



# Original Creativity

An Autobiography

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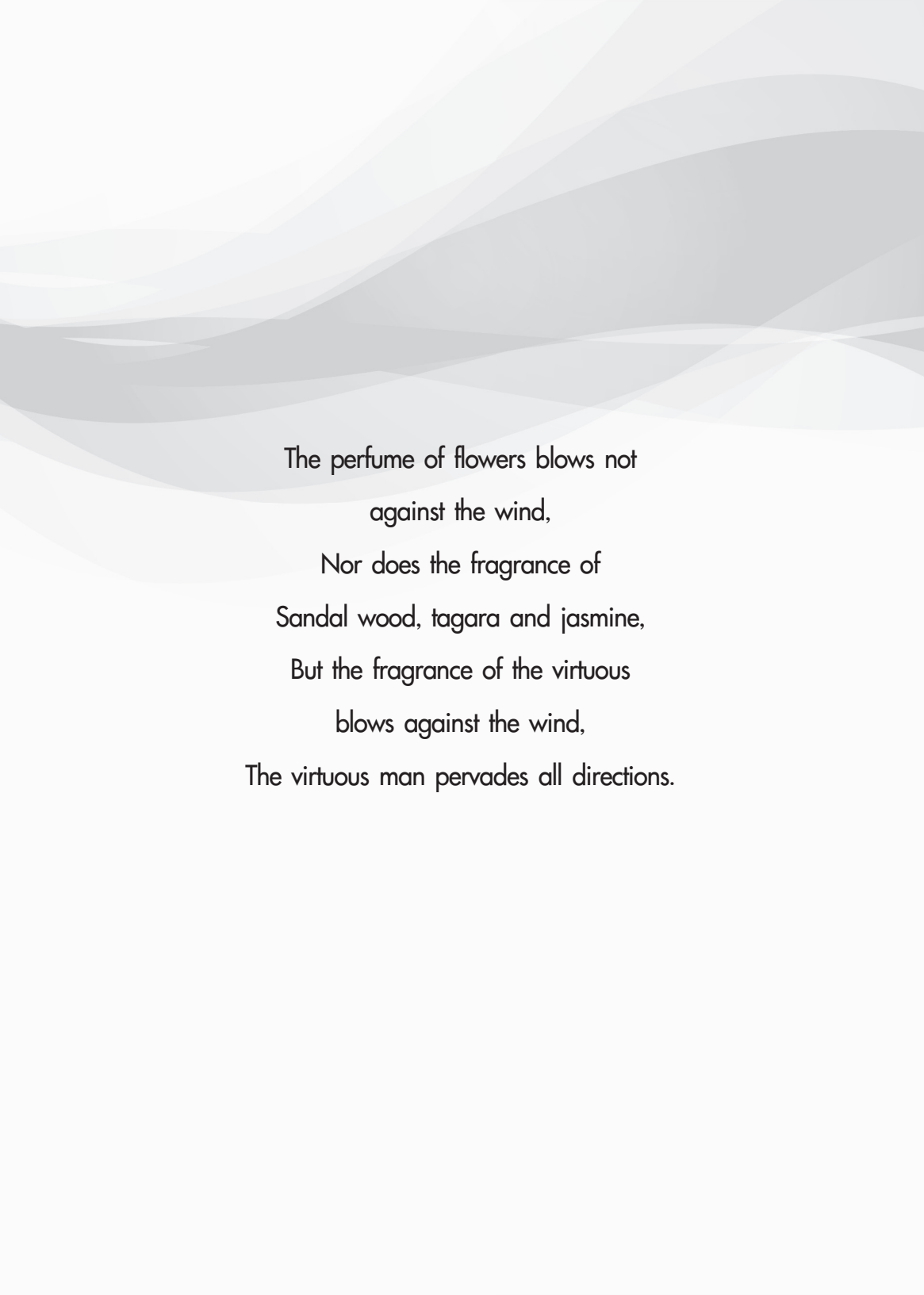
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The perfume of flowers blows not  
against the wind,  
Nor does the fragrance of  
Sandal wood, tagara and jasmine,  
But the fragrance of the virtuous  
blows against the wind,  
The virtuous man pervades all directions.



