

Boys and girls, I would like to say a few words now that we are at the end of the 2018 school year.

First of all, I would like to express my sympathies to the families and the loved ones of those who were killed and injured by the horrible shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand. During the past decades many terrorist attacks occurred and many innocent people were killed or injured. Most of these terrors are caused from racial prejudice, radical thoughts, and biased sense of values. We should never approve terrors. Let's pray for those people in New Zealand.

This month, our tenth-graders learned how to help people who would not be able to get home in case of a major earthquake. Many foreigners may evacuate to our school—old people and children, too. You would have to take care of them as well as of yourselves, probably while worrying about your families, too. You might have to prepare rooms for women, or people who have been injured. It is impossible for us to prevent natural disasters from occurring, but we will be able to reduce the damage that they produce.

The eleventh graders visited Kyoto, Nara, and Osaka. These cities have much longer histories than do those of the Kantō Plain. It must have been a great opportunity for you to visit them and learn something about the past that you had never imagined before. I hope all of you were able to find some guidance for the future by learning lessons from the past. The school trip to these cities has given you a chance to reaffirm your identities as modern Japanese who have a rich past to be proud of. I think the school trip has offered wonderful opportunities for you to start thinking about where you have come from and where you will be going, as well as about what you will pass on to the next generation and how you might be able to change society for the better.

I would like to talk about one thing today.

According to 'The Japan Times,' on February 25, Donald Keene, the great scholar of Japanese literature, died of heart failure at the age of 96. He introduced many talented writers from Japan to the world and decided to live permanently in Japan after the Higashi-Nihon earthquake and tsunami in 2011. He became close friends with a number of Japanese authors, such as Yukio Mishima and Nobel Prize winner Yasunari Kawabata. Keene published hundreds of books in English, Japanese, and several European languages written over more than six decades. His translations included both classic and contemporary works, including numerous Noh plays and modern novels.

He became fascinated with Japanese literature at the age of 18, after reading an English translation of *The Tale of Genji*, which is generally considered the world's first novel. In an interview in 2009, he said, "It moved me very greatly not only because of its interesting story and interesting characters but because it seemed so civilized compared with the world I was actually living in." In

1953, while a graduate student in Japanese literature at the University of Cambridge, he also spent time studying at the University of Kyoto. “I have been happiest when I thought I had discovered some work not fully appreciated by the Japanese themselves, and as an enthusiast, I have not tried to keep my discovery to myself but to ‘publish’ it,” Keene wrote in a 1994 memoir.

As I often tell you, it is very important whether or not you will come across a soul-shaking book that may help you decide how you want to live in the future. *The Tale of Genji* seems to have been one for Keene. That may remind you of the episode regarding Tasuku Honjo, the University of Kyoto professor, which I told about you at end of the second trimester. The biography of Hideyo Noguchi, which his mother had given him in his childhood, inspired Professor Honjo to study medicine. I do hope you will go to the library and come to learn about Keene and his works. You might find a soul-shaking book.

Look up at the ceiling. All of the lights in our gym have been replaced by brand new LED lights. (So bright that we suppress them to 80% of the max) I’m sure they are quite good for sports and other activities. We have also set up a new air-conditioning system for all the classrooms on the fifth floor, including the music room and the students’ hall on the same floor.

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.

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