

## Graduation speech

9/14/2016

By Mahdi Katsumata Shah

Good morning.

It is indeed a great honor and pleasure for me to be selected as the leader of the batch of fall 2016, of the Graduate School of System Design and Management at Keio University. My name is Mahdi Katsumata Shah and I am very happy to share this moment with Dean Maeno, distinguished Faculty and my esteemed colleagues and their families

We came here two years ago not knowing what to expect. We did not know what a system was and we did not have an understanding of components and sub-components; about the multitude of checks and balances otherwise known as verification and validation and the resultant “V” model that allows us to make an endeavor successful. We did not know the relationship between design thinking and systems engineering as well as the project management skills that are necessary to carry forth a finite piece of work. We had a vague notion as to what creativity was and but little of the difficulty of turning that spark into reality otherwise known as innovation.

I feel that the world is more complicated than it was two years ago. The temperature of this planet never ceases to rise. There is an unprecedented refugee crisis happening in close proximity to what used to be the cradle of civilization. Political divisions among communities are rampant and deeper than ever and powers old and new are redrawing this precarious balance known as the World Order.

At the same time, we are entering an epoch. We are entering a world of things talk to each other, chips more advanced than what the Apollo mission used can fit in the palm of our hands, and a child can have access to information greater than the library of Alexandria. Child mortality is down, and great wars have so far been averted.

Whether or not we are better or worse off than we were compared to 30 years ago is a debate for another occasion but one thing is for sure, that is the level of complexity is rising. And the burning question is: are we ready for this? Have we prepared ourselves adequately?

And in this vein, I ask you to consider this as well. Why did we write our papers? To pass requirements? Who did we write them for? To please our families and our professors? Are we leaving this establishment with less or more power to dream? Professors, are you satisfied with us?

Dear all, I challenge you all and myself to change ourselves, our communities and our countries. I challenge us to keep on thinking in such a way as to ensure that we are not subjects to winds of change but that we are the change itself. I challenge us to always think outside our bodies and temperaments, our religious and ethnic boundaries, the various 'isms' that we all inevitably subscribe ourselves to.

I challenge us to think continue to think outside our little boxes so that we can try to fix and improve this complex world that we live in. Thank you and god bless you all.