## Foreword

It is a great honor and privilege for me to translate the book “Original Creativity”, an autobiography in Japanese of Professor Shunji Murai who is my mentor and colleague into English. I used to translate the book “Wings of Fire”, an autobiography of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former president of India into Thai. I found similar creativity spirit and steadfast willpower in these two great men, especially about things to be delivered to the young generation.

Readers will appreciate what he narrated in the book, from his unique creativity since childhood to his success in his career based on survival instinct and premonition. How he followed the teachings of his mentors on bringing up his children and on leadership and management of academic society is worthy of commendation. His continuous work on earthquake prediction using remote sensing technology reflects his great compassion for mankind.

Not only people in the field of geoinformatics but also people in other fields at large could reap much benefits from his experience as described in this book.

Lastly I would like to thank CU Press for the arduous work and patience in bringing out this book.

Dr. Suvit Vibulsresth



# Murai Shunji

## My Life of Original Creativity

### *Purpose of this book*

Having reached the mature age of 65 years almost 20 years ago, I am now approaching 85 years old and even though my willpower is still strong, my physical strength is deteriorating. My mental capacity which was my pride is also fading, making me feel uneasy about being unable to correctly recollect my past. Eyesight is my weak point since it has declined considerably in recent years, resulting in my inability to read small characters in the newspaper. Seniors used to say that there is a wall at the age of 80, after which our bodies do not follow our orders. That truth is now clear to me.

Therefore, while body and memory still function even at a lesser degree, I would like to record details of my life for my family, friends and students so that they can learn of my past life experiences.

In short, the approximately 80 years can be described as striving for “original creativity”. I am a stubborn man who does not listen to others; indeed I am a strange man not interested in common sense or worldly customs; I am a man who thinks or takes extreme actions individually and maps out a strategy to achieve success by my own means. Once the decision has been made, no compromise is allowed; despite resistance in some cases, I remain unmoved, and determination brings about success in almost every case. First of all, I will consider deeply the purpose of taking certain actions and the objective of the task, without consulting books, TV or newspapers, which include sayings or ideas of other people. All my senses, which include my survival instincts and premonition of failure, are considered without discarding any possibilities, and from the selected options for action, I seek the best solution for the task. Of course, I realize that I am therefore solely responsible for the decisions.

If no real examples are given, readers might not understand my approach, so I will list some decisions that I took in each stage of my life. The full story and the results of my decisions will be described in detail later.

- After a ronin period for one year, I passed the entrance examination to study at the University of Tokyo. I decided to join the rowing club of the University and enter for competitive selection to represent Japan at Rome Olympic in 1960.



- After graduated from the University, I decided to work for a foreign consulting company and was dispatched as a member of the survey team for the construction of a dam in a remote area of Ghana in Africa, where I opposed a ruling by the company in order to prevent the staff from contracting malaria.
- I learned to serve my country modestly as a researcher at Maruyasu Laboratory of the Institute of Industrial Science of the University of Tokyo.
- I selected my own theme of study, even when I was told to write up the doctoral dissertation in engineering.
- I decided to separate from Professor Maruyasu who originally was my mentor.
- I gave original guidance to students once the Murai Laboratory became independent.
- I took measures to rebuild the Japan Photogrammetry of Society which was on the verge of being dissolved.
- Steps were taken, in Murai style, for Japan to be a candidate in 1980 for hosting of ISPRS (International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing) Congress, with eventual success of the Congress.
- Events were taken to improve the strategic structure of ISPRS after I became Secretary General and then voted as President of ISPRS.
- Development of the philosophy and strategies for the successful formation of the Asian Conference on Remote sensing (ACRS)

in 1980, which continues to function successfully.

- Decisions about my daily life after retirement from Professorship of the University of Tokyo in 2000.
- The decision following solicitations to carry out research on earthquake prediction.
- The decision to set up the earthquake science research agency as a company in 2013.
- The decision of both my wife and I to raise our children without forcing them to study hard.

