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Reading the tide

Genya Ishigami

In William Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar" there is a passage which goes: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, which taken at the flood leads on to fortune; Omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries." (Citation from a volume mentioned as one of "My Favorite Books.") Simply put, I think this means that you must discern the most fortuitous timing before taking action. The word "tide" in English contains the nuances of both prospects and favorable trends ("Tide" is of course also a strong-smelling brand of laundry detergent.) Just as the word "shiodoki" in Japanese, which is made up of the Chinese characters for "tide" and "time" also means "opportunity," the fact that the people of yore expressed the appropriate timing of life and its transitions in terms of the ebb and flow of the tide speaks to the intimate relationship which exists between human life and the sea.

As you learn in elementary school, the earth's tides are influenced by the gravitational pull by the moon, and these both nurture life and indicate the best times to catch fish via tide tables. In my case, if I get a bumper haul when I go clam digging at low tide I can pass this fortune on to my family. Meanwhile, it is no easy matter to discern the ebb and flow of the tides of the world at large. Especially as we find ourselves in an era in which the cycles of these tides are many times faster than those in Shakespearean times. The powerful tide of AI in particular, a notion which has been somewhat loosely interpreted in the past several years, is nowadays a constant presence. In addition, in the domain of internet cloud computing, huge volumes of content are proliferated and consumed, and there is a repeated ebbing and flowing of the tides as the development and culling of things proceeds at a fearsome pace. Where are these tides leading us, and are we currently in the midst of a high or a low tide? These can be thought of as complex undulations.

Universities make analyses and predictions on the tides of the times, and in a manner of speaking are the shipyards in which the boats sailing on these currents are built. It seems to me that most of students may often experience a number of dynamic confluences, from undergraduate, to master's student, through to doctoral candidate and finally working adult. During my student days, I scuba-dived, and experienced drift diving on several occasions. During this activity you enjoy diving while largely entrusting your person to the currents of the tide. However, in certain circumstances you are obliged to struggle against the current, which is where the skill comes in.

I have recently come to reflect on my tendency to get carried away on the currents of day-to-day affairs. I hope to continue my passage through life nurturing the kind of determination needed to ride the precursive currents which are brimming with energy, and swim against the tide or create new currents when needed, rather than continuing to drift away on the tides of quotidian life.

Science and Technology **Information**

Establishment of the Yagami AI and Advanced Programming Room

Keio University Faculty of Science and Technology have established the Yagami AI and Advanced Programming Room in Room 407 of Building 34 on Yagami Campus. Here, an environment is available for the common use of the very latest advanced AI machines by students wishing to engage with AI and conduct advanced programing so as to promote cutting-edge AI research and the utilization of programming implementation technologies. This environment allows students conducting research relating to AI and advanced programming to freely interact and discuss with their peers, while exchanging information and ideas that transcend university frameworks and affiliated laboratories. An AI beginner's course was also begun for third- and fourth-year undergraduates. An AI and advanced programming counsellor is on permanent standby, and visitors can avail of their advice at any time.

In addition, the "AI and Advanced Programming Consortium" will be inaugurated from April 1, 2019. The inclusion of corporate members in this consortium will facilitate interactions with employees from these companies, in addition to those with other Keio faculty, staff, and undergraduate students across faculties. We also plan various events alongside our corporate members, with an emphasis on AI contests, and also plan to host seminars by these members.

An "AI and Advanced Programming Room" was established simultaneously at Hiyoshi Campus (Room F11 of the Fujiyama Memorial Hall), and similar rooms are to be rolled out to the Shinanomachi, Shiba-kyoritsu, Shonan-Fujisawa and Mita Campuses aligned with the features of the various campuses.

Editor's postscript

I felt a powerful empathy with the warmth exuded by the film-like world Associate Professor Ishigami invokes of mankind and robots living a harmonious existence when asked to talk about the robot development in which he is involved. It is also persuasive to hear the students refer to him in endearing terms tinged with respect and familiarity as "Ishigami-san." This befits both his gentle demeanor and his passion and broad-ranging knowledge and experience in developing robots to contribute to humanity and society.

I felt that learning of the professor's impressions of his time as a researcher is more fate than coincidence, especially in light of the circumstances behind his upcoming appearance in the Japan edition of the Powered Wheelchair Series to be held this year. (Asami Fukumoto)

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