

Nara Institute of Science and Technology  
Congratulatory Remarks  
Addressed by President SHIOZAKI on Jun.24,2022

This is a very important day for each of you here as well as for those watching this ceremony online. I know you're all excited, and so am I.

First of all, let me offer my sincere congratulations to each of you, to the parents, to all the families and friends. To earn a PhD is not an easy task even in the best of times. During this trying pandemic over the last two and half years, you all have been striving toward your significant milestone today. Be proud of your resilience and what you have overcome. Well done!

In addition to celebrating your accomplishments, I am also grateful to our faculty members and staff who have been guiding and helping you throughout your study at NAIST. Thanks to all those people, you have reached this memorable day of your life.

Today, you are leaving this campus and entering a new phase of your career, where your graduate training will come into its own. I am sure your thesis research has equipped you with multiple skills and abilities that have transformed you into another person. You are now different from who you were when you first came to NAIST. I am not talking about knowledge, as even the latest knowledge you currently have will be outdated soon after you step out of this campus.

As a PhD student, you have been trained to identify significant problems to be addressed. You have learned to collect and evaluate information relevant to the problems. You have studied how to logically develop hypotheses and carefully examine them. Through such research training, you have acquired capabilities to objectively observe and critically think and, most importantly, you know how vital they are. Thus, you are willing to confront even inconvenient truth, as you did in the lab when you failed in your experiments.

In the movie *The Matrix*, Morpheus offers Neo a choice between blue and red pills. The blue pill allows Neo to go back to his familiar, comfortable, but virtual world, while the red one reveals the truth about the Matrix, the reality hard for Neo to accept. With some hesitancy, Neo swallows the red pill, as any scientific mind would do, though Neo is not a scientist.

If we see only what we want to see and do not face the reality, we would live in a distorted world. Some people try to stay in their imaginary heaven, while others torment themselves by creating hell in their mind. Such twisted views of the world eventually undermine not only the minds of those individuals but also the society they live in.

“Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed,” states the preamble of the UNESCO Constitution. The ongoing brutal war in Ukraine began in the minds of men, so did all the recurring wars in our history. National boundaries are only in our mind, but people fight over them. In contrast to the calamity of pandemics, humanity creates wars and suffers from them.

We must keep generating the knowledge and technology required to manage global crises, and you are expected to join the force. The world is waiting for you. Moreover, the scientific skills and ways of thinking that you have developed at NAIST allow you to objectively observe, logically think, and critically judge what is going on in front of you

and in the world. Those are essential qualifications for global citizens and leaders in our society, who would never create imaginary foe in their minds.

We are currently facing multiple, unprecedented challenges that have to be addressed. Today, you're joining the community of more than 10,000 alumni, who have also been trained here at NAIST and are trying to make this world a better place. You are also a member of the global research community, where science is a common language. You're not alone! Together, we take the red pills to confront intricate and difficult problems, and tackle them with integrated efforts of our diverse expertise.

Before closing, I would like to remind you of our school motto, "Outgrow your limits". A PhD is not your goal. It's too early to set limits on yourself, as you don't know your full potential yet. Your doctoral degree is just a driver's license that lets you hop in a car and start a new journey to develop yourself further. You will meet new friends, new colleagues, new team mates. You will be learning from them, as after finishing a graduate school, there is no more school to go, except traffic school.

Please remember that, even after graduation, you are members of our NAIST community. We are always here to celebrate your success, as a university is assessed by the success of its graduates. Please stay connected with our Alumni Association, which serves as a platform for the global network of NAIST alumni.

Once again, congratulations! We are proud of our newest alumni.  
Go and outgrow your limits!