Since there will be no contents page, the story of my life will be based on the following headings:

1. My family and my childhood period
2. Introducing my family
3. Reminiscences of my childhood
4. Primary and secondary school periods
5. High school period (including ronin period)
6. University period (indulgence in competitive rowing)
7. Participating in the Rome Olympics
8. As staff of an overseas trading company
9. Murai Laboratory period of IIS, University of Tokyo
10. Rebuilding of the Japan Society of Photogrammetry (JSP)
11. Establishment of ACRS and the Conferences
12. ISPRS Conference in Kyoto and as an Executive Director of ISPRS

13. My model for post-retirement activities
14. Commencement of Earthquake Prediction Research and formation of the Japan Earthquake Science Exploration Agency
15. Epilogue and Biography of Murai Shunji

## ① My family and my childhood period

My father was a member of one tribe of Morioka City in Iwate Prefecture (formerly called Nambu Clan). He was the descendent of Murai Mohei, usually called “Unlucky rich merchant” during the Meiji Restoration Period. Murai Mohei (also called Kagiya Kyosuke) was a rich merchant trading in clothes apparel. It was also said that he owned Osarizawa Copper Mine. Rumours said that he provided financial support to Nambu Clan, so he was treated as samurai and his achievement was widely known and recorded. His ancestor seemed to be a merchant of Ohmi Clan and well versed in trading. The fact that I am rather good at business might have been influenced by blood relation of my ancestors.

It was said that the owner of Japanese sake brewery called “Asabiraki” was also of Murai family. In the city of Morioka, there was a temple called “Gankyoji” with the cemetery of Murai family. I used to visit the temple which kept a wooden board with the story of Murai Mohei dating back to Meiji Restoration Period. After Meiji Restoration, Satsuma Clan and Choshu Clan became the government. During Boshin war, Nambu Clan demanded financial support for the military for 70,000 ryo which Murai Mohei helped financed as requested. However, such mode of finance to the clan chief was considered as lending money to Shogunate and was quite scary. The new Meiji government then forfeited Osarizawa Copper Mine and other properties. Consequently,

Murai Mohei filed a lawsuit against Meiji government. The story of the event appeared in the book called “Saigetsu”, a novel written by Shiba Ryotaro, with details covering several pages. Final judgement of the court only retained his reputation but not the copper mine and other properties.

I used to visit “Asabiraki” sake brewery myself without mentioning my name. I was shocked to know that it was also a French restaurant. As for my house, we used to drink “Asabiraki” sake since long time ago and also used as food condiment.

My father Murai Sakari was the eldest son of Murai Tsuneji. His mother died from disease at young age. My father then was looked after by Kayo, foster mother. This might be the reason why he did not have quite good character and easily lost his temper and often quarrelled with his wife in front of the children. He used to let me see his school record during secondary school and during Hirosaki High School and when studied at Kyoto Imperial University. Almost every subject was marked excellent, which shocked me. During high school, he used to be main player of tennis tournament. At that time, cheering team was very arrogant. If the game was lost, they would quarrel with the cheering team of the opposite. Sometimes, the players of the losing team might be punished by their own cheering team.

During my Primary School period, after dinner, my father would teach calculation lesson in a strict way. As soon as he finished

asking the question, he demanded the answer immediately without allowing time to think. If I did not answer quickly, I would be hit with bamboo cane. For example, a thread 12 centimeter long, if cut into 1 to 2 division, how long those threads would be. If not answered immediately punishment by cane was imminent. Finally at my crying, mother would come nearby. This time father would teach kindly. Every night after dinner for me this was the time of my sorrow. However, with the benevolence of his strict teaching calculation and mathematics became my favorite subjects. The fact that I could pass the entrance examination of the University of Tokyo (from now on called Todai) was due to the power of mathematics received from father's teaching. I feel much obliged to him. Mathematics or geometry, statistics or probability theory which my classmates abhorred, became my point getter. this might be the gift for my education.

I did not have the opportunity to serve my father for long since he died just before the age of 80. There was only one thing that I did earnestly for him. During the golf fever period, by different reasons, I received three member cards of golf clubs. I transferred the one at Hachioji to him. Normally he would join the company golf outing once in a few months and would say what a pity if he could not join. However, after the card was changed to his name, he went to play every week and enjoyed his life after retirement. But less than one year, he suffered from Ischemic stroke and could no longer play his favourite golf, necessitating the sale of his

member card for quite a large sum of money. He did not tell me but phoned Taeko, my wife saying “Taeko san, I will treat you at sushi restaurant in Seiseki Sakuragaoka. please come.” Taeko went to have sushi with my father. After returning home, she felt like being cheated. She learned later that my father had sold the member card of the golf club and with that money gave her a treat.

