



Farewell to Yokohama Hayato High School, 2016 ○○○○ (3-A) (国際語科3年生 答辞)

On behalf of all the graduates of the International Language Course of Yokohama Hayato High School, I, Luna Togawa would like to convey my deepest gratitude to our parents and teachers for the precious experiences we have had over the past three years.

When I entered Yokohama Hayato High School three years ago, I was so excited about studying English here in the International Language Course, or ILC. But at the same time I was a little afraid whether I could get along with my classmates and the teachers. Contrary to my worries, all the teachers and students were very nice and I felt really comfortable. Moreover, I have become more active, and started to welcome any challenges.

During the past three years at Hayato, I participated in various kinds of activities. The school trip to America was one of the most influential events and everybody was motivated to study English more. Through interacting with American high school students, we could feel that America is a multicultural country as everyone has various backgrounds. We also learned about incomprehensible results of religious and racial conflicts at the 9.11 memorial and the Holocaust Museum. Another activity I enjoyed was volunteering. I have been interested in such activities since I was an elementary school student. It was lucky for me to become an ILC student because there were a lot of opportunities to participate in volunteer work.

Last of all, the ILC activities that changed me the most were the inside and outside school speech contests. I participated in the Hayato Speech Contest when I was a first year student, but my performance was terrible. I stumbled so many times. I forgot the lines. In my second year, I wanted to try an outside-school contest. I asked my teachers to recommend contests that were suitable to my ability. All of them agreed that I should try the Churchill Cup - one of the most competitive contests. I felt it was totally beyond me, but the teachers said, "There is no limit in your ability as long as you want to do it. All you have to do is go for it." I was really surprised when I won a prize in the East-Japan Division of the contest and went to the All Japan final. The whole process of participating in the contests was very strenuous - coming up with a topic, writing the speech, memorizing it, then making a speech in front of a huge audience. Through this experience, I am sure I have become more confident in myself.

I should never forget that with the help of the teachers, I could have these precious experiences. The Hayato ILC teachers believe in us, find our potential, encourage us, and support us to take up challenging tasks. Their heart-warming efforts helped lead me to my success in many ways.

When I became a senior, I still couldn't decide what university I wanted to enter. My homeroom teacher suggested that I choose one university that I had never considered because I thought it was too high for me. I was reluctant to follow her advice but she said, "Don't think your capacity is limited. You can make it if you really want to." Her words encouraged me a lot and I started working on the entrance exam keeping her words in mind. In November last year I passed the entrance exam and was accepted into that university.

Above all, I am the luckiest person to have met all of my friends in the International Language Course. I will never forget working with them for these three years - the most important period of time in my life. We had only two homeroom classes so we felt really close to each other. We laughed, cried, and argued. Every single moment with them is my priceless treasure. They helped me, supported me and cared for me just like my own family.

Finally I want to say this to my parents. Mother and father, thank you so much for letting me go to Yokohama Hayato High School. Now I can proudly say it was the right decision.

Now it's time to say good bye to our teachers and classmates. Though we are graduating from Hayato, all of the memories we've made will live forever in our hearts. With the knowledge and wisdom we've gained from our experiences in these three years, I'm sure we have become people who can be "needed and trusted by others" as our school motto says.

March 1st, 2016

