

Congratulatory Remarks to Graduating Students (June 25, 2021)

I would first like to congratulate the 4 graduates who have received their doctoral degrees today.

In the coronavirus pandemic, I am sure you faced many challenges as you pursued your thesis research. The degrees that you have earned are the fruit of your efforts and are truly worthy of praise. I would also like to express my heartfelt congratulations to the dedicated professors who have continually given guidance to today's graduates.

In Japan there is an old saying, 'A PhD is like a grain of rice stuck to the bottom of your foot.' Have you heard of this before? For graduate students, not getting a PhD feels uncomfortable, like a grain of rice stuck to the bottom of your foot; however, even if you get the degree you can't really eat or survive. I remember accepting the saying when I heard it as a graduate student, but after I received my PhD and began working as a researcher in California, my understanding of what a PhD means drastically changed.

First, when I went to US, the title in front of my name wasn't Mr.; it was Dr. PhD holders are highly regarded by society as human resources with knowledge and expertise obtained through higher education. Actually, without a PhD I wouldn't have been employed as a researcher in US. You could say that a PhD is like a driver's license that is valid around the globe and, just as there are cars that you can only drive with a license, there are paths to careers that are only open to those with PhDs. I truly hope that you take pride in the PhD you have received today.

Of course, society is also looking forward to your future activities

Peter Drucker, known as the founder of modern management, published a book titled "Post-Capitalist Society" in 1993. He wrote about the coming of the growing historical transformation from the capitalist society, which has continued for hundreds of years, to a 'knowledge society.' Drucker predicted that, in the history of humankind, this period of transformation will be an extraordinarily turbulent era, which will last for decades until 2020 or 2030. Drucker, having passed away in 2005, of course knew nothing of the novel coronavirus, but for us, living in these turbulent times, we have to admit that his predictions have come true.

Drucker predicted that, in the coming knowledge society, knowledge will have value and knowledge workers will be the foundation of society. Additionally, he stated that the ongoing IT revolution and globalization are the foundation of the knowledge society. We can say that you, in receiving your PhDs today, have obtained your driver's license to be active as leaders in the knowledge society.

How do we construct this knowledge society? What is necessary to solve the issues and tasks for this construction and how can we approach them? You will need to face new challenges and obstacles, considering them from broad perspectives and working beyond the boundaries of your areas of expertise. You will also need the desire to keep taking on challenges without setting limitations on yourself. After graduating from this university, I hope you will remember NAIST's motto 'Outgrow your limits' and that each of you will aim your highest.

This year NAIST is celebrating its 30th anniversary. Your names will be among the 1,789 graduates who earned their PhD at NAIST to date and you are now a member of our alumni community of more than 10,000 master's and PhD degree holders. I believe that the ties you have developed with the NAIST community, including our faculty and staff, are your asset. In order to vitalize this community network, NAIST invites graduates for the 'Homecoming Day' every fall. Due to the current pandemic, we are not sure in what format the event will be held, but I hope that through the Homecoming Day and the alumni association you will take advantage of your ties to NAIST throughout your careers.

Dr. Yuguchi、 Dr. Shirakura、 Dr. Suzuki、 and Dr. Wada.

In closing my remarks, I would like to congratulate Dr. Yuguchi, Dr. Shirakura, Dr. Suzuki, and Dr. Wada once again on receiving their PhDs today.

June 25th, 2021

Kazuhiro SHIOZAKI

President