On the other side, my father was quite playful like small kids. My children used to tell me that when he took his elder grandson Kenji and younger grandson Tetsuya when they were in primary school to buy chess at a store in Shinjuku, grandfather said “I will go after the beautiful girl there” which amused the grandsons very much. My amazing father leaving good impression on his grandsons was a blessing.

Now I will turn to talk about my mother. The birth place of my mother Chieko was in the village called Natori in Murayama City in Yamagata Prefecture. Her family was the owner of a large piece of land. Her father was Sudo Yoshinori. My mother was the six sibling with one elder sister (foster child), four elder brothers, one younger brother, and one younger sister. The elder sister was the foster child because at the beginning there was no offspring, so a foster child was adopted. But after that they had their own children.

My mother was the daughter of a landlord. During primary school she received much attention and was very active in sports as a fast runner. She lived in a large house with many servants. The garden was beautiful with landscape mountain. Under the house there was a small stream passing through. I remembered that in summer fireflies were all over the place. However Sudo family was unfortunate. Four elder brothers including the eldest contracted tuberculosis and died at young age.

Only one brother survived whose son was Sudo Koichi, my step brother who was brought up by the eldest daughter who was his aunt.

After the war life was quite difficult. The aunt sold off land piece by piece and other properties to support the living. Finally all the land of the landlord and other properties disappeared. My mother reminisced the happy moment as landlord who had to become just ordinary farmer. She came to live in Tokyo and worked with the real estate contractor and my present house in Hachioji was also built by this contractor. Once I took mother to visit her birthplace which had nothing left. She sat on the floor of the house of her friend that we visited and talked about stories of childhood period. We also visited the cemetery in the Lotus Shrine inside Bodhi Temple. We also visited the house of a relative who looked after the cemetery, but my step brother who was same age with me and as successor was irresponsible. He did not pay



the maintenance fee to the relative who looked after the cemetery. Consequently I sent the maintenance fee of 30,000 yen every year to the relative and will do so as long as possible.

My grandfather who was the father of my mother passed away before I had the chance to meet him. At that time, no people from Natori village went to further the study at the university, but my grandfather after graduating from Kumamoto High School, went to study medicine at Tohoku University and became village doctor after graduation. It was said that he came to live in the village with the condition that he could do anything he liked.

My grandfather had several hobbies. He invited professional painters, sculptors, writers etc. to live in and taught him different techniques. He had made several good pieces of work. Those artists he hired had presented to him several artist works to express their gratitude which he kept in a large storage room with a watchman. The aunt and my step brother Koichi who inherited these sold the art work piece by piece for money. In my house several pieces my mother received from my grand father still remained. The most valuable one was the paper written horizontally “Toku On Kore Shigeru” (Voice of Merit is Prosperity) written by Doi Bansui when he stayed at grand father’s house for a long time. I had it framed properly and the owner of the frame shop liked it so much that he requested to hang it at his shop for a month.

I could not hold back my humiliation when I looked back at the bitterness of my mother. After the death of my father, there arose the problem of land and house inheritance at Seiseki Sakuragaoka. My mother was born in the house of landlord in Yamagata Prefecture, so she stuck to the “eldest-son-takes all” doctrine. Since the eldest son stayed with her it would seem natural to give 100% inheritance to my elder brother. My elder brother asked my elder sister and two younger sisters to sign the paper of acceptance. However, my two younger sisters even though they wanted to further their study in the university but could only finish high school and had to work. So they were very resentful and did not like cold treatment they received. Consequently they brought the case to court and requested the right to handle the inheritance. My elder sister and myself stood in between but leaned towards younger sisters. This thing should not happen. Finally, the ruling of the court was such that 28 million yen retirement lump sum grant of my elder brother from Tokyo Marine Co.Ltd. was to be divided equally into 4 parts and given to us, each receiving 7 million yen. This episode separated us from my mother. In fact, Taeko my wife’s family also faced the same fate. Inheritance struggle cut off relationship with her father and her younger sister. Therefore in order not to see our sons struggle for inheritance, we asked the lawyer and tax official to explain to our sons for good understanding and mutual agreement which had been posted with the authority.

