

Everyone, I would like to talk about two things at the end of the second trimester, 2021.

First, I would like to express my sympathies to the families and loved ones of those who have died due to COVID-19. The outbreak of the novel coronavirus has concerned all of us during these past 21 months. We have seen very many people worldwide infected with COVID-19—and more than five million deaths due to it. The number of the infections and deaths has continued to rise. Fear of this pandemic has spread all over the world, negatively impacting global transportation and the economy. As you know, we have been through a fifth outbreak of COVID-19, more than 18,000 Japanese have died, and the spread has not been kept under control, especially in Europe, North and South America, and Africa. The current situation could still lead to “over-shooting,” a worldwide explosive surge in infections. In our country, we might experience a new surge of infections due to the Omicron variant, a new mutant strain of coronavirus. It is still unclear when and how the spread of this coronavirus will cease, even after about 77% of Japanese have received full vaccinations. And booster vaccinations have already started. Who knows if we might need four vaccinations or even more? We need to protect ourselves medically. It is very important for all of us—you and your families, my fellow teachers and myself—not to get infected with COVID-19. It is also important for us to be wise enough to avoid any discrimination and prejudice regarding the disease.

Second, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has recognized three scientists for work that is fundamental to our understanding of climate change. The judges awarded Dr. Syukuro Manabe, who was born in Japan, and two other scientists the Nobel Prize in Physics. Their research predicted global warming and how human activity impacts it. Dr. Manabe pioneered research into climate change. He demonstrated how carbon dioxide in the atmosphere contributes to global warming. He sounded an alarm on how people help to drive it.

At a press conference at Princeton University, he answered questions from reporters; one of which and his answer were very impressive.

The question: Can you tell me what is the main reason for you to change your nationality from Japan to the United States? Why did you change your nationality?

Dr. Manabe answered: That’s interesting question, but in Japan people always worry about not to disturb each other. You know,

they have a very harmonious relationship. And this is one of the important reasons why Japanese people get along so well with each other. You know, they keep thinking other people, don't do something which disturb other people. In the U.S., in Japan, if you ask some questions you get answer "Yes", or "No". When Japanese say "Yes", it does not necessarily mean "Yes", it could be "No". Because they don't want to hurt other people's feeling much more than anything else. And so, you don't want to do anything which is disturbing to other people. And U.S. I can do things that I want like. I don't worry too much about what other people feel. Because as a matter of fact, I don't want to hurt other people's feeling, but I'm not observing enough other people to figure out what they think. I found living in the U.S is wonderful! And probably research scientists like me, I can do whatever I please in my research. My boss was generous enough to let me do anything I want to do. And he, as a matter of fact, he got all computer expenditure. I never wrote single research proposal in my life. So I got all computer I want to use, and do whatever I pleases. So that is one reason why I don't want to go back to Japan, because I'm not capable of living harmoniously.

What do you think of his answer, everyone? His answer was sincere and even very humorous, however, the content of it made me feel sad. The outflow of human resources is a big problem for the future of our country because they are treasures for us in Japan, which has little in natural resources. I think we should change our society to one in which excellent human resources would decide to do their research in Japan.

Today I have talked about two things: first, we have been suffering from the surges of COVID-19 and we have to protect ourselves, and, second, Dr. Manabe received the Nobel Prize in Physics and commented the outflow of human resources from Japan.

And one more thing, to twelfth graders, there are just 22 days to go before the New University Examination, and you need to concentrate on your studies more than ever. Do what you can do today for the sake of your own futures. After the examination, your focus will shift to the secondary examinations for individual universities. You will have plenty of time, almost forty days, before taking them. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. I am sure that you will be able to make it. *Ad alta!* Aim high!

Now, to everyone, you may at times feel in low spirits. There will surely be hardships and, perhaps, bitter experiences, especially during those surges of the novel coronavirus. When it is hard striving to solve your problems all by yourselves, please don't

hesitate to talk to your teachers, or to the School Counselor, or to me.

In closing my speech, I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. I do hope the year 2022 will surely be a more peaceful one for people all over the world.

Thank you very much.

961 words

*the quoted matter has been transcribed exactly as found in the source text