful that it will at least be possible for us to perform plays. I know it will be hard for you, being restrained from performing plays on stage with the usual kind of audiences, as you would have been able to do under the original rules, but we don't have time to spend complaining about the age that we live in. I do hope you will accept the reality and enjoy new ways of making your *Gaien-sai* a success, a festival through which, even under emergency conditions, you can meaningfully pass on proud school traditions to your *kōhai*, the next generation.

I'm not sure when or how the COVID-19 spread might cease, but it may still take at least half a year for all of us to be fully vaccinated. It seems almost an impossible hope that you will all have the fulfilling student lives at Aoyama High School that we would wish. I have to tell you again that this is still an emergency situation. We must be patient, wise, and strong enough to win the fight against this fifth surge of COVID-19.

At the starting point of the second trimester of 2021, I would like to talk about two things.

First, according to a report issued in June by Amnesty International, which is famous for its global efforts against the imposition of the death penalty, China has been violating the human rights of people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, and the

Beijing government has received worldwide condemnation for subjecting people of the Uyghur ethnic group to confinement in internment camps, torture, forced labor, and forced abortions and sterilization, as well as for forcing Uyghurs to swear allegiance to the Communist Party of China. It is said that the birthrate among Uyghurs has declined dramatically in recent years. Unfortunately, only a limited amount of information is available regarding specifics of what has been happening in the region, which makes it impossible to confirm many of the accusations with certainty, the existence of severe problems is definitely clear. Last year, the B.B.C. broadcast an interview with the Chinese Ambassador to the U.K. The interviewer asked penetrating questions and showed a drone video of local officials forcing Uyghurs onto the cars of a train, suggesting the possibility of the existence of concentration camps like those the Nazis operated during World War II. The Ambassador repeatedly insisted there was no proof of any violation of Uyghur human rights, and that the Uyghurs were happy because of the splendid policies of the Communist Party. Such complete denials are common practice among China officials. While it might seem that Japan has no involvement in what has been occurring there, one of the main industries in the Xinjian Autonomous Region is cotton cultivation, and Uniqlo has been being accused of using cotton produced by forced Uyghur labor, which seems to have resulted in a dramatic fall in the company's stock valuation. Our government seems a little bit reluctant to act concerning the human rights of Uyghurs, perhaps because we have additional problems with China to deal with, such as sovereignty over the Senkaku Islands. Other East Asian nations, specifically, the Philippines, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Brunei, have issues concerning "ownership" of the Spratly Islands. Some African nations are reluctant to criticize China because they have become financially dependent on it. And the world knows that the Chinese market is essential to the world economy. What do you think the Japanese government should do? I would like to hear your opinions. Many of the twelfth graders will have gained the right to vote in the House of Representatives election next month. Perhaps you ought to consider candidates' diplomatic policies when you decide for whom to vote.

Second, it has been more than a year since the anti-government protests started in Hong Kong. At the end of November, last year, Hong Kong's supporters of democracy scored landslide victories in district council elections. Carrie Lam, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, said that she would listen humbly to the opinions of the public, but I was worried about how the leaders of mainland China were going to deal with this situation and with Hong Kong's citizens, most of whom were born and have been brought up in a democratic society. Most of the pro-democracy district council members have already resigned in response to the Beijing government's tightening of its control over Hong Kong. It is nearly a quarter of century since Hong Kong was returned to China

in 1997. For 150 years previously, they had been governed by the United Kingdom. During those 150 years, citizens became accustomed to British ways in almost everything. The new Hong Kong is still young. People seemed to be enthusiastic until only a relatively short time ago. They seemed to want greater democracy. China promised that there will be “One Nation, Two Systems” until 2047, but the Beijing government is clearly not keeping that promise. It now seems like a long time ago that people’s initial demands changed into broader calls for expanded democracy and an investigation into allegations of police brutality. I’m afraid that Hong Kong as we have known it might be lost under the single-party dictatorship of Beijing.

