

令和5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、大学院修了式を迎えられた皆さん、ご卒業、修了誠におめでとうございます。皆さんをこれまで見守り、支えてこられたご家族と関係者の皆様にも、教職員を代表してお祝いと感謝を申し上げます。

本日、学部学生 1,521 名、博士前期課程学生 556 名、博士後期課程学生 36 名が卒業、修了されます。このうち留学生は 100 名で、中国、韓国、バングラデシュ、インドなどを母国とされている方々です。

今年度は埼玉大学創基 150 周年でした。本学は明治6年に埼玉県改正局で小学校教員の養成を始めたことを礎とし、その後、埼玉師範学校、埼玉青年師範学校、旧制官立浦和高等学校を統合し、昭和 24 年に埼玉大学として創設されました。爾来、9万人を超える卒業生、修了生を世に送り出してきました。昨年 10 月には、卒業生の 1 人である経済学部出身の Milojko Spajic 氏がモンテネグロの首相に36歳で就任されています。皆さんも本学の卒業生、修了生としての誇りを持って社会の発展に寄与すべく、未来に向かって進んでいってほしいと思います。

さて、今、卒業という人生の節目に臨んでいる皆さんの中には、社会に出る不安を胸に抱く人もいれば、早く自分の力を試したいという高揚に奮い立っている人もいることでしょう。大学院進学を選んだ人にとっても、きっと同じことと思います。このような不安と高揚のうちにある皆さんに、ぜひ胸にとどめておいてほしいことを今日はお話したいと思います。

それは「失敗」に対する考え方を自らに問い直してほしい、ということです。

我々は何かに立ち向かうとき「失敗してはいけない、失敗したくない」という思いに捉われます。学生時代はもちろん、社会人となればなおさらでしょう。もちろん、自律と責任が求められる社会生活においては、細心の注意を払って失敗を未然に防ぐ努力をし続けることは大前提です。しかし、「失敗」のない現象など、人の世にあるのでしょうか。

「失敗はあるもの」、です。まずは「失敗を認める」という考え方を持ってください。これは開き直って失敗を坐視するというものではありません。その先にある「失敗から学ぶ」という姿勢に繋げてほしい、ということです。「失敗からの学び」とは、失敗を認め、その「原因を検証・探究」し、次を見据えて「新たな方策を考える」、この一連の過程のことです。失敗を認めることは、その学びの出発点なのです。そして、さらに心してほしいことは、この過程のすべての場面において、自分の視点だけでなく他者の視点を積極的に入れる態度を持つ、ということです。自己と他者との複眼を持って失敗に真摯に向き合い、協働すれば、そこにはさまざまな事例が数多く蓄積され、多様な方策が生まれます。個人にとっては豊かな経験となり、組織にあっては有意な共有財産となることで、失敗は個人と組織を強く鍛えていく重要な鍵となるのです。

イギリスの著名なコラムニスト、マシュー・サイド氏は著書「失敗の科学」の中で、航空業界と医療現場という、二つの異なる組織を対照的に紹介しています。両者をここ数十年の死亡事故数の推移で検証すると、航空業界はその数を飛躍的に減らしたのに比べ、医療現場では死亡事故の減少は限定的だと言います。この差はなぜ生まれているのでしょうか。

それはひとえに、「失敗」に対する考え方そのものが、両者で全く異なるからです。航空業界では「失敗はあるもの」という前提が組織のスタンダードであり、ひとたび事故があれば、すべてのミスを共有したうえで原因を徹底的に検証し、事後の方策に生かすシステムが確立されてきました。一方で医療現場では、「失敗はないもの」というのが前提で、これはともすれば、「失敗を認めない」という態度に直結してしまいます。本書には、手術中に目の前で起きた小さな予想外の連続、つまり小さな失敗に「そんなはずはない、ありえない」という態度で対応し続けた結果、「ごく一般的な手術」とされた現場で不幸にも死亡事故に至った事例が生々しく紹介されています。しかもこのような医療現場の「失敗」は事後も失敗と認められず、まわりと共有もされにくいために、その後の進歩につながらない「クローズド・ループ現象」に陥ってしまう、と筆者は指摘しています。

