

I would like to express my congratulations to all of the graduates here today and to your parents, relatives and those who supported you through your studies.

As of today, NAIST has conferred roughly 10,000 degrees. Many of the graduates before you are active in universities, research institutes, and large corporations both domestically and abroad, assuring the value of the NAIST brand. I expect that this value will be raised even higher with your entering into the workforce.

The NAIST Alumni Association is developing various programs to support both graduates and current students. After graduation, I feel that there will be many instances when you will have a sense of pride towards your studies at NAIST and many opportunities where you realize your connections with NAIST. Gratitude for this will grow over time. I hope all of you will join the Alumni Association and make full use of these ties.

I myself completed the doctoral course here in 1998 as part of the second class of students accepted to NAIST. When I entered NAIST, there were almost no graduates and NAIST's reputation was nowhere near what it is today. The appeal of NAIST was not its reputation or its history. Globally active professors and passionate students had come together with the boldness to challenge the unknown, and this was the most appealing part of NAIST. Even today, with more than twenty years having past, this appeal is stronger than ever.

You have been influenced by the pandemic for the past two years, especially for Master course students, this period was from the time of your enrollment to the completion of your degree. During this time, I can imagine you felt anxious when you couldn't perform your research as you wanted and you also felt lonely not being able to meet your friends. Especially when you were beginning of your school life, you were in the very difficult situation where you couldn't even come to NAIST and take classes. Finally, through your perseverance and the support of those around you overcame these difficulties and completed your studies today. I hope that you will take pride in having overcome these challenges and turn this experience into a strength for the future.

This pandemic unexpectedly revealed accumulated distortions and weaknesses of our society. While we should transform our society in line with SDGs as soon as possible, the norms of yesterday do not apply today and no one is sure of the solutions for these. In addition, the recent international situation reminds us again how fragile and precious our ordinary and peaceful daily life is. I expect you will actively confront these turbulent times and make contributions to better our society. I also hope you will think seriously about what you can do to create a peaceful and prosperous society, and plan and implement this with a sense of leadership, not fearing change.

Having chosen to leave your original institutions to challenge yourself in a new environment by entering the gates of NAIST and having produced cutting-edge research results here as well, I feel that you have the qualities and attitude to respond to the demands of this new era.

The future of humankind will be achieved through your activities as you stand in this new stage of your life today. I hope that you make use of what you have learned at NAIST in whatever path you choose, pioneer a new era, and you lead our future strongly. I am confident that you will achieve great successes.

Finally, I would like to once again congratulate you on your graduation.

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