

# 'I continued beautiful traditions of Council'

**M**y career in ISPRS started with my participation in Ottawa ISP Congress held in July 1972, where I presented a paper. I was lucky to have seen the first image of ERTS (renamed as Landsat-1) during the Congress.

I attended the Helsinki ISP Congress in 1976 along with my family. I presented a paper at the Congress. Prof Takakazu Maruyasu, second vice-president was expected to propose an application of the next Congress to be held in 1980, but he did not do so mainly due to the oil shock. It made confusion in the Society's operation. I understand that Germany solved this difficult problem after Japanese withdrawal by having organised the 1980 Hamburg Congress. But I did not know about this issue as I was just a young scientist in Japan.

I presented a paper on lens calibration of non-metric camera at Hamburg ISPRS Congress in 1980. At that time, non-metric camera was not for photogrammetric use though now-a-days non-metric digital camera has become available for photogrammetry. Prof. Hideo Nakamura proposed an application of the next Congress to be held in 1984 but failed. Japanese were ashamed with the too late proposal and miserable defeat. After the Hamburg Congress, Japan Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (JSPRS) was restructured, which made me Secretary General of JSPRS. I was ordered to make a proposal at Rio Congress again to the next ISPRS Congress to be held in 1988.

At Rio de Janeiro Congress in 1984, I concentrated on



**Shunji Murai**

Former President, ISPRS (1992-1996)

the preparation of the proposal for the next Congress. The competitors were USA, (Larry Fritz), Australia (John Trinder) and India. The time given was just 15 minutes.

I was lucky and honoured to be selected as Congress Director in Rio. I still remember that Prof. Ackerman and Dr. Fred Doyle expressed their support to Japan at the previous day of the election. Since then, I was deeply involved in ISPRS management as a Council. It was beyond my expectation that I served such long years of my career starting from Congress director (1984-1988), secretary general (1988-1992), president (1992-1996) and first vice-president (1996-2000). When I was elected as Congress Director, my mind was fully occupied with thoughts on how I

could make the Kyoto Congress a success.

It was tough work to have organised Kyoto ISPRS Congress in 1988 without government support. I decided to save money by making the Congress hand-made. It meant that all tasks except hotel reservation and commercial exhibition be managed by the voluntary work of students and young scientists. We developed software for registration, paper acceptance, printing, finance etc. by ourselves. Prof. Nakamura and I tried to collect donations as much as possible from private sector. Everybody worked hard! My strongest intention was to get a large number of technical papers submitted from Japan, it being the host country. I encouraged all Japanese researchers and scientists to present their papers. I am honoured to report you that the Kyoto Congress was successful with 2,300 participants (1,500 foreigners and 800 Japanese) and the posi-

tive financial balance. The total number of presented papers from Japan was over 100. I must thank Gottfried Konecny, ISPRS president at that time, who taught Kennert and me to identify the elephant (one who works hard) from a crocodile (one who doesn't work but waits for food). He suggested the Council of ISPRS be managed by elephants. I was elected as secretary general at Kyoto ISPRS Congress from 1988 to 1992. The position of secretary general was a tough task for me coming from non-English speaking country. Keith Atkinson, UK, was of great help in proofing my English.

At ISPRS Congress in Washington in 1992, I was elected as President for the first time from Asia in the history of ISP and ISPRS. I was 52. I believed that I had enough energy to manage the presidency. I tried to continue the beautiful tradition of ISPRS Council to operate in a democratic manner which had been established by previous presidents Dr Fred Doyle, Prof Gottfried Konecny and Prof Kennert Torlegard.

My first strategy was to internationalise the European oriented Society. Many Asian countries had less opportunity to join the ISPRS activities because only one responsible organisation mainly related with photogrammetry and surveying represents the country and region. In this regard, I proposed to set up membership for regional member and associate member in the amended Statutes and Bylaw. It resulted in more Asian participation in ISPRS.

During my presidency, the biggest issue was whether GIS should be involved as a discipline of ISPRS or not. There was an opinion among Council that the discipline of ISPRS should be based on image oriented technologies, but GIS is not image oriented. We had hot discus-



sions about this issue which was finally solved democratically by voting procedure in the Council. Then GIS was officially involved into ISPRS which was reflected in the amended Statutes and Bylaw at General Assembly of Vienna ISPRS Congress in 1996.

I thank Larry Fritz, secretary general and Armin Gruen, second vice-president to have prepared a lot of documents to be proposed to General Assembly. I was lucky that all Council members were so friendly and formed a good team by sacrificing their time and energy. Larry, initiated "ISPRS Highlights" to improve communication among ISPRS members based on the open policy which was one of my goals.

I still remember the gorgeous and beautiful decoration the Hofburg Palace in Vienna where the opening ceremony was held. It was my proud memory to have delivered opening speech at such a beautiful place. I also remember the last moment of the final General Assembly, when Fred Doyle held me and said, "Shunji, you did well". Tears rolled from my eyes at that moment. Then I was endorsed to be the first vice-president at Vienna Congress. I was pleased to support Larry Fritz.

During my tenure as the first vice-president, it was great that Larry organised Strategic Plan Meeting in 1998 when we discussed the future vision of ISPRS. Armin Gruen and I started to organise Special Interest Group on "Visualisation and Animation" since 1996, as we wanted ISPRS to contribute beyond the main Council activities. This is still continuing, though in a little different style. I was elected as an honorary member at Amsterdam Congress in 2000. I served myself as chief delegate from Japan at Istanbul Congress 2004 and Beijing Congress 2008. I thank my wife Taeko to have supported me for sixteen years of my Council era. ■