これらは人命を預かる厳しい現場の事例であり、また両者には、航空機と、より複雑な人体との違いがあることも考慮しなければなりません。失敗に対する基本的な考え方や対応の差異が異なる結果を導くというこの提示は、我々の身近な社会生活にも大いに参考になると言えるでしょう。

失敗を認めない個人やそれを共有しない組織は、成長の機会を失うばかりか大きな事故や不正を生む危険があります。これは昨今頻発している企業の不祥事の事例を見ても明らかです。一方で「失敗を認め、他者と協働し、それを力として活かす」という考え方は、自らを成長に導き、次なる危機に適切に対処する力に繋がります。そしてそこには、他者の失敗にも寛容である人と組織がおのずから育つ土壌も生まれます。ひいてはそういう社会が実現するということにもなるでしょう。失敗に不寛容でやや息苦しい面があると言われる現在の日本社会ですが、皆さんにはそれを打破するマインドを持った社会人・研究者となり、一人一人が社会の変革を促す役割を果たしてほしいと強く願っています。

さて、皆さんの在学中は、学生生活の大半を覆ってしまったコロナ禍を始め、ウクライナやパレスチナにおける悲惨な現実、地球沸騰時代ともいうべき気候変動の深刻さなど、世界は大きなうねりに翻弄されてきました。国内においても今回の能登半島地震や各地での水害など、大規模災害が相次ぎました。これらの出来事は、皆さんの感性を大いに揺さぶり、様々な不安をもたらしたと思います。

けれども、皆さんの身の内にはこれまでに得た有形無形の財産が多く蓄積されているはずです。学内で学んだ専門の学問はもちろん、生涯の友との出会いや、キャンパスを飛び出してのさまざまな活動からも多くを得たことでしょう。それら若い日々の多様な経験はみな、これからの皆さんを支える力であり、依って立つ土台です。課題の多い現在の国内外の情勢も視野に収めつつ、すべての経験を力に明日からの新しい世界にその一步を踏み出してください。皆さんはそれだけのものを確実に培ってきました。どうか自信を持って進んでください。

皆さんの未来が希望にあふれ、光り輝くことを心よりお祈り申し上げて、式辞といたします。本日はご卒業、修了誠におめでとうございます。

令和 6 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 2023**

Congratulations to everyone celebrating their graduation and course completion here at Saitama University's graduation ceremony today. On behalf of all our faculty members and staff, I would like to express my sincere affection and gratitude to the family and friends who watched over and supported you throughout your journey here.

Today, we acknowledge the graduation and completion of 1,521 undergraduate students, 556 Master's students, and 36 Doctoral students. These totals include 100 international students from countries such as China, Korea, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and India.

This year marked the 150th anniversary of Saitama University's founding. The foundation of the University was laid in 1873, when the Saitama Prefecture began training elementary school teachers. Saitama Normal School, Saitama Youth Normal School, and the former government-run Urawa High School would then go on to be integrated into Saitama University, which was established in 1949. Since then, we have sent over 90,000 graduates and alumni out into the world. Last October, one of our alumni, Miloiko Spajic, who graduated from the Faculty of Economics, was appointed Prime Minister of Montenegro at the age of 36. I hope that you will take pride in yourselves as graduates and alumni of this university, and move forward into the future to contribute to the development of society.

Now, as you come to your graduation, one of the milestones in your life, some of you are anxious about going out into the world, while there are others who are excited to test their abilities as soon as possible. I am sure the same holds true for those of you who have chosen to go on to graduate school. Today, I would like to talk about something that I would like you to keep in mind, in the midst of such anxiety and elation.

That is, I would like you to re-examine your attitude toward "failure."

When confronted with something, people have a tendency to think, "I mustn't fail, I don't want to fail." This is the case for students, and even more so for working adults. Of course, living in a society where you need to be independent and responsible, it is a prerequisite to be careful and continue striving to prevent mistakes. However, is there such a thing as a phenomenon without failure in the human world?

