

First of all, I would like to express my sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who died or got injured by the terrorist attacks in Varcelona and other cities in Spain. I also feel very sorry for people in Kyushu and in the Tohoku area, many of whom suffered from floods caused by heavy rains in July and August. Even though we had 21 rainy days in a row in August here in Tokyo, I heard they had 36 rainy days in succession in the city of Sendai. Anywhere in Japan might suffer from earthquakes, floods, or volcanic eruptions at any time. It is impossible for us to prevent such natural disasters, but can try to reduce the damage they produce. We have to be prepared for them, and we have to help one another.

Boys and girls, I would like to talk about three things today, at the beginning of the second trimester, 2017.

First, how was your summer vacation? I think many of the twelfth graders must have spent a lot of time studying for their personal purposes. And I think many of the tenth and eleventh graders may have spent a lot of time in preparing for the *Gaien-sai*, which will be held this weekend. Everybody is looking forward to the *Gaien-sai*, in which each class is going to perform a famous play. It doesn't matter whether you appear on stage in an acting role or not. I hope all the students working on stage or behind the scenes will contribute together to our cultural activities during the *Gaien-sai*, which I hope will become, for you, an unforgettable school memory.

Second, life is short, and I hope you will try as many new things as you can. Life, however, is not always fair. Not every good person is able to live a happy life. And not a few good people are sometimes burdened with diseases, handicaps, or other unhappy things. There are no guarantees that diligence and honesty will bring you good things, but I think that one thing is very clear. Every human being hopes to be happy, and everyone has the right to be happy. It is quite natural for us that we should hope to be happy. Think about people, including children, who are handicapped or who have serious diseases. Things must be very difficult for them. They must have experienced a lot of suffering. Think about them. They are part of our society. We need to consider how we treat one another — and to remember that we should be considerate toward people in our communities. Everyone deserves respect. Don't shun those who are handicapped or who have serious diseases. Prejudice comes from ignorance. And I believe it is important to have personal contact with

others who are different from you. This will help liberate you from the chains of ignorance.

I have been planning to invite students from the Aoyama Special Support School to our school, to let them enjoy some activities with you, and also to visit their own school with you and to enjoy some sports together. It is essential for us to try to understand one another, and we can best do that by communicating with one another. We all are human beings. Everybody has the right to be happy. I hope our society might become one in which everyone is respected and has the opportunity to try to do what he or she wants to do for his or her own personal purposes. Let's work together to help make our society better.

Third, and last, to the twelfth graders, it is less than five months to the Center Examination 2018. Time flies. You should do what you can do today for the sake of your future self. And you should visit the school library or bookstores to find good books. I think reading books on various subjects will give you a great opportunity to learn something old that you have not yet become aware of and to find out about something new that has been discovered recently. I think reading good books will help you identify yourselves as global citizens. We have selected 100 books that we recommend you to read: 100 recommended books for Aoyama High School Students, including novels by Murakami Haruki, and Franz Kafka, as well as books on mathematics, science, world history, and the English language. I do hope you read some of them, even though you will surely be very busy preparing for examinations.

And to the tenth and eleventh graders, I hope you read all of them before you graduate from Aoyama High School. Reading is very important for us to expand our intellectual capacities. And I hope you find a soul-shaking book — that is, the very book which might help you decide how you want to live in the future.

I have told you three things today; first, to contribute together to our cultural activities during the *Gaien-sai*, second, to be considerate toward others and help one another, and, finally, that reading is very, very important.

In closing my speech, I will tell you again what I often tell you at the beginning and the end of each trimester: Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. Work toward realizing your dreams.

Thank you very much.

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