

## 令和7年度卒業式・大学院修了式 学長式辞

本日、ここに埼玉大学卒業式ならびに大学院修了式を迎えられた皆さん、ご卒業、ご修了、誠におめでとうございます。また、本日まで皆さんを支え、見守ってこられたご家族ならびに関係者の皆様に、教職員を代表して、心よりお祝いと感謝を申し上げます。

本日、学部学生 1,517 名、博士前期課程学生 598 名、博士後期課程学生 26 名が、この学び舎を巣立っていかれます。そのうち留学生は 97 名にのぼり、中国、韓国、スリランカなど、さまざまな国と地域から本学に集われました。多様な背景をもつ皆さんが共に学び、今日という節目を迎えられたことを、本学として大変誇りに思います。

さて、学長としてこの場で皆さんをお送りできることを、私は大きな喜びとともに、深い感慨をもって受け止めています。本日は、一人の研究者として、また一人の人間として歩んできた道を振り返りながら、「努力」ということについて申し上げたいと思います。

近年、若い世代の努力観について、さまざまに論じられています。そこから私が感じるのは、皆さんの世代が努力そのものを軽んじているのではなく、その努力に意味があるのか、自分の人生にとって本当に価値があるのかを、真剣に見極めようとしているということです。先の見通しを持ちにくい時代にあって、限られた時間と力をどこに注ぐべきかを慎重に考える。その姿勢は、十分に理解し、評価できるものです。

ただ一方で、人生においては、努力の意味や重みが、その場ですぐに定まるとは限りません。私自身の歩みを振り返ってみても、すぐに結果が見える努力もあれば、そのときには遠回りに思えたことが、後になって自分を支えていたと分かることもあります。努力の成果には、しばしば時間差があるのです。

こう考えるようになった私の経験を、少しお話したいと思います。

私は社会人としての第一歩を、高校教員として踏み出しました。生徒たちと向き合う日々は、かけがえのないものでしたが、その営みが将来どのような形で実を結ぶのかは、当時の私には必ずしも見えていませんでした。その後、私は高校で教えながら夜は研究所で学び、やがて研究の世界へ進む決断をしました。新しい世界では、研究そのものの難しさに加え、新たな環境の中で自分の立ち位置を見いだしていくことにも、困難を感じました。

けれども今振り返れば、生徒と向き合った経験も、学び続けた日々も、試行錯誤を重ねた時間も、すべてが私の視野を広げ、次の挑戦を支える土台になっていました。すぐには意味を見いだせなかった努力が、自らの成長を支える力へと姿を変えていたのです。努力の価値は、時を経てはじめて、その真価が静かに立ち現れるのだと、私は実感しています。

同時に私は、この経験を通じて、成長とは多くの場合、楽なときに起こるものではないことも学びました。教育心理学には、認知心理学者ロバート・A・ビョークが示した「望ましい困

難」という考え方があります。一見すると負担や回り道に見える学び方——間隔を置いた反復や、あえて難易度の高い課題への挑戦——こそが、長い目で見て深い学びをもたらす、という考え方です。もともとは学習の方法をめぐる議論ですが、私はそこに、人生を歩むうえで大切な示唆があるように思います。

人生を歩む中では、自分の思うようにいかないことや、失敗してしまうこと、迷うことに、誰しも出会います。しかし、そのような経験の中でこそ、自分で考える力が鍛えられ、人の痛みを知り、しなやかさや粘り強さが育っていきます。

だからこそ、人生を生きるうえで大切なのは、困難のない道を選ぶことではなく、自分を成長させてくれる価値ある困難を選ぶ力です。そして、その困難に向き合う姿勢こそが、私の考える努力の正体です。

もちろん、ここでいう努力とは、自分を追い込み、心や身体をすり減らすことではありません。自分を慈しみ、大切にできない努力は、決して長くは続きません。困難を引き受けることと、自分を壊すこととは別です。

大切なのは、広くそして長期的な視野の中で、自分にとって意味のある課題を見定め、それに誠実に向き合うことです。その積み重ねが、やがて皆さんを支える本当の力になります。

そして、もう一つ申し上げたいのは、努力はしばしば、信頼という形で実を結ぶということです。今すぐに結果が出なくても、今は誰にも気づかれていなくても、人が真剣に何かに取り組む姿は、周囲の人の心に残ります。誠実に積み重ねられた努力は、皆さん自身の力を育むと同時にやがて「あの人に任せてみよう」という思いを生み、確かな信頼として蓄えられていきます。その信頼は、人生の節目において皆さんを支え、新たな扉を開く力にもなっていくはずです。

順風のときにも、逆風のときにも、今日まで皆さんが培ってきた学びと経験は、皆さんの中に確かに息づいています。その歩みの一つ一つが、皆さん自身の人生を深めるだけでなく、やがて社会の中で誰かを支える力にもなっていくはずで、どうかそれぞれの場において、自らの力を誠実に尽くし、多くの人々との信頼を育みながら、自らの道を確認に歩いていってください。

皆さんの前途に幸多からんことを心より祈念し、式辞といたします。

ご卒業、ご修了、誠におめでとうございます。

令和8年3月25日  
埼玉大学長 坂井貴文

## **President's Address at the Saitama University Graduation Ceremony for the Academic Year 2025**

To all of you who are gathered here today for the Saitama University Graduation Ceremony and Graduate School Completion Ceremony, please accept my heartfelt congratulations on your graduation and completion of your studies.