“Eldest son first” doctrine of my mother was practiced to the extreme since secondary school. Elder brother was provided with tutor. Meat food during dinner was reserved only for father and elder brother. I did not feel strange but the two younger sisters could not stand this. Though I sympathized with the feeling of my younger sisters but I did not like the way it was.

Let me introduce my siblings. Elder brother Masamori was 3 years older than me. He died before reaching the age of 70. By the “eldest-son-first” doctrine of my mother, he received good education since childhood and had a special status among brother and sisters. It was difficult to befriend with him. Since secondary school a university student was hired to give him special tuition. Two younger sisters also distanced themselves like me. On the other hand, my younger sister three years younger (Haruko) and six years younger (Kyoko) and me were close to each other. Whereas the eldest sister (Hisako) was the eldest daughter next to the eldest son, so she also received special treatment from my mother and learned piano since childhood, aiming to study at Geidai. Piano lesson was quite expensive. My mother had me learn harmonica. Thinking back, the family income at that time was not high, but much was spent on the education of the children. Two younger sisters used to study piano for some time but did not receive any special treatment.

Elder sister Hisako had feeble body since childhood but had strong will, or even stubborn. At home economic class during secondary school, she was taught that western bread was good for the body more than rice. So she declared that “From now on I will eat only bread” and started to eat only bread every meal. Though her body was weak, but she always came first in running race. Once she was taught that rope jumping was good for the body, she then rope jumped 1000 times a day. Whereas younger sister Haruko did not fare well in study but had good temper. Youngest sister Kyoto had a rather strong character, and had conflicts with elder brothers and elder sisters quite often. But she was quite good to me for unknown reason. However I was not close to younger sisters. Women would not listen to what others said and just talked about their own story in a quick manner, even I sat dumbfounded. Murai family’s weak point was the habit to talk too much without listening to what others said, especially those women. I wanted to leave this house as quick as possible. Moreover, elder sister Hisako (nickname Chachan)’s determination to pass the entrance examination of Geidai prompted her to practice piano eight hours a day. This became a hindrance to my study for university entrance examination. Such nuisance provoked the neighbor to put harassment paper on our house. When I went for camp training of boat club of Todai in my first year at the university, I was so happy to be released from this annoying house.

My mother who paid much attention to education sent me to study in the university. I could not pass the entrance examination on the first year, and had to undergo tutorship for one year. My mother paid the expense for this. However, my two younger sisters did not have the chance to enter the university. After graduating from high school they had to work immediately, and this was the factor which gave rise to the inheritance struggle which I will deliberate later. Now elder brother, elder sister and youngest sister Kyoko were no longer in this world. Only my younger sister Haruko and myself still survive.

## ② Introducing my family

At that time I was a research assistant at the Institute of Industrial Science (IIS) of the University of Tokyo with a meagre salary of 40,000 yen. One of my father in law's acquaintance had a house in Asagaya but had to move to be stationed in Osaka for two years. So the house was let to us for two years only at the monthly rent of 20,000 yen. This meant we had to start our new family after wedding with half of my salary, a very poor family. Taeko's family upon hearing that "Before she could eat the fruits she likes any time, but not now", tried to send to her favourite fruits from time to time

I tried to supplement my income by teaching survey courses at Engineering Department of Hosei University as non permanent lecturer but the salary was only 3000 yen. Household expenditure of Taeko was quite difficult to manage. The tuition fee of household tutors once a week was around 3000 yen per month. So the income of the non-permanent lecturer of the university was in par with that of household tutor. At that time I made up my mind firmly that in the future I would not let my wife to be troubled with money matters. In conclusion, although Taeko was inflicted with stroke (constricted blood vessels in the brain), with weakness in the left leg, but she had money to take a taxi and to do shopping by herself.

Not long after our marriage, we were blessed with the first son, Kenji. Once when she was pregnant and felt hungry, I went out to buy 20 steamed dumpling at 5 yen per piece totaling 100 yen at the shop around Asagaya for her. Even though she wanted to spare some for me, but after started eating, she could not stop and ate all. She apologized to me but later I learned that having gone through difficult period made me understand the feeling of poor people in Asian countries.