China has become the world second largest economic superpower as the result of economic reforms. This has produced super rich citizens and left poor workers and farmers behind. The Beijing government has recently shifted its economic policies into more suppressive ones. If the government fails in those policies, both the rich and the poor might explode in violent protests. Xi Jinping’s dictatorship might actually be fragile enough to collapse in a moment, and he may feel compelled to tighten his control of this huge nation even more than before. Where will this Asian giant go?

Today I have talked about two things: first, the violation of the human rights of people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region and, second, the danger that Hong Kong might be lost under the single-party dictatorship of Beijing.

In closing, I hope you and your families are all well, keeping safe, and free of COVID-19 infection. And I also hope that, through your activities during the *Gaien-sai*, you will be able to add new pages to our school’s traditions.

Thank you very much.

網掛けの部分は省略しました。

創立80周年を祝う会

At the 80th Anniversary
To Celebrate the 81st Anniversary
On to the Next Decade

We could have celebrated the 80th anniversary last year if there had not been those surges in COVID-19 infections. We wouldn't have had to cancel or postpone curricular and extra-curricular educational activities during those 20 months. Especially significant were such traditional school events as the Gaien-sai Festival and the Sports Day. We wouldn't have been forced to take school lessons online at home for such a long time. I know it's useless for us to complain about how we have been suffering from this notorious infectious disease, which has taken the lives of 5 million people around the world. They say another surge of COVID-19 will surely come. But we have learned many things over those 20 months. I'm sure that we will overcome this pandemic in collaboration with one another. Yes, we will.

Looking back on the previous decade between the 70th and the 80th anniversaries, Toshikazu Koyama, our 21st principal, demonstrated strong leadership and succeeded in establishing Aoyama High School as one of the most selective Metropolitan high schools. That is, the number of students who went on to highly selective national and municipal universities increased steadily during his tenure. And I, the 22nd principal was at first at a loss as to how to maintain that state of excellence, but later realizing how highly motivated and expert the teachers were in their respective fields — and how excellent, honest, and kind-hearted the students were — I began to feel great joy in having the chance to work for this remarkable high school with its proud traditions. For the latter part of the previous decade, our graduates, your *sempai*, left excellent records of going on to highly selective universities. It's not going to these universities at which our school aims, however; it's guiding and encouraging our students so as to accomplish their aims. That's a highly selective high school in a true sense. That's Aoyama High School.

In serving as principal during the final four years of the decade between the 70th and the 80th anniversaries, I have striven to help accomplish certain goals for our school. I first strove to reform

our entrance examinations; I introduced new-style questions, bearing in mind university entrance examination reforms, and this resulted in a number of very positive outcomes: we were commended in newspapers for our foresight, which ignited renewed motivation in our teachers, and in a short period our own in-school examinations, as well, began to extensively employ new-style questions — description-type questions that required intellectual strength, judgment, and powers of expression and which incorporated materials that students would be seeing for the first time. The motto “Striving for good questions improves teaching competence” has become established. In the last two academic years, the number of graduates who passed the entrance examinations for highly selective national and municipal universities has increased to 40, and our target of 42 is now within reach.

Another issue I had to deal with after assuming my post was the repair and improvement of our buildings and their facilities. A budget of three hundred million yen over the last five years has made it possible to install a new air conditioning system in all fifth-floor classrooms and in the gym, to repair the training room and other rooms in the gym, to improve our ICT capacity, to renew our website, to make use of SNSs for public-relations purposes, to replace all the Japanese-style toilets with Western-style ones, to repair the swimming pool, and to install LED lights in the gym and in the swimming pool dome. What remain are repairs and improvements to our athletic field.

The Jingu-Gaien area is slated to be transfigured over the next ten years. A new rugby field is to be constructed next to the National Stadium, a new Jingu ballpark complex, including a hotel from whose rooms games can be watched, is to be built at the site of the present rugby field, and a forty-story business complex is to be built diagonally opposite Aoyama High School. The present Jingu ballpark is to be demolished and the site converted into an open-lawn park. That will be the time at which our present main building should be replaced. I have a dream that the Metropolitan Board of Education will decide to utilize a PFI to replace it with a thirty-story high skyscraper that incorporates a large multi-purpose hall, gyms, and indoor swimming pools, along with

a limited number of commercial facilities and business offices. That would make it possible for our students to study in a secure environment and to decrease the damage and injuries that might result from a natural disaster. This sort of approach would be most suitable for a school which, like ours, is located in the center of a major metropolitan area.

