

Boys and girls, tomorrow we are scheduled to have our 73rd entrance ceremony, and all of you are going to see our new freshmen, your new *kōhai*. I am sure that you have been looking forward to this experience. Many of you are planning to try to induce freshmen to join in your club activities. There must be a lot of good things that you want to pass on to them. You should tell them about our Sports Day, the *Gaien-sai*, and other extra-curricular activities. I hope you will tell them a lot about our school and its proud traditions. And I do hope you, yourselves, will all have fulfilling student lives at Aoyama High School.

At this starting point of a new trimester, I would like to talk about two things.

First, it is important for you, soon-to-be adults, to gain knowledge by learning and instruction since you can't improve yourselves without it. Benjamin Disraeli wrote in 'Sybil,' "To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge." You should try to become a person of culture who can judge the flood of information on the Internet as well as on other mass media outlets, judge them, first of all, as being true or false, and decide what you should do. To do so, you have to read good books, you have to study under good teachers, and you have to come into touch with genuine things, not through virtual experiences but through actual ones. So visit our school library, ask your teachers to give you special assignments, and visit museums or universities, historical sites or theaters. Try to see, feel, and touch genuine things and talk to or listen to people directly. Learning is like water flowing through a faucet. If you turn a faucet off, you will never be able to fill a bucket. It is essential for you to keep on learning for the rest of your lives. The more you learn, the more confident you will become and the more eagerly you will want to learn. Then you will be able to gain intellectual strength, judgment, and powers of expression. It will be useful for you to study at a good school, such as our school, because there you will meet a lot of other excellent students who may motivate you to learn more, so as to become more like them. That's the reason why we strongly recommend you to study at such highly selective universities as the University of Tokyo, the University of Kyoto, Hitotsubashi University, or the Tokyo Institute of Technology. You will be able to study under good professors, to live in friendly rivalry with other good students, and to have more chances to find out what you want to do, or at least what you are good at. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves, boys and girls. According to the QS World University Rankings 2016, the University of Tokyo was 34th and the University of Kyoto was 37th. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology was number one, Stanford University was second, Harvard University was third, the University of Cambridge, in the

UK, was fourth. The National University of Singapore, at 12th. was the top-rated among Asian-nation universities, and Nanyang Technological University, also located in Singapore, was 13th. There are a lot of excellent universities in the world. You don't have to hesitate to try to study at highly selective universities in Japan. (Omitted)

Second, I would like to consider how we treat one another. Please remember to be careful with the words that you use with your friends. It is possible that things you have said carelessly might hurt your friends' feelings—without your having meant to do that. You never know how your friends may feel deep inside. “The more things a man is ashamed of, the more respectable he is,” George Bernard Shaw wrote in *Man and Superman*. I hope all of you are gentle, kind to one another, not ignoring your friends, not speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. Don't come down so hard on your friends. As I have told you, it takes only a moment to destroy a good relationship, and it takes very long time to reconcile with one another. It is necessary for you to be considerate toward your friends. Listen to them, especially when they are in low spirits, try to understand, just be there, close to them, offering your friendship. A real friend is one who walks in when the rest of the world walks out.

One more thing, to the twelfth graders:

You have only ten months left before taking entrance examinations. Nobody can change the speed of time. Everybody is equally under its control. So work hard. You can never compensate for lost time. Time flies. Maintain a willingness to accept challenges. Where there is a will, there is a way. Work toward realizing your dreams.

Thank you very much.

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