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私の My favorite books 本棚



● Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind

Feeling threatened by Japan's fast growing economy, the United States during the 80's typically depicted Japan as "a country of imitators without creativity," "a country driving its people into underpaid hard work" and "a totalitarian country where people are forced to work like robots." Under such influence, I myself did not have a positive view of Japan, the country of my parents. When I had to decide between returning to Japan or entering an American university, I encountered the film version of Nausicaä. I was overwhelmed and felt a strong desire to experience living in the same country as the creator of such a film.

● Essence of Failure

I was told of the experience of my grandfather who was drafted by the Japanese Imperial Army and experienced many terrible things in China and Burma. After attending elementary school in the States, my classmates repeatedly made a point that Japan was defeated by the United States during the war. Such experiences led me to think deeply about the reasons of what had happened. I think it is very important to learn from past mistakes in doing anything.

● Maintaining a Flexible Mind

This book I received as a memento from Shuntaro Sato, a professional conductor of an orchestra with whom we became friends while staying in France from 2005 to 2007. It contains dialogues between Seiji Ozawa (a conductor) and Heisuke Hironaka (a mathematician). Through my relation with Mr. Sato, I was able to confirm that music and mathematics, though seemingly different, have much in common.

● Mindset

It has long been my belief that our "talents" and "abilities" can be developed with effort. This famous book, based on rigorous psychological experiments, explain that one can obtain positive results by maintaining such a mindset. I hope to be able to convey to my students that such a positive mindset is very helpful in future success.

● The Glass Bead Game

This novel is a biography of Josef Knecht, a fictitious character living in a future world; a master of the "Glass Bead Game." The description of the central device of this book, the "Glass Bead Game" – an artistic game integrating music, the arts and mathematics – woke my interest in seriously studying mathematic. Although at first I did not take much notice, I recently began to contemplate on the meaning of the story's shocking finale.

● Realization of Polylogarithms

In this paper, the author Jörg Wildeshaus constructs the realization of the polylogarithms in a very general setting. After attending an intensive lecture by Prof. Kazuya Kato (now a professor at University of Chicago) in graduate school, I learned the difficulty of constructing motivic objects. Immediately after, I encountered this book which suggested that the construction of the polylogarithm was a promising method to construct important motivic objects in a very general setting. This experience convinced me to make polylogarithm as my central topic of research.

● Stories of Mathematics

This series is an introductory account of mathematical concepts that high school and college students will encounter. The books provide students with a good overview of mathematical concepts before they jump into more technical books. The book is recommended to high school students curious about what lies ahead.