

Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies

Graduation Ceremony Address

Dean and Professor

Hitoshi Mitomo

On behalf of Waseda University, Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, I offer my heartfelt congratulations to all of you receiving diploma today. I would also like to offer my sincerest congratulations and gratitude to the family members who have encouraged and supported you all.

There are 73 students completing the Graduate Program this spring, with 63 students completing the MA program, and 10 students completing the PhD program.

As you attend today's ceremony, reflecting on the time you devoted to your studies, I'm sure all of you are reminded of the many things you have learned and accomplished, as well as the hardships you experienced from time to time. As you reflect upon your interaction with your fellow students and faculty, nothing would please us more than knowing that all of you were able to gain a true appreciation for the philosophy of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, which can be described as "Diverse Backgrounds Common Purpose", meaning that people from diverse backgrounds coming together to acquire knowledge in pursuit of one goal".

The Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2018. 20 years is a very short time compared with the history of Waseda University, but in that time, we have received high praise both home and abroad for our curriculum and research focused on the Asia-Pacific region and we have been able to firmly establish a position for our research program over the past 20 years. During that time, we have produced more than 3000 master's degree graduates from over 50 countries and regions. We gather students from not just the Asia-Pacific region, but from all over the world and they play a role in supporting and driving society forward in various ways after graduation. In addition, over 250 students have completed our doctoral degree program and are active not only in research and education, but in a diverse range of specialist areas as well. All of you will join those graduates today.

In 2015, the United Nations adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an action plan for humanity, the earth and prosperity. The 17 goals and 169 targets can be said to systematically

illustrate the issues that need to be solved in order for humanity to achieve a better future. As a graduate of this program, please do your best to achieve these goals in your respective areas of endeavor.

It will be difficult to achieve the SDGs with contributions coming from only individuals or individual companies –it will require multi-stakeholder contributions. Various players will have to work towards the goals together. To that end, it is essential to form connections that are based on trust and go beyond any differences in thinking. The philosophy of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, from which you are all about to graduate, is exactly in line with the philosophy that all SDG activities should possess.

Contributions to SDGs are starting to be seriously considered even in my own field of specialization, information and communication technologies. Here in Japan, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications is conducting a survey of SDG contributions in which I am also participating. Through that survey, I had the opportunity to meet a very special person, a telecommunications specialist from JICA. When we were introduced, He said, “Actually, I was a member of the first graduating class of the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies.” I was happy to hear him speak with pride about being a graduate of our program, and I was genuinely delighted to have the opportunity to work with one of our graduates in such a setting.

Networks of people that share the same goal unintentionally form in unexpected places when graduates connect with other graduates or faculty members. And the sharing of knowledge and cooperation that emerges from those networks is where the true value of this program can be found.

Today, you have all completed the program here at the Waseda University Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies. Today also marks the beginning of new collaborations. With each step you take forward, whole new worlds will appear. It is our sincere hope that you become highly skilled professionals, capable of utilizing the analytical abilities you obtained through your studies and research here at the School of Asia-Pacific Studies to make contributions towards solving problems and creating new value not only in the Asia-Pacific region, but on the global stage as well.

Last but not least, Professor Michio Yamaoka will retire at the end of March this year. He was instrumental in establishing the Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, and has made great

contributions to the development of the program over the past 20 years. Once again, I would like to express our sincerest appreciation for all that he has done.

Now everyone, let's go and build a better future.

Congratulations on completing the program. Thank you!