

Recitation Script (2026)

1. Umeko Tsuda

A Pioneer of Women's Education

In 1871, a six-year-old girl left Japan for the United States. Her name was Umeko Tsuda. She was one of the first Japanese women ever sent abroad to study. She lived with an American family, studied English, science, and Western culture, and quickly became fluent in English.

During her years in the U.S., she learned the importance of education and how it gave people freedom and power. She saw that girls and boys were treated equally at school. This was very different from what she had known in Japan.

When Umeko returned to Japan ten years later, she was shocked. Most girls were not allowed to attend school. They were expected to marry young, take care of their families, and stay at home. Education for girls was not seen as important. Umeko believed this was unfair and that it needed to change.

She once said, “Women must cultivate their minds just as men do, to become independent individuals.” She believed that education was not only for men. It was for everyone, regardless of gender. She wanted women to have the same chances in life as men.

In 1900, Umeko founded Tsuda College, one of the first higher education institutions for women in Japan. She created a place where young women could study, grow, and prepare to lead. She believed women should have the power to think for themselves and contribute to society in meaningful ways.

Today, women in Japan and around the world can study any subject, follow any career path, and become leaders in many areas. That progress was made possible by pioneers like Umeko Tsuda, who opened doors and changed minds.

We must remember her courage and passion. She showed that education can break down barriers and bring new hope. Her life teaches us that learning is not just about gaining knowledge—it's about creating a better future.

Let us follow her example. Learn with purpose. Speak with confidence. And use your education to build a world where everyone has a voice.

(334 words)

2. Shibasaburo Kitasato

A Doctor Who Saved Lives

Shibasaburo Kitasato was a famous Japanese doctor and scientist who helped protect people from dangerous diseases. He was born in 1853 in Kumamoto. When he was young, he studied medicine and wanted to find ways to stop illnesses that caused suffering around the world.

Early in his career, he went to Germany and studied under Dr. Robert Koch, a well-known scientist. There, Kitasato learned new ways to study diseases and germs. He worked hard in the laboratory and made important discoveries. One of his greatest achievements was becoming the first person to grow the germs that cause tetanus in a laboratory. This research helped doctors develop better treatments for the disease.

In 1894, a deadly disease spread through Hong Kong. Many people became sick, and many lost their lives. Kitasato quickly traveled there to help. He carefully studied the disease and worked with other doctors to understand it. His efforts helped stop the disease from spreading and gave hope to people who were suffering.

Kitasato did not stop with one success. He continued studying many other dangerous diseases. He believed that science should help ordinary people live safer and healthier lives.

He often said that research should be useful for society. For him, learning was not only about gaining knowledge. It was also about helping others and improving the world.

Kitasato also helped improve medical education in Japan. He established a research institute and trained many doctors and scientists. Thanks to his work, Japan made great progress in modern medicine.

His work influenced not only Japan but also doctors and scientists around the world. Even today, people continue to learn from his achievements.

During health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, doctors and scientists showed the same spirit of cooperation and dedication that Kitasato valued.

His life teaches us an important lesson: knowledge becomes valuable when it is used to help others. Let us learn from his example, work hard, care for people, and use our abilities to make the world a better place.

(334 words)

※ tetanus = 破傷風

3. Eiichi Shibusawa

A Businessman with a Heart

Eiichi Shibusawa was a remarkable Japanese businessman and thinker. He lived from 1840 to 1931 and helped modernize Japan during a time of great change. He is often called “the father of Japanese capitalism” because he played a major role in building Japan’s modern economy.

But Shibusawa did not believe that business was only about making money. He believed that good business must be based on strong moral values and ethical behavior. He once said, “Without morality, there can be no real economy.” For him, success in business should not come at a cost to others. He believed that helping society was part of true success.

He helped establish over 500 companies, including banks, railways, factories, and hospitals. At the same time, he supported schools, welfare programs, and public services. He believed that business and social good could grow together.

Shibusawa respected fairness, teamwork, and honesty. He believed in working with others and sharing success. He often spoke about the importance of being useful to society. “The most important thing is to be useful to society through business,” he said. These words still inspire people and guide many young entrepreneurs.

Even though he became successful, Shibusawa lived simply. He focused more on kindness and effort than on wealth or fame. Many respected him not only as a businessman, but also as a leader with vision and heart. He advised both government leaders and private companies with wisdom and humility.

Today, when we think about careers or money, we often ask, “How much can I earn?” But Shibusawa’s life teaches us to ask, “How can I help others through my work?”

His idea of “moral business” is important in today’s world. We need people who care about others—not just numbers. We need people who lead with kindness, especially in difficult times.

Let us learn from Eiichi Shibusawa. Use your skills not only for your own success, but for the good of all. Real success is not just what you gain—it’s what you give.

(334 words)