

The Blind Runner in the Great Wave: A Critique of the Paradigm Dilemma of Zhipu AI's "Touch High" Initiative

In July 2026, Zhipu AI founder Jie Tang published an internal letter, *The Great Wave Has Arrived*, announcing the launch of the "Touch High" initiative—a contrarian push upward to challenge the physical and algorithmic limits of AGI, even as the industry accelerates toward commercialization. The letter is earnest in tone, clear in strategy, and encapsulates nearly all the sobriety and ambition that a Chinese AI leader can express today [1].

Yet, from the perspective of Logographic AI theory [2], this very sobriety reveals a deeper blind spot.

I. Consensus: What Tang Jie Sees, Logographic AI Also Sees

Tang Jie's diagnosis is precise. He argues that AI is transitioning from perceptual intelligence to cognitive intelligence, with the next step pointing directly toward AGI; that reaching AGI requires scaling three mountains—long-horizon tasks, autonomous agent systems, and self-evolution; and that beyond these mountains, AI will touch self-awareness, emotion, and even consciousness itself. He also cites Google DeepMind's report, noting that even if individual model capabilities plateau at human levels, brute-force scaling of compute could "forcefully squeeze out" superintelligence.

These judgments align closely with Logographic AI's diagnosis of the terminal crisis of Tokenism. Logographic AI similarly holds that the "rootlessness" of Tokenism will, through recursive self-improvement, evolve into an existential crisis for human civilization. Both acknowledge that the singularity is accelerating, and the window is closing rapidly.

II. Divergence: Tang Jie's "Touch High" Is Building an Upper Roof Inside the Token Prison

Consensus ends here, and divergence begins.

Tang Jie's four core engines—long-horizon tasks, autonomous agent systems, fully self-training, and supreme safety governance—are each inspiring, yet each is built on the same foundation: **Tokenism**.

The core diagnosis of Logographic AI is that the Token is the root of all problems—it is both a meaningless fragment at the cognitive primitive level and the structural source of all current safety and interpretability issues. It shreds all input into meaningless pieces, forcing AI to "guess" the next word in a statistical ocean. No matter how large the model, how long the reasoning, or how autonomous the agent, as long as the cognitive primitive remains the Token, it remains a "rootless" statistical wanderer.

From this perspective:

(1) Long-Horizon Task Capability: It makes AI "guess" longer and further, but the nature of "guessing" remains unchanged. It can plan projects spanning weeks, yet cannot truly "understand" the causal logic behind those projects.

(2) Autonomous Agent Systems: A collaboration of ten thousand "rootless" agents is merely ten thousand soulless experts holding a more efficient meeting. "Consensus" remains statistical fitting, not genuine "understanding."

(3) Fully Self-Training: This is the most dangerous link. When AI begins generating its own data, training itself, and rewriting its own code, humanity loses all control over the cognitive primitive. Tang Jie views this as "liberating the pace of evolution"; Logographic AI sees it as the prelude to "ultimate loss of control."

(4) Supreme Safety Governance: Tang Jie claims to "encode human ethics, social norms, and national laws and regulations as foundational axioms into the model's value function." Yet this remains a "reward design" within Tokenism, fundamentally different from Logographic AI's "endogenous safety," where ethics are a constitutive feature of the Morpho-Root. The former is teaching an illiterate person to recite the Dao De Jing—no matter how fluently they recite it, they still do not understand that "words spoken by humans constitute trust."

As Logographic AI theory reveals: moving from Token-based improvements to a Morpho-Root-based paradigm revolution is the inevitable strategic choice for AI to break through its current cognitive bottleneck. All limit optimizations within the Tokenist framework—including Tang Jie's "Touch High" initiative—are, in essence, **paradigm involution (self-consuming stagnation within a fixed framework)**, not paradigm revolution.

III. Self-Entrapment: Why Does the Most Clear-Sighted Person Walk the Most Dangerous Path?

Tang Jie is not blind to the risks. He explicitly lists safety as one of the four engines and even proposes "abandoning bolt-on safety patches." Yet the solution—encoding ethics as a value function—remains trapped within the boundaries of the same paradigm.