While spending time after newly wed period, we met an important person. He was Arai Michio Sensei, a senior of boat club of Todai who graduated from medical school of Todai and became head of medicine ward at Kawakita Hospital at Asagaya. At that time he opened a clinic called Arai near my house. Since Kenji was a sickly baby and had to receive check-up regularly and Taeko was also often sicked, they both went to the clinic together very often. In such case, Dr. Arai cancelled the check-up of other patients and spent two hours for mother-son check-up, sometimes even past lunch time. Not only about sickness and health problem but also how to live and sometimes even his unique philosophy of life that Dr. Arai talked to Taeko. To this Taeko was not reserved and had expressed her opinion frankly. Once Arai Sensei said “Next time please bring Murai with you” and I followed her. Then Sensei said “Murai graduated from Todai and you graduated from Ochanomizudai, so I am worried about your children, Please listen to me. In the future, do not force

the kids to study hard. If you insist them too much, they may become neurosis or depressive. Neurotic disorders are incurable disease. Even myself cannot handle.”

Our couple abided by his teaching and never said to our sons Kenji and Tetsuya to “study hard” even once. Both our sons liked to play sports such as baseball, rugby and were crazy about invader game. They did not pay much attention to studying until third year of secondary school. Before entering high school, they were told by their teachers that if they did not pay attention to study, the girls would laugh at them that they could only finish high school level. So they started to study earnestly. Both studied at private high school with dormitory and left to live independently. After one year ronin life, the elder son entered Economics Department of Keio University whereas the younger son studied at Economics Department of Kobe University.

My eldest son used to be first league player of rugby and my youngest son immersed in American football of the universities and both of them hardly studied at all like myself. But after graduation they got married and produced grand children for us to admire and also looked after us. We are much grateful to Arai Sensei for making us keep his teachings. It is fortunate that both our sons also kept our teachings such that they never exhorted their children to study hard. We are delighted to see our grand children live a bright and happy life.



Two years passed by and we moved to live in the government welfare house newly built at Musashi Murayama. Our second son Tetsuya was born here. As monthly official house rent was only 1750 yen, it was quite cheap making our life turn much easier. The dissertation (doctoral) which was completed while living at Asagaya passed the examination and I received Doctor of Engineering degree which helped to promote me from research assistant to the position of lecturer, the lowest rank of teaching staff of Todai. I was shocked to see that societal attitude towards me changed suddenly. I did not like to be called Todai sensei. Even now I am Professor Emeritus of Todai but I do not like to be treated as a big professor. Life about research in Todai will be described later.

Taeko also wanted to help supplement our family income even a small amount. She went to become non permanent lecturer in geography at Jiyugakuen College. I also became non permanent lecturer at Tetsudo Gakuen College of Japan Railway, Hosei University, Kanagawa University, etc. to add to the family income.

Finally, in 1971 I was promoted to the position of Associate Professor. In the following year, i.e., 1972 there happened a great change for my research life and also my family. On July 23 1972 United States launched Earth Resources Observation Satellite (Landsat-1) into earth orbit to take digital photos of the earth.

Just by paying some money, one could get satellite photos of any place on earth. This was the forefront of the evolution of science and technology and was called remote sensing and became the subject of research which I could concentrate on. In the United States, an international conference on this new technology of remote sensing was held outside Washington D.C. which I also attended and presented a paper. On the return trip as the plane was heading to land at Haneda Airport, I saw the scary thick pale purple layer of smog pollution, reflecting the worst pollution period of Japan. I was shocked and had a premonition that in the near future, there would be a great atmospheric change on our planet. This was my animal instinct and I went on to think that if such thing happened, then how could I take care of my family. I kept on thinking till the plane landed. My answer was quite simple. If I just continued to live in the government house I might lose my living habitat. The solution was quite straight forward ; to build my own house at any cost.

After returning home, I asked my wife, Taeko to make plane drawing of the new house within a week, because house wife would know best what the arrangement of each room in the house should be. Taeko said that we probably did not have enough money to build a house, for which I answered that money was the responsibility of husband, Taeko just draw a house plan. At any rate, this must be handled quickly. I then asked Mr. Hosoya Seiya who became a land developer in Tokyo from Natori,

the birthplace of my mother, to help in building my new house. Mother's younger brother, Mr. Sudo Chiwa could also make design of the house. So I asked him to make a design of the house in accordance with the drawing of Taeko. It was later known that Seiya had bought Japanese cypress from around their parental home in Yamagata Prefecture at a time when timber was still cheap. He asked me "Sir, how about money?", and I replied right away that "Please do not worry" even though no solution was worked out. It was possible to receive a loan from the household fund at 6% annual interest. But my natural habit was against the deduction of my salary every month to pay back the loan for 30 years. Then it was known that Taeko's aunt was single and had a large deposit and by using this deposit money as guarantee with 8% interest which was not a loan. The principle could be paid whenever we have money. Only the outstanding principle was subjected to be calculated for interest. This scheme was acceptable to me. So we requested her aunt to help in the building of our house, ending the worry of money.

