

President's Commencement Address

First, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to all of you who have been awarded doctoral/master's degrees today. Looking back on the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have come to reflect on how grateful we are to gather here in this Millennium Hall and rejoice over your graduation and new start in life. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. Tetsuya Kobayashi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Foundation for NAIST. Mr. Kobayashi also serves as Representative Director and Chairman of the Board of the Kintetsu Group Holdings Co., Ltd. Our appreciation goes to Dr. Kazuma Yasuhara of the NAIST Alumni Association.

I would like to reiterate my congratulations to your families and friends, as well as the faculty members who have mentored you with enthusiasm since you joined NAIST. Today is a special day also for the Dean of the Graduate School, the Division Directors, the Director of the Health Care Center, and the faculty and staff who have supported your studies here in many different ways. Why don't we give a big round of applause to all who have supported your days at NAIST, including those who are not here today?

Having completed your studies at NAIST, you must have understood that graduate training differs significantly from the education you received as an undergraduate or in technical colleges. From elementary school to college, students learn to understand and use existing knowledge. On the other hand, we can say that learning in a graduate school is "ORT". Have you ever heard of the abbreviation "ORT"? Even if you don't know "ORT," you've probably heard of "OJT." "OJT" stands for "On the Job Training," that is, vocational training through practical work. "ORT," on the other hand, is "On the Research Training," that is, learning while conducting actual research.

In your graduate training, you have tackled your dissertation research, receiving various advice and suggestions from your supervisors and laboratory members. When you present at a research conference or try to publish a paper, you would also be given critiques and evaluations by researchers outside the university. During such a research process, you review and reconsider your research based on the input from various third-party viewpoints, allowing you to learn objective perspectives for "critical thinking."

Critical thinking, in which we objectively evaluate and criticize not only others but also ourselves, is similar to "Riken no Ken," which was advocated by Zeami, a Noh theater master, about 600 years ago. Zeami wrote down the wisdom of performing arts to his son in his treatise "Kakyou," which is preserved as a cultural property at Hozanji Temple here in the City of Ikoma, Nara Prefecture. In it, Zeami pointed out that there are three perspectives: the self-view "GAKEN," the others' view "RIKEN," and the detached view "RIKEN no KEN." The self-view "GAKEN" is the perspective of yourself playing on the Noh stage, looking at the

audience. The others' view "RIKEN" is the audience's perspective watching you on the stage. On the other hand, the detached view "RIKEN no KEN" is the perspective of objectively looking at yourself on the stage as if you were in the audience. Zeami asserts that it is crucial to avoid self-satisfaction by looking at oneself objectively and critically from this detached perspective: "RIKEN no KEN."

Lately, people have talked much about the importance of this "RIKEN no KEN" but have expressed it as a different term, "metacognition," as American psychologist John Flavell proposed. "Metacognition" is to objectively perceive and control one's various cognitive activities, namely perception, behaviors, and thoughts. Metacognition is described as "another self" that looks at oneself doing something, and it is the same concept as Zeami's "RIKEN no KEN."

The graduate degree you have been awarded today proves that you have acquired skills to address a variety of academic and social issues, such as "critical thinking" that encompasses Zeami's "RIKEN no KEN" and Flavell's "Metacognition." In other words, what you have learned at NAIST is not limited to the specific themes and fields of your dissertation research. You now have skills and abilities to help you in different jobs, challenges, and overcoming obstacles. Therefore, upon graduation from NAIST, you all are ready to embark on the next new challenges. Today is not the goal. For you, another exciting "Outgrow your limits" is about to begin!

Your new challenge should be initiated by looking for a new "question" that you will work on. Identifying the right questions worth addressing is one of the skills that you have honed in ORT "On the Research Training" at NAIST. Peter Drucker, the so-called "inventor of modern management," once said:

"The important and difficult thing is not to find the right answer, but to look for the right question. Nothing is more useless than the right answer to the wrong question."

After you have completed your studies at NAIST, you should be able to identify the right "questions" to pursue next with passion.

We look forward to seeing you again in the near future as one of our proud alums. NAIST has sent out more than 10,000 graduates to society, and the Alums Association has become a place for their global network. Please join this network and make the most of it.

In closing, I would like again to congratulate you all and wish you a bright future that you will carve out with the NAIST spirit of "Outgrow your limits."

March 22th, 2024

Kaz Shiozaki

President