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Joe [] Graduation Address, n.d.

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Commencement Address -
Tri-State High School,
Guy Cook

V. 0. E. (17)

Tonight, we, graduates, have reached a milestone in our lives. Tomorrow many of us will have to take our places in a real world. To many people we are inexperienced, but we represent the new generation which will reconstruct this war-torn world. But, to our parents, we are the fulfillment of accomplishments denied them in their youth.

Every year graduates have tried to express their gratitude in flowery words of thanks to their parents for the sacrifice and love bestowed upon them. But I think the most appropriate words are: "Thanks, mom; Thanks, pop."

To our teachers, who have guided us through these formative years, who have seen the bitterness that is in some of us and have understood, who have strived, with patience and wisdom to lead us on the proper path, to them, we extend our heart-felt gratitude. We realize, perhaps, for the first time, just how much high school has meant to us, and just how much the teachers have done for us.

We cannot help but feel some what sorry to be leaving high school. We have only memories to link us with the happy hours spent in school--only reminiscence to remind us of those pleasant experiences that will be ours no more.

However, let us face realities at this moment. Before evacuation many Nisei did not have the time to study as much as they wanted, since they attended American school all day, went to Japanese school, and after reaching home performed daily chores before the close of day. Therefore, time was a precious element

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then. But today, and I say this especially to the undergraduates, we evacuees have the best opportunity and the time to study to further our knowledge. Advantages such as we have now "Knocks but, once" never again will we have so much time as we have now for mental development.

Many of us are of the opinion that we will be able to further our knowledge and accomplish great things after we leave camp. But at present we risk the danger of becoming just idle dreamers. Life is real now, we cannot lie back and take our future for granted just because we hope and dream. The present is all we have-or all anyone has. We must seize opportunities while they are presented to us. Let us live now.

Think of the state of the world if Edison had been content to dit by gaslight--if Hideo Noguchi had allowed himself to weep over his physical handicap--or if George Washington Carver had been defeated by race prejudice. What a number of achievements the world would lack if all men threw themselves on a bench and moaned when they encountered hardships!

But these men rose above the stumbling blocks placed in their way. Their accomplishments benefited mankind. They freely gave their services and achieved real happiness--yes, even immortality.

Such people reached "ever higher", not for themselves, but for what they believed. Can we as a class do even half as well? We have learned in school that we get out of life exactly what we put into it. Now what are we going to do? Work for ourselves and

ignore the needs of the world in order to profit personally? NO!
We will work together with a genuine love for our fellow-men.
Not tomorrow, but now with sincerity and willingness in our hearts.
Opportunity to do good, to give service lies right here, not in
some vague shadowy future, for what we give is more important
than what we get. The poet, Lowell, said, "Not what we give but
what we share, for the gift without the giver is bare." This
lesson
principle we have learned. The test, fellow classmates, is will
we practice what we preach?