

## Ceremonial address at the entrance ceremony for the 21st class of students

On this fine day, with the fresh green of the trees and the beautiful flowers and grasses shining in the glorious spring sunlight, congratulations to all the new students who have been admitted to our school.

It is my great pleasure to welcome all the distinguished guests and parents here today to the 21st Entrance Ceremony of Hyogo Prefectural Ashiya International Secondary School. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of you.

Well, all of you new students, your life at the secondary school is finally about to begin. Many of you took the entrance examination, which was probably the first experience for you, and passed it with flying colors! And today, after all the necessary procedures have been completed, you have been admitted to the school. It is indeed a very happy event, and I believe that it will be a particularly significant milestone in the long course of your lives.

All 80 of you, have led different lives, but you all have one thing in common: you were born into this world a little more than ten years ago. I am sure it must have been a joy for your parents when they found out that your lives were conceived in your mothers' bellies. You grew up in your mothers' bellies with an overflow of love, your parents rubbing your belly and talking to you, and you celebrated your birthday. Even after birth, we human babies can never live on our own. Parents and guardians have put their care and nurturing above all other priorities, and some of you must have had to quit your jobs or change workplaces. I am sure that the parents who guided their children to enter middle school today must have gone through a lot of hard work.

There is nothing in this world for which we can be more grateful than the fact that we have been allowed to stand on this earthly stage. The "life" that you have been given, the "life" that you have nurtured...I urge you to reflect on this once again and express your gratitude to your parents and guardians at this new start, this major milestone in your lives today.

On February 28, at this same place, the 15th class graduated with pride and dignity. Many of the graduate have fulfilled their goals and are moving on to the next stage with great enthusiasm. The graduation ceremony will be held in about 2,000 days. How you spend these 2,000 days will make a big difference in the rest of your lives.

I believe that the "purpose of life" and "purpose of living" is "to be deeply grateful for the life we have been blessed with as human beings by our parents, to refine our souls and improve ourselves until the end of this life, and to strive to use the power we have acquired

to help the world and others.

In fact, our greatest joy and happiness is when we feel that our presence, our actions, and what we say and do are useful to the world and to others. We are created to help each other and live in a way that is helpful to others, and only then can we find happiness.

For the next 2,000 days, please do not lose sight of this "purpose of life" and use the energy you have left over to improve yourself. In order to do so, first of all, I ask that you experience the joy of learning and the happiness of being able to learn by acquiring a great deal of "knowledge" while experiencing the depth of learning and the wisdom of mankind through "classes".

In addition, "homeroom activities," "student council activities," "school events," and "club activities" are also very important. In various situations, you will build relationships with various people, cooperate with each other, sometimes clash with each other, be stimulated, and refine your skills, and strive to acquire "comprehensive human skills" in the spirit of the school motto, "Respect, Integration, Harmony, and Contribution.

At school, where many students gather, you may encounter stressful situations at times. I hope that you will have the ability to accept stress as "polishing sand" to improve yourselves, and that you will grow up to become adults at the age of 18, which you will reach while still in school, with high aspirations, both physically and mentally.

First and foremost, I hope that you will enjoy your school life. Your hidden abilities will flourish when you are willing to work on them and enjoy them. There is a limit to how much you can grow if you are only passively doing what you are told to do. Please take a big leap forward and break through without hesitation. The possibilities are endless. It is you, not anyone else, who sets the limits. Believe in yourself, free yourself from your limitations, and push through.

Of course, we will not tell you to go it alone. There are kind and reliable seniors, many passionate and loving teachers, and above all, by some miraculous chance, friends with whom you have a deep "karma" who have entered the school with you today. If you talk with your friends, recognize and encourage each other, and complement each other's efforts, there is absolutely nothing that you cannot break through.

Congratulations to all the parents and guardians. I am sure you must be filled with deep emotion to see your children's "fine appearance" as they have grown up so well. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all.

Today, we have received your precious children, the irreplaceable treasures of each family. All of us at Ashikoku will do our utmost to provide the best education possible so that in six years' time, they will be able to leave for their big dreams with their hearts full of energy and joy, and that you will say, "I am so glad I entered Ashikoku! We will do our best and, six years from now, we will leave with our hearts full of pride and responsibility as professional educators who make education their life's "profession".

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the guests and parents for attending today's ceremony and ask for your continued support and cooperation in the future.

April 10, 2023

Yoshinori Kawasaki, Principal of Ashiya International Secondary School, Hyogo Prefecture