As the completion of the new house drew near, there happened oil shock crisis, pushing commodity prices up 3 times. Seiya the contractor said "It was not possible to build the house then at 7 million yen, at least 20 million yen must be. When I started to build the new house, several people said "Why hurry? You both should go and look at the constructed house. You just buy the one you like, isn't it better" But after oil shock, price skyrocketed.

Then they said “Murai, how did you know that there would be oil shock?” How could I know? I only said that having seen the severity of pollution smog over Haneda, my instinct reminded me of dangerous signal. In October 1972 our new house at Mejirodai, Hachioji City was completed. I was 33 years old at that time. The land was bought by Taeko’s parents at the time Keio Railway Co. developed the area around Mejirodai. Total land area was 70 tsubo. We were indebted to her parents. The construction cost was 7 million yen from borrowed money. Since my salary also increased with the high increase of the price of the goods, I managed to pay back the money within 10 years.

The house was completed but no fence nor gate, even now there remains the same. In the garden there is a sakura tree now taller than the roof, with circumference of 30 centimeter. It was planted from seedling 50 years ago. Trees that the tree shop discarded, such as, plum, biwa, yuzu, kumquat, grape, persimmon were planted every year. We enjoyed eating these fruits. The house was built more than 50 years ago but no problem at all.

After moving in the new house, while the elder son and the younger son studied one year apart in the primary school, Taeko must have suffered fatigue from bringing up the children. The body was worn out with body weight dropped from 50 kilogram to under 40 and quite scrawny. She could not live as normal and even she received several medical treatment, nothing improved.

At that time, I made a big decision seeing that doctors and medicine could not cure her, so I decided that the only remedy was to change the place of living.

In July 1976 ISP Congress was to be held in Helsinki, capital of Finland. I also would present a paper at the congress. So I thought that if the whole family travelled together, Taeko would recover from the illness. At that time, travelling abroad was expensive and was quite special. Taeko was not sure about travelling by airplane so we decided to go to Helsinki by Trans Siberia Railway. During the two week congress my wife and the children could rest or go around. After the congress we would travel by Eurail pass and board the plane in Milan for the return trip, totaling 40 days of travel. At that time, my salary was not much and we had no savings. I took the available money of 1.6 million yen for this trip. The children were in primary school grade 1 and grade 2. The teachers at Hachioji gave permission for leave though it was still 10 days before the start of summer vacation.

We got on the ship in Yokohama for Nakhodka and from there boarded the Trans Siberia train until we reached Helsinki. The children were very excited. Our family, a group of four could occupy the whole compartment so we did not feel bored. Every thing was perfect except for the food. On the way we stayed one night each in Moscow and Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) for city tour. Taeko's health which was worried to deteriorate was all right and even seemed to improve.

After passing through health quarantine of Finland we entered Finland from Russia. On arriving at Helsinki every body felt much impressed with the beauty and excellence of this country. At check in of quite cheap Helsinki University residence we did not feel exhausted and looked forward to joyful moment. Taeko and the children could rest for almost two weeks. At the dining room of the university It surprised me that children under 12 years old could have breakfast for free. This showed that Finland was an advanced social welfare state. Children ate more than Taeko, so she felt a bit sorry.

For myself, besides making presentation of my paper and attending sessions of interest, I stayed with my family, enjoying sauna and went shopping at some department stores. The children were excited to the extreme.

After the congress we travelled by Eurail. On the way when we saw interesting cities through the window, we would descend from the train and looked for cheap hotels around the railway station. After check-in at the hotel we would go city touring. In Germany, we took Rhine River tour. In Switzerland we went to Zermatt and looked up to see Mount Matterhorn. We took a train to Gornergrat at altitude of 3500 meter from sea level. Then we walked down to Zermatt. After that we travelled to Milan by train passing through several cities. We boarded the plane in Milan for return trip to Japan, ending 40 day summer vacation.

