

## Celebratory Speech

As we celebrate The Twenty-Year-Old Ceremony today with a glorious start to the new year, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all.

After the Taika Reform, this city was the first to have the National Government in Hokuriku Region and has flourished into the center of politics, economy and culture.

Echizen is home to world-class authentic craftsmanship, such as Echizen washi paper, Echizen forged knives and Echizen chests, also in the surrounding area, Echizen lacquerware and Echizen pottery. The technology that was brought over from the continent in ancient times, combined with abundant natural resources such as clean water and fertile soil, took root in this area, and is now leading to the development of cutting-edge industries. I believe this is also due to the large number of talented people living here. I am sure that the strength, dedication, and hard work that have protected our traditions for so long will be passed on to you, who will become the next responsible generation.

In addition, more and more visitors from Tokyo and the Chukyo Region have been increasing since the awareness of our city was boosted by the extension of the Hokuriku Shinkansen within the prefecture, the opening of Echizen Takefu Station, as well as the opening of Itagakizaka Bypass on National Route 417, and the broadcast of the historical drama, "Dear Radiance".

As you all turn twenty, our city is also about to undergo major changes to prepare for a new era. As we look to the future, we would like to support the dreams and hopes of each of you by creating a stage where you can freely take on new challenges and demonstrate your abilities, thereby expanding your possibilities.

Let's work together to make Echizen a city where people want to live and visit, a city where all citizens feel pride, love, and a desire to stay, a city to which people want to return even after leaving to study or for work.

In closing, I wish all of you good luck for your bright future filled with dreams and hopes and would like to conclude my congratulations by wishing your continued success and happiness.

January 12, 2025

Echizen City Mayor      Kenichi Yamada

## Celebratory Speech

Echizen City Council Chairperson

Kenichi Okubo

Congratulations to all of you who have reached the age of 20. I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to you all and to your families who have watched over you with loving kindness as you grew up in good health both physically and mentally and have reached this day.

Last July, the banknotes issued in 2004, the year you were all born, were given a new design for the first time in 20 years. The portrait chosen for the 5000yen note is of Umeko Tsuda, who was the first Japanese female student to study in the United States and who established a scholarship system, founded the Joshi Eigaku Juku(now Tsuda University) and laid the foundation for women's education.

Umeko once said," It is easy to start something, but difficult to continue it, and even more difficult to succeed." I believe that these words truly express the truth of life. As you enter your twenties, I hope you will continue pursuing your interests and walking a path with purpose. On the way life, you will face various choices and decisions you must make. However, I hope that you will never give up and accomplish your dreams and goals with your flexible and innovative imagination and energetic drive while accumulating various experiences.

Today, as we celebrate The Twenty-Year-Old Ceremony, I hope you will take this opportunity to think about your hometown, your family and your future.

In closing, I would like to conclude my congratulatory speech by hoping that each of you will go forth with self-awareness and pride that is expected of you as a member of our society.

## Celebratory Speech

Congratulations to everyone participating in The Twenty-Year-Old Ceremony. On behalf of the Echizen City Board of Education, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on this memorable occasion.

We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to all our guests for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend this ceremony.

I understand that today's ceremony was planned by the Executive Committee, comprised of those who are turning 20 just like you, and that they worked hard to make this ceremony a memorable one. I express my deepest respect to you.

Now, everyone, are you aware that in recent years we have been referred to as living in the "VUCA era?" This refers to an era in which the world is changing rapidly due to new technologies such as ICT and AI, industries, natural disasters, and other factors, making it difficult to predict the future. Looking back on the COVID-19 pandemic that had lasted for about 3 years, we realize that our normal lives have changed dramatically, and I believe that this expression is exactly right. There may have been many such situations in history. However, it is young people like you who are the driving force that will overcome the times, create new movements, and pioneer the future.

Microsoft, which made personal computers a part of our daily lives, was founded by Bill Gates when he was 19, while Apple, which created the iPhone, was founded by 21-year-old Steve Jobs.

Soichiro Honda, who made the world's best car and founded "the World HONDA", became independent at the age of 22. In the field of manga, Eiichiro Oda created "ONE PIECE" when he was 22 as well. At the age of 25, Akira Toriyama created "Dr. Slump", and later went on to create the series "Dragon Ball". "Dragon Ball" has been admired all over the world and has shown the wonder of Japan.

In July 2024, new banknotes started releasing for the first time in 20 years. Eiichi Shibusawa, who is the model for the 10,000 yen note, served the last shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, at the age of 24, and later founded many companies that still exist today.

What all those great people have in common is that they made decisions and started to take action when they were young. They probably made many mistakes. However, the younger you start the more time you will have even you fail. In the VUCA era in which you live, you also need the power to go forth without being afraid of failure. Like the theme of The Twenty-Year-Old Ceremony of this year, "Go Forth!!~Team 20~", I hope you will make use of your greatest asset: your "youthful energy". And as you take on various challenges, I hope you lean on your friends if it is impossible to do it by yourself.

In closing, I wish all of you good luck for your bright future. I would like to conclude my congratulations to all of you in attendance by wishing you health and happiness.

January 12, Reiwa 7

Superintendent of Echizen City Board of Education  
Hideyuki Sawazaki

## “Go Forth!!～Team 20～”（プログラム）

The Twenty-Year-Old Ceremony Executive Committee

Chairman Ramu Kurokawa

Today, as we celebrate The Twenty-Year-old Ceremony, I would like to first express my sincere gratitude on behalf of all of us who turned twenty to those who supported us over the past twenty years, including our families, teachers, local community members, and all those involved in this grand ceremony.

Now, this year's theme is “Go Forth!! ～Team 20～”. We turned twenty in this memorable year when the Hokuriku Shinkansen was extended to Fukui Prefecture. It was a once-in-a-century opportunity. Thus we chose the theme to convey our beliefs that like the shinkansen, we ought to be strong, always look forward, and go towards our destination, which is our future, with our friends.

Looking back, the past twenty years are filled with many memories. Whether they were fun times or hard times, those memories are filled with the warmth of our hometown which raised us and the people who supported us. We are never alone. If we face hardships in the future, as long as the members of Team 20 come together, combine our strengths and support one another, we will surely overcome them.

Some of us have already worked in society, while others chose to continue their studies. Although our futures are different, we all started from our hometown: Echizen City. From now on, let us continue to nurture our attachment to our hometown in our hearts while moving forward every day towards our goals. Let us also be aware of our roles as members of society while striving to support others. Let's go! Team 20!