

## 2022 Entrance Ceremony

### Congratulatory Speech

Kohei Itoh

President of Keio University

To our new Keio students, parents, and guardians. Welcome to Keio Gijuku, and welcome to Keio Academy of New York. I am delighted and privileged to represent the faculty and staff to speak to you today.

Founded in 1858, Keio Gijuku is Japan's first modern institution of higher learning and continues to be one of the most influential academic establishments in Japan. In 1896, approximately 40 years since its founding, Fukuzawa Yukichi, made a speech to the Keio community, a part of which has been recognized as the mission of Keio Gijuku. In Japanese, it reads,

慶應義塾は単に一所の学塾として自から甘んずるを得ず。其目的は我日本国中に於ける気品の泉源、智徳の模範たらんことを期し、之を實際にしては居家、処世、立国の本旨を明にして、之を口に言ふのみにあらず、躬行実践、以て全社会の先導者たらんことを欲するものなり

In English, it reads,

Keio University is not merely a place for academic pursuit. Its mission is to be a constant source of honorable character and a paragon of intellect and morals for the entire nation and for each member to apply this spirit to elucidate the essence of family, society, and nation. They will not only articulate this essence in words,

but also demonstrate it in their actions, and by so doing make Keio a leader of society.

This speech was delivered by Fukuzawa 127 years ago amid Japanese society's transformation from the feudal system to a liberal democracy in the Meiji period. His words continue to remind us of our mission to act as responsible citizens. We value the sense of independence and self-respect, 独立自主, in which we think for ourselves and respect the dignity of others. We study hard and make full use of our imagination and creativity for the betterment of the global society.

So, for you to make the most out of your Keio life that begins today, I would like to make the following three suggestions.

My first suggestion to you is the following; always be willing to try something new. Fukuzawa Yukichi has taught us that if we choose to merely pursue our own happiness and remain satisfied with the present situation, a society of self-interest is all that lies in store. Try something new, with an awareness that you are leading the way for others. As you take on new challenges, let your learning guide you. Oftentimes, new endeavors do not go as planned. But fear of failure will only allow us to preserve the current state. This will consequently represent a step backward for society. I suggest that you always embrace challenges throughout your life, working hard to acquire necessary insights. Make the best of your opportunity here at Keio Academy of New York, to begin a "virtuous cycle" where new knowledge leads on to ever more fresh challenges.

Embarking on a new endeavor is easier than you might think. Try first by pushing yourself just a little bit further than usual. It is similar to standing on tiptoe to

reach for something slightly higher. By this, I am not referring to your assigned day-to-day studies and extra-curricular activities. Those are important skills you will need to acquire to grow and improve, something similar to your physical growth in height. But in addition to this, what you need is your own will to “stand on tiptoe”, in other words, to aim higher. Standing tall on your tiptoes is quite easy to do. Every day, exert yourself by saying, "I'll try this today," or "I'll improve on this today." Putting that kind of habit in place will naturally lead you to take on greater challenges.

The second suggestion, and perhaps the most important, is to strive to become an inspiring leader; one I choose to call a “luminary”. Creating a better future (Improving society) cannot be done alone. Many things can be accomplished together that none of us can accomplish alone. What we need is the kind of leader who can instill confidence and motivate those around them to take on new challenges; a reliable partner whom others will feel they can work with to create a thriving family, school, company, community, country, and world. Now, take a moment to look at your classmates on both sides of you. I’m sure they are the kind of peers you will want to work with; always positive and sensibly optimistic, striving to live a life with integrity and high aspirations. Even in the most ordinary situations, an inspiring leader is the kind of person who is lively and uplifting. This manner is the key to gaining the trust of others. The significance is universal and transcends ethnic and linguistic barriers. It is the prerequisite to becoming a true global citizen. So, strive to become a luminary, someone that many others will want to work and cooperate with; someone with the ability to inspire others and engage society. This is the ethos to which Keio Academy aspires and the kind of inspiring leadership I envision.

The third element I would suggest to you is that you make your way in the world

and seek to broaden your horizons. Knowledge and experience of the wider world will allow you to perceive the influence your personal decisions and actions will have on society at large. Keio Academy of New York offers a unique environment of bi-lingual learning, in a tri-cultural setting where the cultures of Keio, Japan, and the United States merge. Here, at the Academy, we place great value on diversity. As you share long hours at school and in the dormitories, we hope you will be supportive and compassionate of each other's endeavors. When you live and learn together in a community, you motivate and grow together too. It takes a certain amount of courage and effort to persevere and work towards highly set goals. Please respect and celebrate each other's diversity.

Today, I have put forward three suggestions. Make an effort each day to stretch yourself one step further or reach just a little bit higher, behave in a trustworthy manner befitting of an inspiring leader, and lay the groundwork for global engagement, always maintaining your sense of independence and self-respect. My heartfelt congratulations to you all as you embark on your new journey. Thank you.