

We have seen the old year out. We have welcomed in the New Year, 2022, Reiwa 4. It is the 82nd year of our school.

During this winter vacation, you have been busy doing many things, especially the twelfth graders, who are preparing for the Common Test for University Admissions. Even so, I hope you had enough time for enjoying good food and having a good time with your friends and families. We have been forced to accept so called new ways of living due to surges in COVID-19 infections. Be patient. Please concentrate on your studies a bit longer.

Everyone, I would like to talk about two things today at the starting point of the third trimester.

First, in an age of uncertainty, it is essential for everyone to keep on learning. I want you to be life-long learners. What you learn at school may be outdated within a decade or so. That's why recurrent education is regarded as being very important. I hope you will continue to learn, with high aims of making our society better through your lives. I don't think it is right that you stop learning after graduating from a high school or university. Learning always offers sufficient satisfaction to your curiosity and may help you change your lives for the better, and our society for the better. I hope you will be able to have fun learning new things. You should accept as many new things as you can. Don't shun them. I hope you will always enjoy changes. You may have many more chances to leave your marks and achievements in this age of uncertainty than might be possible in an age of an unchanging society. I do hope you will come to make important contributions to our society.

Second, and last, the Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held soon. The US, a number of European countries, and Australia have already decided not to send a diplomatic staff to China, since this Asian giant has been violating the human rights of people in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. The Beijing government has received worldwide condemnation for subjecting people of the Uyghur ethnic group to confinement in internment camps, torture, forced labor, and forced abortions and sterilization, as well as for forcing Uyghurs to swear allegiance to the Communist Party of China. There has been a serious conflict between China and the US and its allies. Xi Jinping, who has been aiming to be the leader of the Communist Party for three consecutive terms, doesn't want foreign governments to make claims about human rights violations in his country. He seems to be quite confident about being able to persuade his people to believe him, but seems not be comfortable with a situation in which he has to hold the Olympic Games without presence of foreign diplomats from the US

and other countries. He insists that such a thing is only a minor problem, but his political enemies might make use of it as a result of political errors made by him. We had to hold the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games without ordinary audiences. I hope that the winter Olympic Games in China will be successful without major influences from COVID-19. But I wonder where this Asian giant is headed and am afraid that some drastic political changes might happen in the near future. What do you think, everyone?

Today I have spoken about two things: first, that you should become life-long learners, and, second, that the conflict between China and the US and its allies might influence the Beijing Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games.

One last thing to the twelfth graders, who are going to take the Common Test for University Admissions within a week. Believe in yourselves. I'm sure you will be able to make it. Don't be afraid to set high goals for yourselves. The possibilities for you are infinite. Aim high!

In closing my speech, as I have told you many times, I hope all of you are gentle and kind to one another, not ignoring your friends, and not speaking ill of them. Every student deserves respect. And as I have told you many times, it takes only a moment to destroy a good relationship, but it takes very long time to become reconciled with one another. Help each other. Respect your friends. And work together toward achieving your dreams. There is always hope to be found in the hardships of life. Ad alta!

Thank you very much.

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