

Congratulations on your graduation. My name is Masao Torii, President of Sophia-kai, the Sophia Alumni Association. It is a pleasure to welcome all of you to Sophia-kai, of which you are all.

members starting today. I am very happy to be here in person on behalf of Sophia-kai to extend my words of congratulations on your achievement of this great milestone – graduation.

I myself studied at the Faculty of Foreign Studies at Sophia University over 50 years ago, perhaps before your parents were born. I still clearly recall the excitement that I felt when I was successfully admitted to Sophia University, the school that I had admired since high school, and I remember taking a commemorative picture in front of the school gate. I joined ESS (English Speaking Society), where I met Fr. Forbes, an American professor who supervised the club and taught in the Department of English Studies. Watching Fr. Forbes dedicate all his time to his students, I was inspired to become the type of person who is devoted to others. With this determination, I have sought to live as a member of society who can practice the spirit of Sophia, “For Others, with Others.” I am sincerely grateful to Sophia University for offering me the opportunity to mature as a human being.

Now as we look across the world, the global situation is changing rapidly. Politics remains in turmoil, society is becoming more divided, the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East show no signs of ending, natural disasters caused by climate change are increasing, and the future is extremely unstable and uncertain. Furthermore, when we look at Japan, our global status has dropped, its future is uncertain, and it lags behind the world’s digital leaders, to name only a few of its challenges.

In order for Japan not to be left behind in globalization trends and in order to build a sustainable global society, the leadership of young people like you is the key to success. I sincerely hope that you will harness what you learned at Sophia in society and contribute to realizing a sustainable society.

Today, the world is changing at a very fast pace. The advancement of AI technologies has transformed our daily lives drastically. The way we work, learn and communicate will be fundamentally changed. Therefore, I would like to request three things of you:

First, please be tremendously curious. Please expand your scope of interest and be prepared for any change that may occur. By constantly exposing yourself to new information and ideas, you

can achieve growth. Second, have an appetite for learning. When you find something that you would like to study, pursue it immediately. If you leave it for another day, you will find yourself even more busy and left with no time for it. There is no end to learning. Third, step out of Japan. If it is difficult for you to spend one or two years abroad, spending three months or even one month overseas and exposing yourself to different cultures will allow you to expand your views and reflect upon yourself. It will give you insight on how to how to improve Japan.

Please be sure to act on the three items that I just requested: with a passionate curiosity, learn eagerly, and go abroad.

Finally, I would like to introduce Sophia-kai. Sophia-kai is Sophia University's alumni association, connecting alumni with other alumni and with the university. The two important pillars of our activities are "to contribute to the development of the university and support students" and "to deepen ties among alumni." Upon graduation from Sophia University, you will automatically become a member of Sophia-kai. Many faculties and departments also have alumni groups, so please be sure to register your contact information today, using your smartphone or on your computer, and become an active member of the Sophian network. You will receive a souvenir from Sophia-kai today at your departmental gathering. The Sophians' Club is located on the sixth floor of Bldg. No. 6. You are welcome to use it to meet friends or for gatherings. Please come by if you have time today.

Again, congratulations.

March 24, 2025

Masao Torii

President of Sophia Alumni Association