



Dear Reader,

Kyoto (and many other institutes in Japan) has a forced retirement system by age and it came to me this March. Fortunately I got a small position at RIMS in the same Kyoto University and am now spending almost the same daily life as before (well, virtually no classes or faculty meetings,... a bit lacking tensions). So I had a lot of things to do in February and March, mostly paper works.

Among others, I had to prepare a bunch of documents for my pension, which does not come to me automatically. Obviously it was a good chance to know what our pension system is like and especially what amount of money would be coming. Then it turned out that the description of those things is really complicated with several formulas. It is a well-known fact that only a very small group of people, mainly bureaucrats, do understand it and they do not want other people to do so. The reason is clear; they are afraid that many complaints are coming once people understand it.

However, after a couple of weeks' study, I finally ended up with the fact that our pension has a couple of different sources but the amount of money coming from its main part, which is also the hardest part to understand, is somewhat proportional to the income he/she has gotten in the whole carrier. This is surprisingly simple but the description never mentions that. Of course you can figure out the exact amount after understanding several definitions of terms and complex formulas, but its (pretty accurate) approximation is simple and

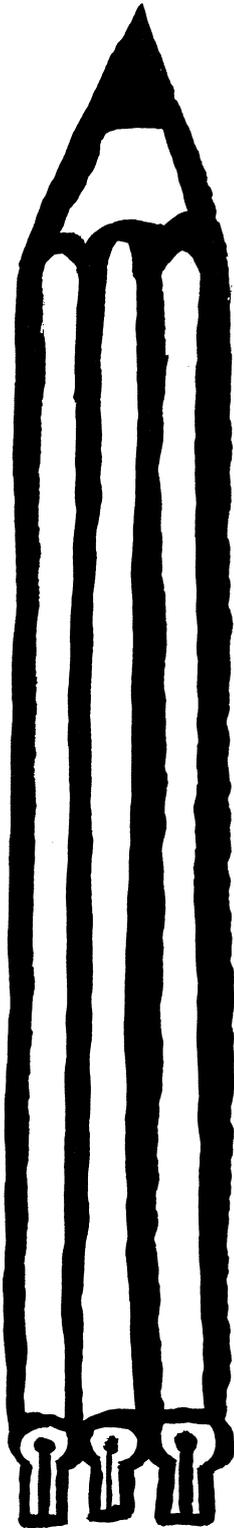


natural. But they still don't want to make it clear.

Then I noticed that exactly the same thing can happen when we write papers. I am sure there are many (but not all) cases that the basic idea is quite simple although the exact description should be complicated. Now there are several different types of authors. Some of them make it (the idea) clear but still succeed in claiming the result is nontrivial. Some of them deliberately hide it because they are afraid that its revealing would destroy the importance of the result. Some of them even do not know there is a simple idea behind the (rather complicated) result, which is sometimes indicated by reviewers. Our pension system is exactly the second type.

This issue of BEATCS has five obituaries including the one for David Johnson. I was a main organizer of SODA 2012 in Kyoto and I remember a lot of communications with David who everyone knows is a single main figure of the conference. He looked ok at that time, but soon after that I heard he was having a serious health problem.

I enjoyed reading advises from EATCS fellows. I also read similar articles here and there and even have written ones by myself. In such occasions, it is always hard, at least as far as I am concerned, to understand how the whole environments are different between now and when I was young (usually these kind of articles target young people). I can write how I should have done when I was young but I am not sure if this is useful at all for young guys of the current time.



Summer is approaching. Its image is different from place to place, but to me who lives in Kyoto it is definitely not very welcome, just heat and humid. I hope it IS welcome with you. Kyoto (and many other institutes in Japan) has a forced retirement system by age and it came to me this March. Fortunately I got a small position at RIMS in the same Kyoto University and am now spending almost the same daily life as before (well, virtually no classes or faculty meetings,... a bit lacking tensions). So I had a lot of things to do in February and March, mostly paper works.

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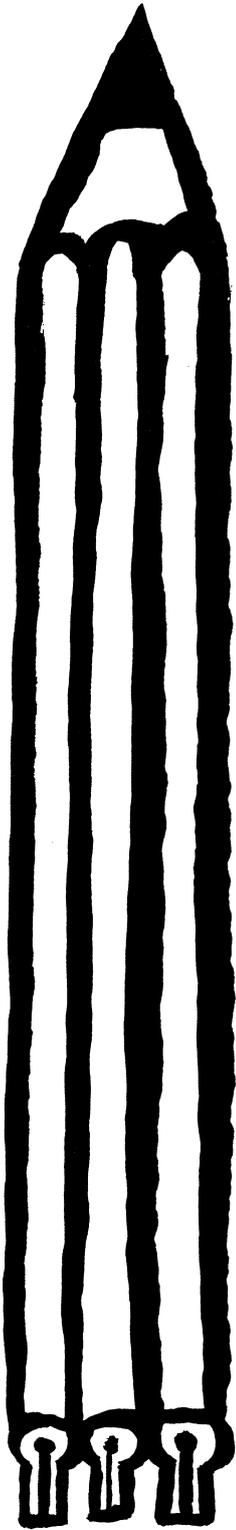


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*Kazuo Iwama, Kyoto  
June 2016*