

At the 80th Anniversary
To Celebrate the 81st Anniversary
On to the Next Decade

We could have celebrated the 80th anniversary last year if there had not been those surges in COVID-19 infections. We wouldn't have had to cancel or postpone curricular and extra-curricular educational activities during those 20 months. Especially significant were such traditional school events as the Gaien-sai Festival and the Sports Day. We wouldn't have been forced to take school lessons online at home for such a long time. I know it's useless for us to complain about how we have been suffering from this notorious infectious disease, which has taken the lives of 5 million people around the world. They say another surge of COVID-19 will surely come. But we have learned many things over those 20 months. I'm sure that we will overcome this pandemic in collaboration with one another. Yes, we will.

Looking back on the previous decade between the 70th and the 80th anniversaries, Toshikazu Koyama, our 21st principal, demonstrated strong leadership and succeeded in establishing Aoyama High School as one of the most selective Metropolitan high schools. That is, the number of students who went on to highly selective national and municipal universities increased steadily during his tenure. And I, the 22nd principal was at first at a loss as to how to maintain that state of excellence, but later realizing how highly motivated and expert the teachers were in their respective fields — and how excellent, honest, and kind-hearted the students were — I began to feel great joy in having the chance to work for this remarkable high school with its proud traditions. For the latter part of the previous decade, our graduates, your *sempai*, left excellent records of going on to highly selective universities. It's not going to these universities at which our school aims, however; it's guiding and encouraging our students so as to accomplish their aims. That's a highly selective high school in a true sense. That's Aoyama High School.

In serving as principal during the final four years of the decade between the 70th and the 80th anniversaries, I have striven to help accomplish certain goals for our school. I first strove to reform

our entrance examinations; I introduced new-style questions, bearing in mind university entrance examination reforms, and this resulted in a number of very positive outcomes: we were commended in newspapers for our foresight, which ignited renewed motivation in our teachers, and in a short period our own in-school examinations, as well, began to extensively employ new-style questions — description-type questions that required intellectual strength, judgment, and powers of expression and which incorporated materials that students would be seeing for the first time. The motto “Striving for good questions improves teaching competence” has become established. In the last two academic years, the number of graduates who passed the entrance examinations for highly selective national and municipal universities has increased to 40, and our target of 42 is now within reach.

Another issue I had to deal with after assuming my post was the repair and improvement of our buildings and their facilities. A budget of three hundred million yen over the last five years has made it possible to install a new air conditioning system in all fifth-floor classrooms and in the gym, to repair the training room and other rooms in the gym, to improve our ICT capacity, to renew our website, to make use of SNSs for public-relations purposes, to replace all the Japanese-style toilets with Western-style ones, to repair the swimming pool, and to install LED lights in the gym and in the swimming pool dome. What remain are repairs and improvements to our athletic field.

The Jingu-Gaien area is slated to be transfigured over the next ten years. A new rugby field is to be constructed next to the National Stadium, a new Jingu ballpark complex, including a hotel from whose rooms games can be watched, is to be built at the site of the present rugby field, and a forty-story business complex is to be built diagonally opposite Aoyama High School. The present Jingu ballpark is to be demolished and the site converted into an open-lawn park. That will be the time at which our present main building should be replaced. I have a dream that the Metropolitan Board of Education will decide to utilize a PFI to replace it with a thirty-story high skyscraper that incorporates a large multi-purpose hall, gyms, and indoor swimming pools, along with

a limited number of commercial facilities and business offices. That would make it possible for our students to study in a secure environment and to decrease the damage and injuries that might result from a natural disaster. This sort of approach would be most suitable for a school which, like ours, is located in the center of a major metropolitan area.

Despite all the difficulties which must surely still lie ahead, I believe it will be possible to maintain the high Aoyama High School standards while creating valuable new traditions for the future, and it is my most fervent hope that we do just that.

I thank you all, Mr. Goto, the President of the Gaien-kai, the Alumni Association, Ms. Tsunawaki, the President of the PTA, my fellow proud teachers, and Mr. Takimoto, the former Deputy-Principal and now the principal of Mukogaoka High School, our students, and their guardians. Thank you again. And let's move forward on to the next decade. Ad alta!

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