

Shimane University Autumn Degree Conferment Ceremony, 2026 - Addressy

Congratulations to the 16 graduates from the five faculties, 4 master's students from the Graduate School of Human and Social Sciences, 11 master's students and 4 doctoral students from the Graduate School of Natural Science and Technology, and the 1 doctoral student (based on a dissertation), as well as all those involved, on your graduation and completion of your studies. On behalf of the officers, faculty, staff, and students of Shimane University, I offer my heartfelt congratulations.

You all chose to study at Shimane University and enrolled here to fulfill your dreams and aspirations. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have diminished during your time at the university, throughout the period, you maintained your interest and enthusiasm in your specialized fields, and your strong desire to learn. Through daily effort, you completed the prescribed curriculum, and after the end of the pandemic, you enjoyed university life as it had returned to its original state. I sincerely congratulate you on receiving your degrees here today.

To all the international students, you have come to Shimane, Japan, far from your home countries, to study at Shimane University. You have diligently studied to fulfill your dreams and to apply the results of your learning to address challenges and contribute to the development of your home countries. We express our sincere respect and congratulations on your success in compiling your unique research into theses and obtaining your degrees, and for the efforts you have made throughout this process.

You are here on the day of graduation through the support and involvement of people around you, including your supervisors who guided you during your studies, your friends with whom you discussed your future, shared problems, and studied hard together, the regional community who supported you in various aspects, and your family members who watched over your growth. Please continue to walk your new path, never forgetting your gratitude to those who have supported you up until now.

Now, the knowledge and skills you have acquired at this university will undoubtedly form the foundation for your future. On the other hand, I believe you all realized that even passing exams doesn't mean you've learned everything, and that even after completing a thesis, many challenges remain. I believe that one of the most important lessons at university is realizing and understanding that the more you learn and research, the more there is to learn and research.

Specialized knowledge and technology are constantly evolving at an accelerating pace, but this itself indicates that there is still an almost infinite amount of knowledge we need to know. In fact, we don't even fully explain our own existence. Of the energy in our universe, ordinary matter accounts for less than 5%; the remaining 95% is called dark matter or dark energy, but essentially, we don't know what it is. Furthermore, theoretically, the universe is not just one universe, but a multiverse, with countless existences. If more than 95% of that single universe is unknown, how much more advanced can we say that today's cutting edge research is compared to the time when the geocentric model was still being advocated?

Moving from the topic of space, let's now shift to my specialty, anatomy, and discuss individual differences. Just as every person's face is unique, so too are the bones, organs, and bodies of each individual. For medical students, experiencing and realizing this during anatomy labs is the most fundamental understanding they will have when facing unique patients in clinical practice. I always told my medical students that textbooks only show one example of all humans from their origins to extinction; all the answers lie within each individual's corpse. It's miraculous that each person, in that unique, once-in-a-lifetime moment, can see, hear, feel, speak, think, and act upon the expressions, posture, and movements of the person before them. We still barely explain the body and mind that make this so commonplace.

While the amount of information increases daily, the cutting edge—a hundred years ago, today, and in the future—is merely the cutting edge of that particular moment; our knowledge is limited.

No matter which path you choose, no one knows what the true right answer is. Therefore, throughout your life, repeatedly remind yourself of the "knowledge of ignorance" and continue to learn humbly every day.

Furthermore, the evolution of technology, especially AI, is accelerating, and is now transforming the world in every field, including politics, economics, science, art, medicine, and even the military. No matter what field you choose in the future, you can no longer avoid the influence of AI; the question is how to utilize it wisely. However, in real society, correctly recognizing the limitations of AI and making final decisions based on your own responsibility is critically important.

A symbolic example illustrating the importance of final judgment is the results brought about by the dramatic increase in efficiency and accuracy of attacks on the battlefield brought about by AI. Cases where misfires occur due to AI's "accurate" judgments demonstrate that the information AI uses as a basis for judgment is, in principle, based on past inputs, not current information, and therefore cannot respond to the unique once-in-a-lifetime circumstances of a present situation. Moreover, the fact that tactically successful attacks resulting from AI's "accurate and dramatically rapid" judgments sometimes lead to strategically more difficult situations rather than the intended outcome demonstrates the limitations of the perspective AI has when making judgments based on the information it is given. These examples clearly demonstrate the risks of directly applying AI judgments to real-world situations, no matter how rapid or statistically accurate they may be.

Unfortunately, the world is currently experiencing increasing turmoil from conflicts, divisions, and global warming, and we humans are deeply involved in many of the causes. In this context, let us reaffirm that communication among individuals, both domestically and internationally, and the mutual understanding that results from it, are the most fundamental and important foundation for realizing a peaceful and sustainable world.

As we continue to learn throughout our lives, in this era of turmoil and uncertainty, where human civilization is exceeding the limits of the Earth, there is a concept we should keep in mind to realize a sustainable Earth and society as envisioned by the SDGs: "Roppou Yoshi: six way satisfaction". "Sampo Yoshi: three way satisfaction", known as the philosophy of Omi merchants who were active throughout the country during the Edo period, is "good for the seller," "good for the buyer", and "good for society". This was an idea that valued the interests of buyers and social contribution, rather than pursuing only the interests of the seller or himself. The "Roppou Yoshi: six way

satisfaction”, for realizing a sustainable society and a living environment on Earth, includes three additional elements: “Good for craftsman”, “Good for the earth”, and “Good for the future”. In order to think about all the people who are directly or indirectly involved, and to pass on the earth that nurtures abundant life to future generations, please always keep in mind “Roppo Yoshi: six way satisfaction” and proceed on your own path.

Shimane University has a history of over 75 years and has produced over 70,000 alumni. Even after graduation, we hope you will cherish the connections you have made with fellow alumni, faculty, staff, and the local community in Shimane, and continue your involvement with Shimane University and Shimane Prefecture. In addition to alumni associations in various locations throughout Japan, including Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Fukuoka, and Hiroshima, Shimane University currently has alumni associations in 12 countries overseas. We encourage you to participate in these alumni associations and take advantage of the Shimane University network that transcends faculties and generations. Furthermore, as alumni of Shimane University, we would be extremely grateful if you would support the further development of our university for the sake of your juniors.

I offer my congratulations on your bright future, and I would also like to extend my congratulations once again to your families and all those involved who have supported and watched over your growth with great expectations. This concludes my address at the degree conferment ceremony.

September 18, 2026

OTANI Hiroki

President of Shimane University