

Koshin Yokoyama

Class of 2026

How to achieve my "Bunbu Souzen(文武双全)"

The phrase "Bunbu Souzen" is not just a few words used to describe students who are outstanding in both academics and sports, but is a timeless ideal deeply rooted in Keio's philosophy. "Bunbu Souzen" describes a mutually beneficial relationship between academics and athletics, not as opposing forces, but one that enhances the other. There is a very similar phrase, "Bunbu Ryodo" which describes a harmonious balance between both academics and athletics. However, this view indirectly contradicts Keio's beliefs, as "Bunbu Ryodo" describes two paths that students should aim for, but does not show a direct correlation between the two. If "Bunbu Ryodo" is described as "two separate wheels connected by an axle", then "Bunbu Souzen" is a perfect Katana. A katana is a long, single-edged sword accompanied by a long and strong grip used by Japanese samurai. Just like the idea of "Bunbu Souzen", a katana's blade is sharp in intellect, and its grip is strong and resilient, just like an athlete's body. Without one or the other, the Katana would not be able to express its maximum potential. As a student who has lived and breathed this principle, I have strived to be a well-rounded student of this community and developed several skills. For example, discipline, curiosity, and resilience to establish my version of "Bunbu Souzen".

As stated on Keio's Athletic website*, "Bunbu Souzen" is a way of life that reflects the principles and philosophy of Fukuzawa Yukichi sensei. Fukuzawa sensei primarily emphasizes comprehensive and varied education, as evident at Keio Academy of New York. The school encourages students to perform in varsity programs and extracurricular activities while pursuing rigorous academic studies. Keio's holistic and educated approach nurtures leaders who have discipline, think critically, and live life to the fullest. In order to cultivate

my “Bunbu Souzen”, I have established my personal goals and, to put it simply, “what I want to accomplish at this school”. Over the 3 years I have spent at this school, I believe my “Bunbu Souzen”, or my Katana, has been forged.

First of all, the sharpness of my Katana. For me, the word academic intelligence could have various meanings. Academic intelligence is not just letters and percentages on a piece of paper, but it contains the ability to verbalize complex thoughts and unique ideas to the world around you. Before my time at Keio, I barely interacted with Japanese culture, let alone the idea of “Bunbu Souzen”. First, I was struggling to communicate and connect with my community as I was not proficient in Japanese. However, by striving for academic excellence, I have steadily improved my Japanese language skills and can express my thoughts and feelings without any struggles. Through Keio’s multicultural community, I was able to bridge the gap between Japanese and English cultures. Academic excellence is also a form of discipline and being consistent. To receive a high score on a test or an exam is astounding, but to be consistent with that approach for a full academic year is a grind and is not at all easy. Consistency requires an established routine, a strict mindset, and the skill to mentally be resilient to challenges that might come your way. I have managed to be on the Headmaster’s Honor Roll through the entire year due to understanding the importance of these principles. However, with that being said, I could not do it alone. I used Keio’s diverse community to gain information through multiple perspectives while helping others do the same. Through these experiences, I was able to produce the results that I wanted, which ultimately sharpened my Katana.

Secondly, the base of the Katana, which is the strength of the steel, can not be forgotten. Athletics taught me many valuable lessons and morals that can not be learned through books. Physical discipline is not solely related to building your body, but building perseverance and mental strength. In Japanese Literature class, I studied a famous Japanese

author, Mishima Yukio. His philosophy was that strength training, such as going to the gym, is not just about muscles, but also about the mental mindset to keep pushing hard no matter what condition. His aesthetic sense stems from the strengthening of a beautiful body. While Keio's athletics is not just about going to the gym, Mishima Yukio's principles can be applied to the experiences of many in varsity or extracurricular activities. During my time at Keio, I was fortunate enough to be a part of the soccer varsity program for 3 straight years, and I could not be more proud. There were many hardships, as well as defeats, but that has never stopped me from playing the sport that I love. Thanks to soccer, I was able to establish relationships with friends, senpais, and kouhais, which I will never forget. During my 2nd year at Keio, the varsity program made it to the sectional finals up against an opponent we had never beaten. In the last minute of the game, our team scored the goal to make it 3-2 and win the most important game probably in our history. In that moment, the elation, excitement, and relief that I felt was a feeling like no other. That moment is something academics cannot solely give to you. athletics, similar to academics, require mental discipline and consistency, but is also about single moments. It is safe to say that I live for these moments. All the hard work and consistency are for moments of exhilaration, and that is what makes sports beautiful.

A crucial aspect of my "Bunbu Souzen" is discipline. In both academics and athletics, being consistent is a major idea that contributed heavily to my "Bunbu Souzen", and forced me to get my school life together and establish a routine. However, what I believe helped achieve my "Bunbu Souzen" the most is the concept of living life to the fullest. Focusing just on academics or just on athletics is possible, but in my opinion, will sooner or later bore me or cause a burnout. Giving your all in one aspect of life is respectable, but lacks variety. By pursuing intellectual and physical realms, one can better understand their identity and their passion, which better equips people to become members of society as we students progress to

university and beyond. “Bunbu Souzen” is not just a motto, but a lifestyle that embodies my ideals, and at the same time guides me throughout my career.

Sources:

Work Cited

*“ATHLETICS - Keio Academy.” *Keio Academy of New York*,
<https://www.keio.edu/varsity-sports>. Accessed 17 June 2025.