Despite all the difficulties which must surely still lie ahead, I believe it will be possible to maintain the high Aoyama High School standards while creating valuable new traditions for the future, and it is my most fervent hope that we do just that.

I thank you all, Mr. Goto, the President of the Gaien-kai, the Alumni Association, Ms. Tsunawaki, the President of the PTA, my fellow proud teachers, and Mr. Takimoto, the former Deputy-Principal and now the principal of Mukogaoka High School, our students, and their guardians. Thank you again. And let's move forward on to the next decade. Ad alta!

895 words

令和3年度 2学期終業式式辞

Everyone, I would like to talk about two things at the end of the second trimester, 2021.

First, I would like to express my sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who have died due to COVID-19. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has concerned all of us during these past 21 months. We have seen very many people worldwide infected with COVID-19—and more than five million deaths due to it. The number of the infections and deaths has continued to rise. Fear of this pandemic has spread all over the world, negatively impacting global transportation and the economy. As you know, we have been through a fifth outbreak of COVID-19, more than 18,000 Japanese have died, and the spread has not been kept under control, especially in Europe, North and South America, and Africa. The current situation could still lead to “over-shooting,” a worldwide explosive surge in infections. In our country, we might experience a new surge of infections due to the Omicron variant, a new mutant strain of coronavirus. It is still unclear when and how the spread of this coronavirus will cease, even after about 77% of Japanese have received full vaccinations. And booster vaccinations have already started. Who knows if we might need four vaccinations or even more? We need to protect ourselves medically. It is very important for all of us—you and your families, my fellow teachers and myself—not to get infected with COVID-19. It is also important for us to be wise enough to avoid any discrimination and prejudice regarding the disease.

Second, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has recognized three scientists for work that is fundamental to our understanding of climate change. The judges awarded Dr. Syukuro Manabe, who was born in Japan, and two other scientists the Nobel Prize in Physics. Their research predicted global warming and how human activity impacts it. Dr. Manabe pioneered research into climate change. He demonstrated how carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contributes to global warming. He sounded an alarm on how people help to drive it.

At a press conference at Princeton University, he answered questions from reporters; one of which and his answer were very impressive.

The question: Can you tell me what is the main reason for you to change your nationality from Japan to the United States? Why did you change your nationality?

Dr. Manabe answered: That’s interesting question, but in Japan people always worry about not to disturb each other. You know,

they have a very harmonious relationship. And this is one of the important reasons why Japanese people get along so well with each other. You know, they keep thinking other people, don't do something which disturb other people. In the U.S., in Japan, if you ask some questions you get answer "Yes", or "No". When Japanese say "Yes", it does not necessarily mean "Yes", it could be "No". Because they don't want to hurt other people's feeling much more than anything else. And so, you don't want to do anything which is disturbing to other people. And U.S. I can do things that I want like. I don't worry too much about what other people feel. Because as a matter of fact, I don't want to hurt other people's feeling, but I'm not observing enough other people to figure out what they think. I found living in the U.S is wonderful! And probably research scientists like me, I can do whatever I please in my research. My boss was generous enough to let me do anything I want to do. And he, as a matter of fact, he got all computer expenditure. I never wrote single research proposal in my life. So I got all computer I want to use, and do whatever I pleases. So that is one reason why I don't want to go back to Japan, because I'm not capable of living harmoniously.

What do you think of his answer, everyone? His answer was sincere and even very humorous, however, the content of it made me feel sad. The outflow of human resources is a big problem for the future of our country because they are treasures for us in Japan, which has little in natural resources. I think we should change our society to one in which excellent human resources would decide to do their research in Japan.

Today I have talked about two things: first, we have been suffering from the surges of COVID-19 and we have to protect ourselves, and, second, Dr. Manabe received the Nobel Prize in Physics and commented the outflow of human resources from Japan.

