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Pursuit of Research

Yoshiaki Furukawa

I can proudly say I have been engaged in research on wide-ranging themes from biology of bacteria to pathogenic mechanisms of human diseases, centering on metalloprotein structures and functions. Therefore, when I'm asked, "What kind of research are you engaged in?" I usually respond with a variable answer, trying to see what the questioner really wants to know. The case of the interview for this issue was no exception; I felt a bit undecided which research to talk about. Nevertheless, if asked about why I pursue research, my only, definite answer is "Because it's fun."

Pursuit of research – what do you think of it? Given difficulties inherent in research, some of you may have the impression that the more difficult a research theme is, the more exciting it is. It is true we have to make preparations (preliminary studies)

to understand the content of a research; you actually don't have to regard research itself as something invincibly difficult. For instance, why don't you regard research as an extension of amusement?

Just remember the days when as a child you played hide and seek. It must have been fun for you to look for a new hiding place or think up a crazy idea for fleeing from the tagger. Exactly the same can be said of research. Desires to discover new things and surprise all others are the very motives for research. No matter how small a discovery may be, only the first researcher who has published it can be the winner. This drives researchers around the world to aim at winners' positions with a vigilant eye. That said, this rule is the same as that of hide and seek. Everyone being serious about the game makes research endeavors all the more fun.

Despite the nature of research, which is supposed to be fun, we often hear of gloomy screams over the decreasing

number of students who aim to choose researchers' careers. There may be various reasons for this trend. For one thing, to my great regret, negative aspects of researchers' careers (such as unstable employment) are bandied about as the use of the Internet and SNS spread. In my early years, there were no terms like "network society". Information was practically limited to "live" success stories about our seniors and professors who were around, which helped us young ones devote ourselves to research in a situation of "Ignorance is bliss", so to speak. Instead of aiming only at finding employment with big businesses, why don't you shut yourself off from worldly noises and come to grips with the world of experiments and research? Your future will somehow take care of itself only if you enjoy your researcher's life in earnest. I'm sure you will find a life of amusing yourself in the "fun" of research much better and rewarding than perceived from outside.

Science and Technology Information

Introducing Keio's organization for industry-academia collaboration

By establishing an organization for close collaboration with industry and local governments, Keio University's Faculty of Science and Technology strives to return its research results to society and foster up-and-coming human resources. We are also intent on strengthening our research organization by supporting government initiatives such as the Program for Promoting the Enhancement of Research Universities and the Top Global University Project.



Editor's postscript

In the process of their evolution, living things had acquired a smart mechanism of using metal ions as metalloproteins. In recent times, significant progress has been made in research, particularly shedding light on mysteries of life sciences at molecular and atomic levels. This progress is expected to contribute to human society in a wide range of fields. We sincerely hope Keio University will also bear an active part by offering its most advanced research results in science and technology including medical and pharmaceutical sciences. Dr. Furukawa's lab is filled with various chemical test apparatuses, where we found member students devoted to research, which was an impressive sight.

(Kenji Kobayashi)

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