

March 25 and 26, 2023

March 2023 Graduation Ceremony

Akira Mandai,
Executive Chairman of the Waseda University Alumni Association

Hello, everyone. I am Akira Mandai, Executive Chairman of the Waseda University Alumni Association (WUAA). I would like to offer my congratulations on behalf of the WUAA.

First, allow me to extend my congratulations to all of you graduating today. I would also like to congratulate your families who have supported you during this time.

Since 2020, we have faced a raging COVID-19 pandemic that has been spreading not only throughout Japan, but across the world. As a result, people's lives have been and remain seriously affected to this day.

All of you who are graduating today must have taken great pains to continue your student lives over the past three years. For these reasons, my heart is especially full to be celebrating and delivering my message on behalf of the Alumni Association to you today.

As you graduate, you will all become members of the WUAA, also referred to as "*Koyukai*." Let me take this opportunity to briefly explain more about this word. Waseda University calls its graduates "*koyu*," – "*Koyukai*" is the association of Waseda University alumni. The WUAA was established in 1885, soon after the first cohort of students graduated from Tokyo Senmon Gakko, which later became Waseda University. Since then, the WUAA has shared our alma mater's history and philosophy, with 2022 having marked the 137th anniversary of our founding. The missions of the WUAA are to support the University and our juniors who are current students at Waseda as well as to build friendship and a strong network among our alumni. The WUAA maintains our headquarters within the University. Our organization is headed by Waseda University President, Mr. Aiji Tanaka, and is managed by approximately 60 chairpersons. The WUAA provides between 200 and 300 million yen annually to support students, mostly in the form of scholarships, and also to finance various university activities.

During the pandemic, the WUAA called on its members to donate to the COVID-19 Student Emergency Assistance Fund. In response, alumni from all over Japan and many from abroad showed their generosity in donating more than 800 million yen over the course of a year. This money was used to provide financial assistance to current students.

The University currently has about 670,000 alumni. There are at least 1,400 alumni association chapters, known as "*Tomonkai*," across Japan and overseas. Some of these chapters are organized according to the alumni's graduation year or occupation. Waseda University takes great pride in its

670,000 alumni. Not only are Waseda alumni businesspeople and corporate executives, they are also prime ministers, community leaders, lawmakers, statesmen, legal professionals, artists, physicians, journalists, and so on. Our alumni are active in every field and sector both in Japan and around the world. We are truly a diverse group.

The Alumni Association has inherited a great tradition, and we hope to continue to stand alongside Waseda University, a place we consider our home, with many of you as our members, as we carry on the spirit of these important words: “To the world together, toward the future together.”

Those of you graduating from Waseda University today are facing a situation that no one has ever experienced before: a future without answers. At present, the world is not only fighting the coronavirus, but we are also in a time of major political, economic, social change and safety guarantee as well as great uncertainty. However, it is precisely because we live in such an era that we need individuals who can take on new challenges and be innovative, without being hampered by any preconceived ideas. Waseda University graduates are exactly such individuals. They are active in their local communities while also working on the world stage as global leaders .

As you begin your journey, you may experience joyful and happy moments but also great difficulties that may cause pain and sadness. Nevertheless, you are headed toward a bright future. Please apply the intellectual resilience and flexible sensitivity that you have developed at Waseda University. Take pride in the fact that you have studied here and demonstrate an enterprising spirit as you venture out into wider society. I urge you to move and inspire people wherever you go in Japan, no, wherever you go in the world, and become someone capable of making a significant global contribution.

Even after you graduate and leave the Waseda nest, the University’s spirit will be embedded in your DNA. The 670,000 alumni who have graduated from Waseda and who are active all over the world, are of one mind. The WUAA welcomes you wherever you are, as our network extends throughout Japan and into a variety of countries and regions worldwide. As you begin your career, feel free to utilize the resources that the WUAA has to offer.

Lastly, please remember that your alma mater and fellow alumni will always be by your side cheering you on. We hope that, in the future, you will be the ones warmly supporting and cheering for Waseda’s students of tomorrow.

The WUAA’s slogan is: “To the world together, toward the future together.” In that spirit, please take a leap, spread your wings, and soar high as you take on the world and step into the future.

Again, congratulations!

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