

## **Akio Toyota's Speech at the Toyota Technical Skills Academy Graduation Ceremony on February 18, 2021**

Congratulations on your graduation to all new graduates and their families.

The view from this stage is unlike any other graduation ceremony we've ever had, but some things never change, and in fact, other things have become stronger... like the shine in your eyes and the desire of your families for your continued growth.

The spread of COVID-19 has drastically changed all our lives. And student life was no exception.

Your daily lives, including events and extracurricular activities, were severely restricted, and you were unable to train in the same way as in the past.

However, you all thought hard about what you could do under the current circumstances and took action.

When masks were in short supply, you donated the ones provided by Toyota to local medical institutions, and handmade your own masks.

While struggling with unfamiliar needlework, in the spirit of Toyota, you refined your *monozukuri* skills, paying attention to cost and quality.

Parks and roads have always been maintained by the community.

But after realizing that elderly people couldn't do such work due to the risk of COVID-19, you, the young generation, took matters into your own hands, and covered in sweat, cleared away the overgrowth.

I'm sure missing the opportunity to create something at the *genba* during the factory training was frustrating for you.

When production restarted, you worked tirelessly to deliver products to our customers as quickly as possible.

I think everyone here realized that nothing can be taken for granted, and nothing happens without someone's hard effort.

More than anything, you must have realized the feeling of gratitude to your families who have supported you every step of the way.

To all family members,

I'm sure you would've wanted to see your proud children in person.

Rest assured. I can see right in front of me the determination in their eyes, looking straight at the future.

No matter how much they wanted to, they couldn't see their families... they couldn't do the usual training like before.

The graduates have attained the strength to overcome such unprecedented hardships, and kindness towards one another.

They learned both these lessons, and grew. I no longer see the timidness that I saw at the entrance ceremony.

Thank you very much for entrusting your precious children to us.

Moving forward, I will do my utmost to support them to grow strong in mind, body and spirit as they become invaluable assets to Toyota.

Last year, we presented the "Toyota Philosophy," explaining what is Toyota, and defined "Producing Happiness For All" as our mission.

You must be strong and kind to bring happiness to others.

New graduates of Toyota Technical Skills Academy, please be people who show a lot of strength and kindness. Do your very best to bring smiles and happiness to many people.

I believe that all of you can achieve that.

I would like to conclude by asking for your continued support, and once again... congratulations to you all!

END