

We have seen the old year out. We have welcomed in the New Year, 2025, Reiwa 7.

During this winter vacation, you have been busy doing many things—especially the twelfth graders, who have been preparing for the Common Test for University Admissions. Even so, I hope you have had enough time to enjoy good food and to spend quality time with your families.

On December 26th, I went to a concert by one of our school's alumnae, Tokiko Katō, at Hulic Hall in Yūrakuchō. The next day, December 27th, was to be Tokiko Kato's 81st birthday. I was captivated by her powerful singing voice, which didn't seem like that of a person who was 80 years old. She is someone we definitely ought to invite to speak in our cultural lecture series. After graduating from Komaba High School, Tokiko Katō attended the University of Tokyo, and after graduating from university, she made her major debut and has since released many hit songs, right up to the present day. This year, she is also expected to hold nearly 20 concerts nationwide. Her lifelong dedication to singing and to giving dreams and hope to many people continues to inspire countless admirers. Don't you think a way of life devoted to and thoroughly pursuing your passions is a wonderful thing?

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

First, with uncertainty all around us, it's crucial to keep learning. I always encourage you to be lifelong 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 What you learn at school may be outdated within a decade or so.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 for making our society better through your own lives. The possibilities for you are infinite.

You can choose any career you want. You may have great personal potential that you have not yet realized, and I don't think it would be right for you to stop learning after graduating from high school or university. Learning will always offer 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 the challenges of as many new things as you can. Don't shun them. I hope you will always enjoy changes. I do hope you will come to make important contributions to our society.

Second, and last, many people around the world have become refugees or are facing starvation, which is terribly worrying. The United Nations reports that about 700 million people are at risk of starvation. And, according to the UNHCR, the number of refugees in the world is more than 100 million, including those from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Syria, Myanmar, and Venezuela. And there are just as many internally displaced people, such as those in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Myanmar, and Ukraine, who have been forced to remain in their own countries even though many are desperate to escape. Also, according to Amnesty International, there have been serious violation of human rights in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, in Tibet, and in many other countries which are often dominated by charismatic authoritarians. Most of those people are forced to struggle for their lives because of wars, political and military conflicts, and economic conditions. This has been made worse by critical droughts, fatal floods, and extreme

high and low temperatures—all of which are at least partially attributable to global climate change. How can we help prevent global warming—or global boiling, as António Guterres, the Secretary General of the United Nations, has described it? How might we help those refugees? How might we reach people in need who remain in their countries? These are tough questions. It is clear, however, that without trying to solve those problems, our own beloved nation may find it difficult to survive in the future, as may any other nation. Thus, it is essential for you to learn things in the liberal arts, which will, I'm sure, give you important clues useful for building a future filled with hope.

Today I have spoken about two things: first, that you should try to make important contributions to our society, and, second, that it is essential for you to learn things in the liberal arts.

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

In closing my speech, 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. 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.

Thank you very much.

旧年を送り、2025 年、令和 7 年の新年を迎えました。

この冬休みには色々なことで忙しかったことと思います。特に 3 年生は大学入学共通テストの準備があります。しかし、それでも美味しい食事を楽しんだり、ご家族とゆっくり過ごす時間をもてたのではないかと思います。

今日は、第 3 学期の始まりに当たり、二つのことをお話します。

まず、周囲が不確実な状況にある中で、学び続けることが重要です。私は常に皆さんにライフ・ロング・ラーナーであれと言ってきました。学校で学んだことが 10 年もすれば時代遅れになるかもしれません。だから、再教育が重要視されているのです。皆さんが、自分自身の人生を通じて社会をより良くするために、高い目標をもって学び続けることを望んでいます。皆さんの可能性は無限大です。

皆さんはどんなキャリアでも選ぶことができます。皆さんは、自分でもまだ気づいていない大きな潜在能力をもっているかもしれません。高校や大学を卒業して学びを止めてしまうのは適切ではないと思います。学ぶことで、好奇心を十分に満たすことができ、人生や社会をより良い方向に変えていく助けとすることができるでしょう。新しいことを学ぶことを楽しんでほしいと思います。できる限り多くの新しい試練に立ち向かってください。試練を避けずに、変化を楽しんでほしいと思います。皆さんが社会に重要な貢献を果たすことを心から願っています。

第二に、世界中で多くの人々が難民となったり、飢餓に直面していることが非常に心配です。国連によれば、約 7 億人が飢餓の危機に直面していると報告されています。また、UNHCR によると、アフガニスタン、ウクライナ、シリア、ミャンマー、ベネズエラなどを含め、世界には 1 億人以上の難民がいます。民主コンゴ共和国やスーダン、南スーダン、ソマリア、ミャンマー、ウクライナのように国内避難民を多数抱える国もあり、多くの人々が逃れたいと思っても国内に留まらざるを得ない状況です。また、アムネスティ・インターナショナルによると、新疆ウイグル自治区やチベット、その他のカリスマ的な独裁者によって支配されている国々で深刻な人権侵害が行われています。多くの人々が戦争、政治的および軍事的な対立、経済状況のために必死で生きることを余儀なくされています。こうした状況に、深刻な干ばつ、致命的な洪水、極端な気温の上下変動—これらすべてが部分的であるにしろ地球規模の気候変動の影響に拠るもの—が加わり、事態は一層深刻になっています。地球温暖化—アントニオ・グテーレス国連事務総長は「地球沸騰化」と述べています—を防ぐにはどうすればよいのでしょうか。難民をどのように助けることができるのでしょうか。自国に留まる人々を外からどのように支援できるのでしょうか。これらは答えを出すのが難しい問題です。しかし、これらの問題を解決しようとしめない限り、他国同様に我が国も将来生き残るのが厳しいことは明らかです。それゆえ、リベラルアーツを学ぶ（幅広く学ぶ）ことが重要であり、希望に満ちた未来を築くうえで役立つ重要な手がかりを与えてくれると確信しています。

今日は二つのことをお話しました。まず、社会に重要な貢献を果たすことを目指すこと、そして、教養科目を学ぶことが不可欠であるということです。

最後に、数日のうちに大学入学共通テストを受ける 3 年生の皆さんへ。自分自身を信じましょう。きっと成功できると確信しています。高い目標をもつことを恐れず、志を高くもちましょう。

スピーチを締めくくるに当たり、皆さんが互いに優しく親切であり、友達を無視せず、悪口を言わないことを願っています。すべての生徒が尊重されるべきです。良好な関係を壊すのは一瞬ですが、和解するには長い時間がかかります。お互いに助け合い、友達を尊重し、夢の実現に向けて共に努力してください。人生の困難の中にあっても常に希望はあるものです。