

It has been hot this summer, though it is already autumn in old lunar calendar. During the summer vacation, I visited some of your summer training camps, where you welcomed me very warmly. I am glad that we were able to have summer training camps for the first time in three years. We have proved that we can do our school events even under emergency conditions by creating new ways of doing them. And we are going to have our *Gaien-sai* this year in five days. I am sure that you will be able to make your *Gaien-sai* a success, a festival through which, even under emergency conditions, you can meaningfully pass on your proud school traditions to your *kōhai*, the next generation. We should be thankful that it will at least be possible for us to perform plays in front of classmates, your guardians, and some junior high school students. 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* one of the unforgettable ones.

At the beginning of the second trimester, 2022, I would like to talk about two things.

First, as you know, it is 77 years since Japan accepted the Potsdam Declaration and surrendered to the allied forces of that time. There seem to have been many geographical and political reasons that our forebearers decided to declare war against the allies, which you have learned about in history classes. It may have been because they needed natural resources from far-flung territories in the Pacific Ocean that were essential for them to continue war on the continent, or it may have been because they wanted to construct the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere by liberating colonized countries from their European rulers. In 1941, Japan decided to declare war against the U.K., the U.S., Australia, and the Netherlands, while having continued to prosecute an endless war against China for more than 11 years. After the four-year-long devastating war against the U.S. and its allies, major cities, including Tokyo, Osaka, Hiroshima, and many others, were almost completely destroyed, which must have forced our forebearers to accept Japan's defeat and its surrender. I think it was clear to everyone at that time what the reckless and insane war had brought upon them. Since then, the world has changed a lot, especially in the fields of the economy and information technology. Many nations rely on one another economically, which has come to make it impossible for individual nations to live alone. And the global network of information supported by global satellite systems, many of which are run by private companies in the U.S.

and Europe, seem to make it impossible for any nation to invade another nation without being damaged severely. Today, scientists can analyze anything the size of 30cm square on the ground from outer space even when the earth is covered by heavy clouds. I have heard that is why the U.S. was able to predict that Russia was ready to invade Ukraine in the middle of February. Those technologies, however, may bring us new possibilities in the field of agriculture, business, and the battle against global climate change. In this modern age, we must live in harmony with other nations, helping each other, which is essential for all people in the world to improve their lives and be prosperous together—with the help of ICT. There are, however, not a small number of nations that are dominated and oppressed by dictators who control the use of such horrible weapons as nuclear missiles. Those leaders also can achieve technological expertise. It is dreadful that a single dictator might be able to lead us to total destruction. And in those nations governed by such leaders, it seems that people have been deprived of human rights, especially freedom of speech and expression. I think we must do something to help them build democratic societies. But there are counter-opinions in those nations, opinions which say that they do not necessarily want or need a democratic society. They just need a strong leader whom they can trust and who they believe will help them create a better society, a better world. We cannot force them to think in our way, but we must try to help them to get accurate information, help them to distinguish truth from propaganda. That may take time. We must unite together and be wise enough to make the world a better place.

Second, the number of our graduates admitted to national and municipal universities has dropped sharply. With respect to the top four national universities and medical departments, the number for 2021 was 24 and only 18 this year; with respect to the top ten universities and medical departments, the number for 2021 was 40 and only 25 this year. And more than 40% of our graduates decided to go to private universities. This tendency is quite characteristic of our school; there are no other such examples among the top seven metropolitan high schools, including Hibiya, Toyama, and Nishi. This may have been due to surges in COVID-19 infection rates. It is understandable that many of our graduates may have hesitated to leave Tokyo for study. However, I do hope you think about what the purpose is for you to study at a university. National universities have certain advantages over private universities: close relationships with professors in smaller groups of students, access much more generous research funding, and cheaper tuition fees. It would not be a bad choice at all for you to study at a top private university, but I do hope you consider striving for admission to a top ten national university and medical departments. If you have not yet decided what you will major

in, you should try to get into the University of Tokyo; if you are interested in STEAM, then try to get into the Tokyo Institute of Technology. Don't hesitate to set high goals for yourselves. The possibilities for you are infinite. There must be many good things about yourself that you haven't yet discovered. It is very important for you to live in friendly rivalry with excellent students who are better than you in certain fields, who may motivate you to learn more so as to become more like them. Don't choose an easy way. Accept as many new challenges as you can. Where there is a will, there is a way. Ad alta.

Today I have told you two things: first, that people need to be able to distinguish truth from propaganda, and second, that you should accept as many new challenges as you can.

One more thing—I hope all students who participate in the *Gaien-sai* enjoy themselves and add bright new pages to their book of high school memories.

Thank you very much.