Failure is something that happens. First, have a mindset that acknowledges failure. This does not mean that you should take a "so what" attitude and let yourself fail. I want you to connect that mindset to the attitude of learning from failure. Learning from failure refers to the series of processes that include acknowledging your failures, examining and exploring their causes, and considering new strategies for

the next step. Admitting failure is the starting point for that lesson. Furthermore, I would like you to keep in mind that you have to be willing to actively include the perspectives of others, not just your own, in all aspects of this process. If we sincerely confront failure from multiple viewpoints - both our own and those of others - and work together, we can accumulate many different case studies and create a variety of strategies. Failure is the key to building strong individuals and organizations, as it is a rich experience for the individual and a significant shared asset for the organization.

In his book "Black Box Thinking," renowned British columnist Matthew Syed contrasts two different kinds of organizations: the airline industry and the medical field. Examining both in terms of the number of fatal accidents over the last few decades, he says that while the airline industry has dramatically reduced that number, the decline in fatalities in the medical field has been limited. What accounts for this gap?

The gap exists because they have completely different ideas about failure. In the airline industry, the premise that failures happen is an organizational standard. A system has been established where if a single accident occurs, all mistakes are shared and the causes are thoroughly examined. Those results are then put to use in subsequent measures. On the other hand, in the medical field, the assumption is that there are no failures, and this can lead directly to an attitude of not admitting failure. This book vividly describes a series of small unexpected events that occurred in front of a surgical team during surgery - in other words, a series of small failures - which unfortunately resulted in a fatal accident in what was considered a very common kind of surgery, as a result of the team constantly responding with an attitude of "that can't have happened, it's not possible." Furthermore, Syed points out that such failures in the medical field are not recognized as failures, even after the fact, and are not easily shared with others. This leads to a "closed loop phenomenon," wherein failures do not lead to subsequent progress.

These are examples of severe cases in which human lives are at stake, and the difference between aircraft and the more complex human body must also be taken into consideration. However, this demonstration of how different basic attitudes and responses to failure can lead to different results is very instructive for our lives in society.

Individuals who do not admit failure, as well as organizations that do not share it, do not just lose opportunities for growth, but create the risk that they will suffer from major accidents and fraud. This is evident from the cases of corporate scandals that have been occurring frequently in recent years. On the other hand, the concept of accepting failure, collaborating with others, and using it to your advantage leads to the ability to develop oneself and to deal appropriately with ensuing crises. This also creates a climate that naturally develops people and organizations who are accepting of the failure of others, as well. By extension, this will lead to the realization of society which is similarly accepting of failure. It

is said that today's Japanese society is intolerant of failure, and in some respects, it can be stifling. However, it is my fervent wish that each of you will become a member of society and a researcher with a mindset to break through this barrier, and that each of you will play a role in promoting social change. Now, during your enrollment, the world was thrown into turmoil due to major events, including the COVID-19 pandemic that spanned most of your student life, the tragic realities in Ukraine and Palestine, and the seriousness of climate change, which should be called the global boiling age. There have also been an unrelenting series of large-scale disasters in Japan, such as the Noto Peninsula earthquake and major flooding in various areas. These various events must have greatly shaken your sensibilities.

However, up until this point, I am sure that you have accumulated many tangible and intangible assets within yourselves. You have gained a great deal, not just from the specialized studies you pursued on campus, but also from the lifelong friends you made and the many activities you engaged in outside of the campus. Going forward, these diverse experiences of your young days will be the strength that sustains you, and the foundation you will rely on. While keeping the current domestic and international situation - which is rife with challenges - in mind, wield the power of your experiences and take your first step into the new world of tomorrow. You have certainly cultivated the ability to do just that. Take that step with confidence.

It is my sincere desire that you all move forward with a heart full of hope, and a blazing bright spirit. With that, I would like to conclude this ceremony. Congratulations on your graduation and course completion.

March 25, 2024

Takafumi Sakai
President, Saitama University