

In Memoriam:

Honorary Member Tomoyuki Shirai, MD, PhD, 1946–2015

An honorary member and the former president of the Japanese Society for Toxicologic Pathology, Doctor Tomoyuki Shirai, suddenly passed away from acute aortic dissection on November 19, 2015. For me, it is still difficult to find ways to manage my grief for his sudden and too early death with his seventieth birthday close at hand.



On that day, Doctor Shirai attended the 46th International Symposium held by the Princess Takamatsu Cancer Research Fund at Palace Hotel Tokyo, and met a large number of his colleagues. I, his junior in school, also enjoyed conversations with him as intimately as usual while having lunch together. It was totally unexpected that I would be informed of his death after only 10 hours.

Doctor Shirai was the former (fourth) president of this society. It is truly regrettable that I as his junior in school have to write such a memorial for him while being the present president of the society. Now that only 2 months are left for an academic meeting I mainly organize as the chairman in Takamatsu, he passed away. I expected him to attend this meeting, and let me hear his opinions about it, but this has been an unfulfilled wish.

Doctor Shirai was born in 1946. After graduating from the Medical School of Nagoya City University in 1970, he completed the PhD course at the Graduate School of Medical Sciences, and was appointed as a research associate for the First Pathology Department of the Medical School of the university in 1974. This was immediately after Doctor Nobuyuki Ito, the later President of Nagoya City University, was appointed as a professor of this department, and he started studies on chemical carcinogenesis. From 1978, he studied abroad in the United States for 2 years and a half as a visiting scientist under the supervision of Doctor Charles M. King of the

Michigan Cancer Foundation. After returning to Japan, he worked for the First Pathology Department of the Medical School of Nagoya City University as a lecturer. From 1980, he led activities as the director of the Koseiin Medical Welfare Center, while actively conducting studies on carcinogenesis in the First Pathology Department. Subsequently, he worked for the department as an assistant professor from 1989 and as a professor following Doctor Ito from 1994. When he was an assistant professor, he devotedly played a central role in managing offices for a large number of events, such as academic meetings, symposiums, and conferences, mainly held by Doctor Ito in- and outside Japan. I also assisted such events with Doctor Shirai. Memories of those days when we were so busy, but with fulfillment are dear to me. As the president of the Japanese Society for Toxicologic Pathology, he also devoted himself to its development. It is particularly noticeable that when facing the event of an office which was in charge of clerical work for the society's academic activities going out of business immediately after his appointment, he addressed the situation in a calm manner as the president, and consequently contributed to the establishment of its current stable systems.

Furthermore, Doctor Shirai achieved extensive research outcomes in the field of chemical carcinogenesis. Importantly, the establishment of the first model for the carcinogenesis of prostate cancer using rodents, which had not been established up to that time, made him a pioneer of this area. After retirement from his post of the dean of the Graduate School of Medical Sciences and Medical School of Nagoya City University at a fixed age of retirement, he took up an appointment as the director of the present Nagoya City Rehabilitation Center.

Sharing multiple hobbies, Doctor Shirai and I had established a close relationship despite the age difference between us. He loved music, and was especially fond of playing classic guitars. We both were in charge of instruments other than guitars, while belonging to a guitar & mandarin club in our school days. We both continued to actively play instruments even after graduation, and resumed to mainly play guitars later. Interestingly, even the car brand was the same, HONDA. As we similarly liked photographs and cameras, and similarly used Olympus OM-D, we borrowed and lent lenses each other on some occasions. We both studied abroad at the Michigan Cancer Foundation, and when I studied under the supervision of Doctor King, the supervisor frequently mentioned him by name, "Tomoyuki". I had the opportunity to observe experimental instruments devised by him when studying abroad, and was impressed by his originality and creativity, as well as dexterity.

About 1 year ago, when a memorial concert was held at the NGK Spark Plug Civic Center in Nagoya to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Nagoya City University Guitar & Mandarin Club, Doctor Shirai participated in it as a guitarist, and played a guitar solo in a piece of music. As this was recorded on a CD, it is still possible to listen to the clear sound of the famous guitar Ramirez he played at that time.

He fell down when he was playing his favorite guitar Ramirez after taking his last dinner with his family at home. While falling down, he placed his guitar at the guitar stand, protecting from its damage. The score set on the music stand was entitled: "Tárrega Guitar Pieces" by Tárrega, called the father of guitar.....These episodes, told by his wife whom guitars led to marry him, also touch my heart.

Representing the Japanese Society for Toxicologic Pathology, I would like to express my deep gratitude to Doctor Shirai for his devotion to the society, while heartily praying for the repose of his soul.

December 5, 2015

Katsumi Imaida, MD. Ph. D.
President of the Japanese Society for Toxicologic Pathology
Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Kagawa University