

First of all, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of you who have received your degrees today. It is a great pleasure for me to be here with you, not online, but in this Millennium Hall, to share in the joy of your degrees and new beginnings. I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to Mr. Tetsuya Kobayashi, Chairman of the board of directors, Foundation for NAIST, and Prof. Kiyoshi Kiyokawa, President of the NAIST Alumni Association, for their congratulatory speeches.

Obtaining a graduate degree is no easy task. Moreover, I am sure that you have faced many difficulties during the pandemic, but you have worked on your research day in, day out, and have reached the great goal of earning your degree today. I hope that you will take pride in what you have accomplished.

I would also like to congratulate your families and friends, as well as the faculty members who have guided you so enthusiastically. In addition, the fact that the university has been able to continue its active educational and research activities while minimizing the outbreak of the new coronavirus infection is due to the efforts of the entire NAIST community. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Dean of Graduate School and the Division Directors on this stage, as well as many other faculty members and the staff who have provided support in various ways, day and night including on weekends. Let us give a big round of applause to all those who have supported your studies at NAIST in various ways, including those who are not here today.

Today, you are completing graduate school after many years of study since elementary school. According to the School Education Act, the purpose of graduate school is "to teach and research academic theories and applications at the highest level, as well as to cultivate deep academic knowledge and outstanding abilities for a career that requires a high level of specialization, aiming toward the development of culture". In other words, you have acquired the most advanced and in-depth academic knowledge and expertise in graduate school.

On the other hand, in the past three years since the outbreak and spread of the new coronavirus, we have witnessed how various opinions and theories have been proposed about this new infectious disease and its countermeasures, only to be rewritten into something else. Apart from the speed of the rewriting, it is not uncommon in the world of science for the "correct" answer to be updated. One of the most famous examples in the history of science is the replacement of the long-believed celestial motion theory by the geocentric theory with the advent of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo.

In other words, the advanced and specialized knowledge you have learned at NAIST may one day be rewritten. The "tentativeness" of science is that the scientific knowledge we have is not necessarily eternal truths, but is rather something tentative that it is reasonable to assume to be correct for now, based on the data, information,

and observations obtained so far. We can see that science has been developing as previously considered "facts" and "theories" are replaced by new facts and theories.

Conversely, acquiring and accepting existing knowledge and theories, or "Learning", is not enough to develop science and technology. We need to look critically at the knowledge we have learned and let go of it. Through the process of such "unlearning", we have to create breakthroughs that prevail over conventional assumptions and common sense. Thus, the meaning of the word "unlearning" includes not being bound by conventional wisdom, and I think it is similar to the famous phrase "Stay foolish" that Steve Jobs once said in his commencement speech at Stanford University. Now that you have completed graduate school, the most advanced level of learning, I have great expectations for all of you to be conscious of "Unlearning" and create breakthroughs in every corner of society.

And of course, as you embark on your journey into the world, I am sure all of you are excited about your new start, promising yourself you will further expand your potential and play an active role in society. On the other hand, no matter what path you choose, the road ahead will not be smooth, and there will be times when things do not go your way. At such times, I always remember some words, which I would like to share with you today:

"Those who work hard speak of hope; those who slack off speak of discontent."

These are the words of Yasushi Inoue, a writer who was once nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature. It is precisely in times of hardship and dissatisfaction that we should speak of hope and do what we can to achieve the future we desire, one step at a time. I am sure that all of you can do so, as you have made efforts in the unprecedented situation of the pandemic, searching for hope despite your anxiety, in order to finally reach this day. Having gone through such an experience, you probably agree with the words of Yasushi Inoue.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all of you again and let you know that you are part of the NAIST community even after graduation. The NAIST Alumni Association is a global network of our alumni, and I encourage you to take advantage of it. With great pride, we will enjoy learning about your achievements and accomplishments as a member of our over 10,000 alumni. We look forward to seeing you again at the annual Homecoming Day in the fall and on other occasions.

March 24th, 2023

Kaz Shiozaki

President