And one more thing, to twelfth graders, there are just 22 days to go before the New University Examination, and you need to concentrate on your studies more than ever. Do what you can do today for the sake of your own futures. After the examination, your focus will shift to the secondary examinations for individual universities. You will have plenty of time, almost forty days, before taking them. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. I am sure that you will be able to make it. *Ad alta!* Aim high!

Now, to everyone, you may at times feel in low spirits. There will surely be hardships and, perhaps, bitter experiences, especially during those surges of the novel coronavirus. When it is hard striving to solve your problems all by yourselves, please don't

hesitate to talk to your teachers, or to the School Counselor, or to me.

In closing my speech, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I do hope the year 2022 will surely be a more peaceful one for people all over the world.

Thank you very much.

961 words

*the quoted matter has been transcribed exactly as found in the source text

令和3年度 3学期始業式式辞

We have seen the old year out. We have welcomed in the New Year, 2022, Reiwa 4. It is the 82nd year of our school.

During this winter vacation, you have been busy doing many things, especially the twelfth graders, who are preparing for the Common Test for University Admissions. Even so, I hope you had enough time for enjoying good food and having a good time with your friends and families. We have been forced to accept so called new ways of living due to surges in COVID-19 infections. Be patient. Please concentrate on your studies a bit longer.

Everyone, I would like to talk about two things today at the starting point of the third trimester.

First, in an age of uncertainty, it is essential for everyone to keep on learning. I want you to be life-long learners. What you learn at school may be outdated within a decade or so. That's why recurrent education is regarded as being very important. I hope you will continue to learn, with high aims of making our society better through your lives. I don't think it is right that you stop learning after graduating from a high school or university. Learning always offers sufficient satisfaction to your curiosity and may help you change your lives for the better, and our society for the better. I hope you will be able to have fun learning new things. You should accept as many new things as you can. Don't shun them. I hope you will always enjoy changes. You may have many more chances to leave your marks and achievements in this age of uncertainty than might be possible in an age of an unchanging society. I do hope you will come to make important contributions to our society.

Second, and last, the Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held soon. The US, a number of European countries, and Australia have already decided not to send a diplomatic staff to China, since this Asian giant has been violating the human rights of people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The Beijing government has received worldwide condemnation for subjecting people of the Uyghur ethnic group to confinement in internment camps, torture, forced labor, and forced abortions and sterilization, as well as for forcing Uyghurs to swear allegiance to the Communist Party of China. There has been a serious conflict between China and the US and its allies. Xi Jinping, who has been aiming to be the leader of the Communist Party for three consecutive terms, doesn't want foreign governments to make claims about human rights violations in his country. He seems to be quite confident about being able to persuade his people to believe him, but seems not be comfortable with a situation in which he has to hold the Olympic Games without presence of foreign diplomats from the US

and other countries. He insists that such a thing is only a minor problem, but his political enemies might make use of it as a result of political errors made by him. We had to hold the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games without ordinary audiences. I hope that the winter Olympic Games in China will be successful without major influences from COVID-19. But I wonder where this Asian giant is headed and am afraid that some drastic political changes might happen in the near future. What do you think, everyone?

Today I have spoken about two things: first, that you should become life-long learners, and, second, that the conflict between China and the US and its allies might influence the Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

One last thing to the twelfth graders, who are going to take the Common Test for University Admissions within a week. Believe in yourselves. I'm sure you will be able to make it. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. The possibilities for you are infinite. Aim high!

In closing my speech, as I have told you many times, I hope all of you are gentle and kind to one another, not ignoring your friends, and not speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. And as I have told you many times, it takes only a moment to destroy a good relationship, but it takes very long time to become reconciled with one another. Help each other. Respect your friends. And work together toward achieving your dreams. There is always hope to be found in the hardships of life. Ad alta!

Thank you very much.

752 words

令和3年度 卒業式式辞

74th Commencement Tuesday, March 15th, 2022

Three years have passed since you began your studies at this highly selective and historically important Metropolitan High School. There must be countless things that have concerned and interested you during these years.

