

In Memory of Professor Yasuo Takamura

Prof. Yasuo Takamura, who played a central role as a founder in establishing the Society of Sago Palm Studies and was Vice President from 1992 to 2003, concluded his life of 84 years on June 4, 2019.

As a councilor from 2004 to 2009, he was devoted to the management of the Society. As an Advisory Committee member at SAGO 2001, held in Tsukuba, and as an Executive Committee member at the 12th International Sago Symposium held in Tokyo in 2015, he conducted coordination efforts with domestic and overseas organizations.

Six days before his passing away, I received e-mail from Prof. Takamura. I had actually been consulting with Society members to visit him in the very near future, so I received his obituary with great surprise.

The content of the last email I received is below.

“Dear Prof. Ehara, Prof. Toyoda, Prof. Toyota, Prof. Okazaki and Councilors,

Thanks to you for the establishment of a valuable and respectable international academic society on sago palm research. I would like to thank all of you and pray for good health. This will close my email account.

Terima kasih.”

This email was sent as a reply to the SSPS annual meeting report. After the meeting was held, I had hoped to show him the new book *Tropical Agriculture*, published with the members of the related societies, as our recent achievement, and I regret that I was delayed for a few days.

Prof. Takamura graduated from the Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto University, in 1960, became an associate professor at Okayama University, and a professor at Okayama University, before becoming a professor at Kyoto University, where he served from 1993 to 1998. After retiring, he received the title of Professor Emeritus from Kyoto University.

During his professional life, Prof. Takamura was consistently engaged in research on tropical crops. In 1972, he conducted research on cultivated plants in Latin America, in 1979 on the origin of cultivated rice, in 1984 on sago palm ecology in Indonesia, and in 1989 on agricultural ecology in Botswana and Zambia. From 1994 to 1997, he was a JICA project team leader in Tanzania. In 2003, Prof. Naito and I received the Nagato Academic Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research and introduced the sago palms to Tanzania with Prof. Takamura’s great support. When he stayed in Tanzania in 2006, we were able to show him the sago palms growing on the campus of Sokoine University of Agriculture.



Prof. Takamura's achievements in research and technology transfer have greatly contributed to and continue to influence activities in various fields. In 1998, he was awarded the Eikichi Iso Memorial Award from the Japanese Society of Tropical Agriculture (JSTA) for "Researches on Cropping Systems in Tropical Africa". In 2004, he received a high honor in the form of the JICA President's Award. The following is one of major publications that summarize research results. *The Sago Palm: The Food and Environmental Challenges of the 21st Century*, Kyoto University Press.

After being a long-time councilor at JSTA, Prof. Takamura became president for two terms in four years, beginning with the 2000 fiscal year. He was in charge of the editorial secretary at the Crop Science Society of Japan and worked on improving the quality of the journal.

Prof. Takamura was kind and thoughtful in all directions and was polite in dealing with everything. I think his personality may have been reflected in his high level of coordination in management, such as the construction of various networks and the maintenance and improvement of their functions. It may be a proof that the contribution of "Hitozukuri" (human resource development) projects in the field of international cooperation was highly esteemed by society.

Prof. Takamura was also a talkative person, and we had been growing up looking at his back and we also listened to a lot of stories from him and received various materials and his suggestions. I think we were able to find ways to grow as researchers and/or educators. Not only did he love talking, but he was also a good and kind listener. It was our pleasure to plan, implement, and coordinate various projects while looking forward to telling Prof. Takamura about new initiatives at academic societies, the progress of various projects, research results, etc.

Our last opportunity to witness Prof. Takamura was during the general discussion at the open symposium held by JSTA at Kyoto University on September 29, 2018, eight months before he passed away. We are sorry that we will no longer be able to talk with or report directly to Prof. Takamura, but we would like to continue our self-improvement in order to show our gratitude and honor his contribution to our lives.

I, together with the members of societies for related studies, would like to pray for the soul of Prof. Takamura, who was an educator and a researcher until the end.

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