Congratulatory Remarks for Graduating Students (September 24, 2021)

It is just great to be here, standing in front of you. Not online. Not recording.

Let me begin by congratulating each member of this graduating class, on which I have just conferred 25 Master's degrees and 31 Doctoral degrees.

About 30 years ago, I was also a graduate student.
So, I know that completing a postgraduate degree is not an easy task even in the best of times. During this trying pandemic, you all have been striving, with your eyes kept on your milestone today. Some of you may now be recalling all the sacrifices you made to reach today's goal. Lack of sleep, working in the lab on weekends, missing family and friends back home…
We are proud of your resilience and what you have overcome.

In addition to saluting your efforts, this is also a day to thank everyone who has helped and supported you. Your professors, your family, your friends…
They may not be here today, but why don't we give them a round of applause.

This is also a perfect opportunity for you to reflect what you have learned here at NAIST. What do you think? Cutting-edge knowledge in science and technology? Unfortunately, even the latest knowledge you currently carry will be outdated soon after you step out of the campus.

I believe one of the most important skills that you have acquired as graduate students is to learn for yourself. Through your thesis research, you have learned how to update yourself, how to upgrade yourself, and how to create new values to share with others.

Now, I like to spend a minute, talking about a famous actor of the Japanese Noh theater 600 years ago. His name is Ze-ami. Some of you may have heard of the name. In addition to about 50 Noh dramas that are still played today, Ze-ami wrote dozens of treatises on drama, including "*Fuhshikaden*", which is also known as "*The Book of Transmission of the Flower*". It had been passed on as a book of secrets for hundreds of years within a school of Noh theater in Nara until its

publication around the beginning of the 20th century.

In the book, Ze-ami says, "住する所なきを、まづ花と知るべし".
I would translate it as "Never dwell to be a flower".
"Never dwell to be a flower".
I think Ze-ami meant to say, "Don't stay where you are and who you are". You should not remain yourself of today, even if this graduation day is one of the most glorious days in your life. Keep reinventing yourself in order to bloom. I mean a big flower.

Facing the unprecedented challenges, such as the pandemic and global warming, the world needs big "flowers", more than ever. They are waiting for our newest alumni. The unprecedented challenges offer unprecedented opportunities for you to grow and contribute to innovative solutions for the global issues.

So, how can we keep reinventing ourselves?
I have a piece of advice for you. This is from a song titled "My Revolution" by the signer Misato Watanabe. She is originally from Seika-cho, not far from the Sushiro restaurant on 163. The song was released in 1986, and one of the best-selling songs of the year in Japan.

The song says, ※'My revolution means to distort tomorrow'. It tells you can start

your revolution, and evolution, by trying something new tomorrow. Doesn't need to be something big. All you need to do is to "distort" your set pattern by trying a small thing at a time. After many of such tomorrows, you will find yourself developed into another person that you will be proud of, more than you are today.

In years to come, I look forward to seeing you as our proud alumni, for example, on our Homecoming Day, which is organized every fall. Remember – even after graduation, you are members of our NAIST community. NAIST now has over 10,000 alumni and the NAIST Alumni Association serves as a platform for their global network. Please keep in touch.

Again, congratulations to all of our graduates, and my best wishes for your future. Go and outgrow your limits!

SHIOZAKI Kazuhiro, President, Nara Institute of Science and Technology
September 24, 2021

※Referenced from Misato Watanabe – My Revolution