Three years ago, all of you were still junior high school students. And now you are already soon-to-be adults who have, to some extent, gained intellectual strength, judgment, and powers of expression. That makes me very happy. Actually, after April 1st you will be legally adults since the amended Civil Code will be implemented. You'll have gained the right to do many things, and at the same time you'll be responsible for how you'll behave as adults. Even though it may be difficult for most of you to be independent economically from your guardians, however, you should be independent as young adults and be responsible for the principles by which you live.

Most of you already have the right to vote. There will be a House of Councilors election in July. Go to the polls, everyone. You will be young adults soon, and that means you ought to be able to show individual responsibility. I do hope you become highly responsible adults whose moderation in behavior will be an excellent model for others. And I do hope you will come to make important contributions to our society.

There have been many things that have seemed especially noteworthy during these past three years.

In 2019, we suffered from a continuing series of natural disasters, including Typhoon Hagibis, which caused many floods and took the lives of more than 90 people. In October, Okinawa's symbol, Shuri Castle, burnt down. Fortunately, we have also witnessed a number of very good things, one of which was the visit by Pope Francis to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Another good thing was the enthronement ceremony of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito. A new era began. In December, when the Opening Ceremony for the New National Stadium was held, we attended together with you, our 74th graduation class. I am still basking in the afterglow.

In 2020, in January, I attended, by invitation, the *Utakai hajime* (Annual New Year's Poetry Reading) in the Pine Room of the Imperial Palace. In the same month, I was commended for contributions as a teacher by the Minister of Education and was

granted, with others, an audience with Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako. This was only possible because I was the principal of Aoyama High School, and it gave me great happiness.

Then, in March, the government declared a state of emergency. We were forced to lockdown our school for nearly three months. We had to cancel or postpone our school trips, the Sports Day, the *Gaien-sai* Festival, and the 80th Anniversary Ceremony. These unfortunate reversals have been especially disappointing to you, your guardians, and my fellow teachers. Since then, we have also had to go through five further state of emergency periods.

In 2021, the vaccinations started in March. Now nearly 80% of us are fully vaccinated, and about 30% of us have been booster vaccinated. But we had to hold the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games without ordinary audiences in the summer. Even though the stadium is in hailing distance from us, we could only watch the Blue Impulse jetfighters flying over our school. Some good news, however, made us happy, such that Japan won 58 medals in the Olympic Games, in which many young athletes attracted interest and achieved good results, that Shohei Ohtani appeared in the MLB All-Star Game and was named the MLB's MVP, that Sōta Fujii won four Shōgi titles, and last month he gained a fifth title, and that Dr. Syukuro Manabe won the Nobel Prize in Physics. He pioneered research on climate change.

And this year, we have been experiencing a new surge of infections due to the Omicron variant, a new mutant strain of coronavirus that has begun to mutate into a new variant, BA-2. North Korea has launched missiles several times. Russia has invaded Ukraine, which I still can't believe. This invasion is irrational and illegal, however, and that has made us understand that no war is motivated by logical thinking, but brought on by insanity and madness, hatred and anger.

It is hard to imagine how our society might change in the next ten years. That's why you all should be lifelong learners. I think we learn because we want to be happier. And to stop learning means to stop becoming happier. If you stop learning, you will not be able to adapt yourself to changes in our society. If you can't be happy yourself, you won't be able to make our society better. Albert Einstein said, "The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything." Protecting ourselves from COVID-19 infection while maintaining socio-economic activities has certainly been far from easy. But we must keep on moving forward. And you should remember that there will be many chances to leave your marks

and to make achievements that will change our society for the better in this age of uncertainty.

Some of you will begin studies at a university and others will prepare for another try for admission next year. You may feel depressed to discover that some people you meet are better than you in certain fields. But communicating with those people will help you mature and make you stronger and wiser. Working together creates strength.

Japan has little in the way of natural resources. Our nation's greatest treasure is its citizenry. You are part of that great treasure. Each of you is irreplaceable. Believe in yourselves. The possibilities for you are infinite. *Ad alta*. Aim high, everyone!

