

September 20, 2025

September 2025 Graduation Ceremony Congratulatory Address

Hello everyone! I am Akira Mandai, Executive Chairman of the Waseda University Alumni Association. On behalf of the Association, I would like to offer you our congratulations.

To all of you who are graduating today, as well as to your families who have supported you up to the present, congratulations on this accomplishment! Well done!

In September 2021, when many of you enrolled here at Waseda, we were all still dealing with the difficulties of the COVID-19 pandemic. Even as social activities gradually returned to normal, I imagine that many of you continued to face challenges in your student life, both academically and in extracurricular activities. So, you must be feeling extremely pleased to have made it here today for your graduation ceremony. It is for this reason that I feel especially happy to be here to join you in this celebration and to deliver a message on behalf of the Alumni Association.

Now that you have graduated, all of you will automatically become alumni of Waseda University and members of the Alumni Association. Please let me take this opportunity to briefly explain what the Waseda University Alumni Association is about. At Waseda University, we call our graduates “*koyu*,” and the Waseda University Alumni Association, also referred to as “*Koyukai*,” is an alumni organization composed of graduates of this university.

The Waseda University Alumni Association was founded in 1885. The predecessor of Waseda University, *Tokyo Senmon Gakko*, was established in 1882. It produced its first class of 11 graduates in 1884, with a further 67 students graduating in 1885. The Alumni Association was launched on December 13, 1885, at a gathering held at the *Fujimiken* restaurant in Tokyo’s Kojimachi Ward. The meeting was attended by over 50 university officials and graduates, including Sanae Takata, one of the founders of the Association. Afterwards, *Tokyo Senmon Gakko* was renamed Waseda University. Since then, we have stood side by side with Waseda University on its long journey, sharing in all its triumphs and difficulties to the present day. Though it began with just several dozen alumni, the Waseda University Alumni

Association now boasts 690,000 members, making it one of Japan's leading alumni organizations. This December will mark its 140th anniversary.

The Alumni Association's essential purpose is to support Waseda University and the current students who are following in our footsteps, as well as to foster personal connections and friendships among alumni. Currently, the Association is headquartered within the university campus and officially headed by Waseda University President Aiji Tanaka. The affairs of the Association are run largely by a secretariat of approximately 60 people. Every year, we provide 200 to 300 million yen to support Waseda University. A large part of this goes toward scholarships for current students, but various other kinds of financial support are also provided.

There are also around 1,400 Alumni Association chapters, known as "*Tomonkai*." These include local chapters around Japan, chapters based on year of graduation and profession, and even overseas chapters. All are actively engaged in activities. Waseda is proud of the power of its 690,000 alumni. In Japan and around the world, Waseda alumni actively contribute to society in a vast range of fields, as entrepreneurs, business leaders, Prime Ministers, local community leaders, politicians, bureaucrats, legal professionals, athletes, writers, artists, doctors, media figures, and more. This diversity of Waseda alumni is a source of inspiration and pride for the university.

In the past, the Alumni Association tended to be seen as a male-dominated organization. However, reflecting the great diversity of today's graduates, it has changed significantly in recent years. It strives to create an environment in which all alumni can feel comfortable and secure participating, regardless of gender, disability, nationality, or other factors. Respect for diversity is one of the values that the Alumni Association holds highest.

I understand that many international students are with us at today's graduation ceremony. The Waseda University Alumni Association warmly welcomes you all. The diversity of the Association, which includes graduates from many different countries, is a strength, so we are honored by your presence. Now that you are alumni of Japan's most international university, we sincerely hope that you will consider taking on a role within the Association to serve as a bridge between Waseda and the world. The different cultures and perspectives that you offer can make a positive impact in the international community. As

you pursue your careers in various parts of the world, we hope that you will shine brightly with a heart full of the intelligence and sensibility that you cultivated here at Waseda.

At the Alumni Association, we are committed to continuing this journey hand in hand with “Waseda, home of the heart.” Our doors are open to alumni from all walks of life, so we look forward to your participation.

Finally, as you embark on your careers in the real world, we urge you to take advantage of the Waseda University Alumni Association. It is a treasure trove of talented people and extensive networks.

Remember that you can join *Tomonkai* alumni chapters, not only throughout Japan but also around the world. There are chapters for specific industries and for every year of graduation. Contact information for alumni chapters is available on the Alumni Association website. We encourage you to get in touch with your local chapter and join our community. I sincerely hope that over time you will even become strong supporters and cheerleaders of current Waseda students.

The motto of the Waseda University Alumni Association is “To the world together, toward the future together.” May all of you, who are graduating today, fly out confidently into the world and into the future!

I very much look forward to meeting you all again in five years, when you will be invited to return to the university for the Homecoming Day.

Welcome to the Waseda University Alumni Association! And once again, congratulations on your graduation!