On behalf of the faculty and staff, I would also like to extend my sincere congratulations and deepest gratitude to your families and to all those who have supported and watched over you up to this day.

Today, 1,517 undergraduate students, 598 students in the master's program, and 26 students in the doctoral program will leave this place of learning and set forth on new paths. Among them are 97 international students who have come to our university from various countries and regions, including China, Korea, and Sri Lanka. As a university, we take great pride in the fact that students of such diverse backgrounds have learned together and have reached this important milestone today.

As President, I receive this opportunity to send you forth with great joy and deep emotion. Today, as one who has walked his own path both as a researcher and as a human being, I would like to speak to you about effort.

In recent years, much has been said about how younger generations think about effort. What I sense from these discussions is not that your generation makes light of effort itself. Rather, it is that you are earnestly trying to discern whether a given effort truly has meaning, and whether it is genuinely of value in your own life. In an age when the future is difficult to foresee, you think carefully about where to devote your limited time and strength. That attitude is one I can fully understand and sincerely respect.

At the same time, however, the meaning and significance of effort in life do not always become clear at once. When I look back on my own path, there were efforts whose results appeared quickly, but there were also endeavors that seemed like detours at the time and only later proved to be what had sustained me. The fruits of effort often reveal themselves only after time has passed.

Allow me to share a little of the experience through which I came to think this way.

I began my professional life as a high school teacher. My days spent working with students were irreplaceable, yet at that time I could not always see how those efforts would bear fruit in the future. Later, while continuing to teach at high school, I studied at a research institute in the evenings, and in time I made the decision to enter the world of research. In that new world, I found not only the inherent difficulty of research itself, but also the challenge of finding my own place in an unfamiliar environment.

And yet, as I now look back, I can see that my experience of working with students, the days I spent continuing to learn, and the time I devoted to repeated trial and error all broadened my horizons and became the foundation that supported my next challenge. Efforts whose meaning I could not immediately perceive were transformed into a strength that sustained my growth. I have come to feel deeply that the value of effort often discloses its true worth quietly, and only with the passage of time.

At the same time, through these experiences I also learned that growth, in many cases, does not occur when life is easy. In educational psychology, there is the concept of "desirable difficulties," advanced by the cognitive psychologist Robert A. Bjork. It suggests that methods of learning which may at first appear

burdensome or indirect—such as spaced repetition or deliberately taking on difficult tasks—are precisely what lead, over the long term, to deeper learning. Originally, this idea was proposed in discussions of how we learn, but I believe it also offers an important insight into how we live.

As we make our way through life, everyone encounters things that do not go as hoped, experiences failure, and passes through times of uncertainty. Yet it is precisely through such experiences that we cultivate the ability to think for ourselves, come to understand the pain of others, and develop resilience and perseverance.

That is why what matters in life is not choosing a path without hardship, but having the wisdom to choose worthwhile challenges that help us grow. And the attitude with which we face such challenges is, to my mind, the very core of effort.

Of course, the effort I speak of here does not mean driving oneself mercilessly and wearing down one's mind and body. Effort that does not allow one to care for and cherish oneself can never be sustained for long. Accepting challenge and breaking oneself are not the same thing.

What matters is to discern, from a broad and long-term perspective, the tasks that are truly meaningful for you, and then to face them with sincerity. The steady accumulation of such effort will, in time, become the true strength that supports you.

There is one more thing I would like to say: effort often bears fruit in the form of trust. Even if results do not appear immediately, and even if no one seems to notice for the moment, the sight of someone devoting themselves earnestly to something remains in the hearts of others. Effort accumulated with sincerity not only strengthens you yourselves, but also gradually gives rise to the feeling, “This is someone to whom we may entrust this task,” and is stored up as genuine trust. That trust, at important moments in life, will sustain you and also become a force that opens new doors.

Whether the wind is at your back or against you, the learning and experience you have cultivated until today are surely alive within you. Each step of your journey will not only deepen your own life, but in time will also become a source of strength that supports others in society. Wherever you may go, may you devote your abilities with sincerity, nurture bonds of trust with many people, and walk your own path with steadiness and conviction.

With my heartfelt prayers for abundant happiness in your future, I now conclude my address. Once again, congratulations on your graduation and completion of your studies.

March 25, 2026  
Takafumi Sakai  
President, Saitama University