Thank you very much. 954 words

令和3年度 修了式式辞

At the end of the third trimester, 2021.

On 15th of this month, we had the 74th commencement of our school. We celebrated 280 of our new graduates, with their guardians, my fellow teachers, and school staff. They had been forced to give up very many things, just as you have been, and about that I'm truly sorry, both for them and for you.

Of the 74th graduating class, more than 100 students passed entrance exams for national or municipal universities. Further, other students were accepted to private universities known to be highly selective. They did a great job. But it is not so important for you just to succeed in passing entrance examinations for highly selective universities. You are expected to come to make important contributions to our society in the future, and you should have a strong will to study further, in your future education, what interests you most. I would like you all to aim high.

I would like to talk about two things today at the end of the 2021 school year. First, we have gone through the state of emergency five times and extended quasi-emergency measures since March of 2020. Everything has changed a lot. We have been struggling to restore the lives that we had been living before. That seems, however, quite difficult now. Twenty-four months have already passed since the beginning. We have still been in a situation of the overshooting of this notorious infectious disease. Booster vaccinations have started, but a new mutant strain of the Omicron virus has been found even in our country. That makes the situation even more complex. I wish vaccines at least would be able to make our bodies robust against the virus.

I checked all the statements you and your guardians wrote in the latest School Evaluation Questionnaire Survey; some of them strongly insist that we should try to maintain our educational activities as normally as possible, while others may caution that we should increase online lessons or at least be able to choose between coming to school or taking online lessons at home. As you know, we are in the sixth surge of COVID-19, more than 20,000 Japanese have died in total, and the spread has not been kept under control. Under such conditions, we need to protect ourselves medically. It is very important for all of us not to get infected with COVID-19.

It is also important for us to be wise enough to avoid discrimination and prejudice regarding the disease. We don't have time to spend complaining about the age that we live in. Everything that surrounds us is in constant transition. We ought to be able to enjoy changes in our society. Take on as many new challenges as you can. If you can't adapt yourselves to changes, you will never be happy. And you should be lifelong learners, so as to be able to adapt yourselves to changes in our society.

Second, it is about a month since Russia has invaded Ukraine. I couldn't believe how President Putin would dare to begin war against

Ukraine. He calls this invasion a military operation, but it is apparent that Russia has invaded a neighboring country. It is illegal, irrational, and insane. What if your leader were to go insane? War is brought on by insanity and madness, hatred and anger, often by dictators who have political and military power. Putin says President Zelenskyy was attempting to join the EU and NATO, and that's why he began a military operation in Ukraine. They say Putin wants to install a puppet leader there and never let Ukraine join NATO. But who knows Putin's desire will not go beyond that? The U.S. and western allies began to impose severe sanctions on Russia's economy with the hope that those sanctions will loosen Putin's hold over his country. Actually, the deaths and injuries of Russian soldiers have been reported in newspapers, on TV, and on SNSs, which may make the people of Russia declare that they don't want war. That might be Putin's weakness since he says the "military operation" is limited to the eastern areas of Ukraine and will end in a short period. Our government has already declared that it has started economic sanctions against Russia as one of the G7 countries, and Prime Minister Kishida has agreed with the leaders of the U.S. and other developed countries to cooperate on supporting Ukrainian refugees. I don't think many of those refugees will decide to come to our country, but I do think our government's decision is a good one, not just paying money for the refugees. We should think what we can do for them. It might happen that the Asian Giant will decide to cross the channel and start a "limited military operation" in Taiwan. Then will we be able to accept refugees from Taiwan? Are you sure we are ready to do so? Let's think about what the refugees of Ukraine, the people of Ukraine, want and about what we can do for them, everyone.

Today I have told you two things: first, that you should be lifelong learners and, second, that you should think what you can do for the people of Ukraine.

In closing, you may sometimes feel in low spirits, and if it is hard striving to solve your problems all by yourselves, please talk to your friends, family, teachers, the School Counselor, or me. We will always try our best to give you useful advice, and we will always be at your side.

I would also like to offer you all my best wishes. I look forward to seeing you on the first day of new school year this coming April.

Thank you very much. 947 words