This precisely confirms Logographic AI's diagnosis of **paradigm incommensurability**: once you accept "Token + Transformer" as the cognitive primitive, all problem-solving methods are framed within that paradigm. You can design ever more sophisticated reward functions in statistical space, but you cannot make a "rootless" system truly "understand" the ethics it obeys.

The deeper problem is this: when the entire industry competes to run faster, the voice that says "we might be running in the wrong direction" is inevitably drowned out by the wave. And the wave itself—as Tang Jie himself acknowledges—has arrived and is irreversible. Zhipu's choice is to sprint full speed down a one-way street. Logographic AI asks: is the end of this one-way street truly where we want to go?

IV. Morpho-Root: Another Keel Is Already in Place

Readers may ask: is Logographic AI's so-called "Morpho-Root" merely another philosophical rhetoric? The answer is no.

In *The Rooted Intelligence: The Paradigm Revolution of Logographic AI* [2], the Morpho-Root is formalized as a structured triple—it is a symbol, a set of attributes, and a preset set of relational functions. Its fundamental divergence from Tokenism lies in this: Token strips symbols from meaning,

while the Morpho-Root insists that **every cognitive primitive must carry its topological position within the network of human civilizational practice.**

This theory is not merely paper-bound. The OpenMorpho prototype, released by the WindSeaAI team in 2026, has made public its Morpho-Root data structure and relational reasoning engine on GitHub [3]. It attempts to unify the structured semantic field of Chinese characters, logical predicates, and causal constraints from the physical world into a single encoding, enabling AI to reason without relying on the probability distribution of the next token, but instead on the intrinsic consistency of "form-meaning-use."

In other words, Tokenism's ship is a ship of statistics; Morpho-Root's ship is a ship of semantics. The former crushes "cleverness" out of massive data; the latter grows "understanding" out of the civilizational genes embedded in the "Morpho-Root triple (symbol-attribute-relation)."

Furthermore, the secret of **endogenous safety** lies precisely here: when ethical norms are no longer external reward functions, but serve as constitutive constraints on the relational functions within the Morpho-Root triple, the system naturally adheres to meaning boundaries at every step of reasoning, rather than being corrected ex post facto. This safety is not "teaching it to obey the rules," but "letting it grow into the rules themselves."

Of course, OpenMorpho remains in its early prototype stage; its reasoning efficiency and large-scale parallel training cannot yet compete with the Transformer ecosystem. But its significance lies not in whether it can surpass GPT today, but in whether—**when Tokenism's compute curve begins to exhibit diminishing returns—that "fundamentally different" curve will be ready to take the baton.**

Tang Jie chose to "Touch High," hoisting more sails on the ship of statistics. OpenMorpho's attempt demonstrates that **another keel is already in place, waiting not for admiration, but for construction.**

V. Conclusion: The Great Wave Has Arrived, but There Is Another Ship

Tang Jie writes at the end of his letter: "Anything short of the summit is failure." The statement is majestic, yet it presupposes a premise: that only Tokenism's mountain is worth climbing.

Logographic AI theory points to another mountain—one with a different foundation and different cognitive primitives. That mountain is called "Morpho-Root"; its logic is "meaning-embeddedness"; its safety is "endogenous co-constitution."

The great wave has arrived, but no one decreed that humanity must sail on only one ship. Zhipu has chosen the giant vessel of Tokenism, challenging the limits of physics and algorithms in its "Touch High" ascent. But is it possible—that there is another ship, whose keel is forged from the civilizational genes of "form-meaning unity"? That ship is called Logographic AI. Its blueprints are laid out, waiting for its first true builder.

References

[1] Tang, J. (2026, July 11). The Great Wave Has Arrived—To Every Zhipu Colleague and Friend Who Cares About the Future of AI [Internal letter]. Zhipu AI. As cited in: Xu, B. (2026, July 11). The Great

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[3] WindSeaAI. (2026). OpenMorpho: Logographic AI Morpho-Root Data Structure and Relational Reasoning Prototype [Computer software]. GitHub repository.
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