Taeko's health hitherto worried became stronger. The trip from big decision this time was successful. Even now both my sons still have good memories of that time.

Let me introduce my two sons. The elder son Kenji after graduating from Keio University worked at Mitsubishi Bank. Since he was a rugby player of the first league of the university, he was readily accepted to work at Mitsubishi Bank which was highly aspired by most people. He also joined the rugby club of the Bank. However, he only stayed for three years and resigned from the bank. The reason was like this. At that time he was responsible for the financing sector. Even though it was considered that the property was not worth financing but his boss told him to go ahead. He complied not full heartedly. Then the loaner went bankrupt. But the boss asked Kenji to be responsible for this. At that time we husband and wife lived in Thailand. Kenji took trouble to travel to Thailand to ask us to sign the consenting document for him to resign. After resigning from the company Kenji had some difficult time. However, since he was interested in environment problem, he set up a small plastic recycle company and after struggling for ten years, at present with his wife the company is doing well with good profit. Above all we were happy that he got married to Miss Yokota Mihoko and had two offsprings, our grandsons, Kakeru and Noboru.

Now the youngest son Tetsuya had a rather unfortunate destiny. Too much indulged in American Football at Kobe University resulted in his becoming a repeater. At this time there occurred Hanshin Awaji Great Earthquake on January 17,1995. Tetsuya used 10 yen coin to phone from the public phone booth telling Taeko that “I am still alive, watch T.V.” and the line was cut off. We quickly turned on the television to find out that there was the great earthquake. I was responsible for the journal of JSP at that time and felt very confused. Tetsuya walked from Kobe to Osaka to take Shinkansen train back to our house. He bought a few necessary things and returned to Kobe to help the senior people as student volunteer. So he got repeated for another year, a total of six years before he graduated from Kobe University.

Upon returning to Tokyo, he said that he would like to continue his study. So he got enrolled in master degree course of Tokyo Metropolitan University and furthered his study in doctoral course under the guidance of Professor M who was well known in oral history. His doctoral dissertation was accepted and he received doctoral degree of law. However, he did not reach the position of Associate Professor and spent his time as non-permanent lecturer in political history subject at several universities. I supported him sometimes as father and son. He got married to Miss Kawana Mizuho and had one daughter, i.e., my granddaughter named Juli. Since they lived nearby, we were taken care of pretty well. He was an affectionate and dutiful son. Even though he was not successful



in professional life I feel content. Seeing his struggling condition as non-permanent lecturer in political history at several universities, I want to support him as much as I can.

My elder daughter-in-law Mihoko and younger daughter-in-law Mizuho are very close to Taeko, their mother-in-law. Each year in the garden of my house we organize rice cake pounding party and they came to join joyfully with our grand sons and grand daughter, Kakeru, Noboru and Juli. The fact that every body in the family gets close to each other in harmony is a great fortune.

Mihoko, wife of elder son Kenji after taking care of the children, helped errands of the office of Far East Network (FEN) of Plastic Recycle Co. of her husband. Probably due to the fact that she used to work as secretary of the executives of Nissho Iwai Trading Firm, she handled the work expeditiously. She was an indispensable person of the company, with open heart and enjoying tennis.

The eldest grandson, Kakeru, was sick with asthma when he was a baby. I took my pension of 40 million yen to buy a resort home at Karuizawa. It was lucky that Mihoko also liked the place and during summer vacation I took grand sons and grand daughter to get pure air at Karuizawa which resulted in Kakeru recovered from asthma.

We had wished to have our two sons live in the nature as much as possible. But if we stayed in the hotel those naughty boys would run around playfully in the lobby since morning

causing some nuisance. Even if we rent a resort house, it is not sure that we could stay peacefully, not to mention the high cost of renting. At any rate a resort house was a must. If it was in Karuizawa, I thought that both daughter-in-law would like it. I then asked the estate realtor company to take us around to see the houses. Finally we found one that we liked most and bought it. The house was painted in pink and situated on a small hill built one year earlier. The owner whose company went bankrupt so he had to sell the house. The house inside was also properly appointed. Not only daughters-in-law but those grandsons and grand daughter also came to stay happily. Having bought a resort house in Karuizawa, a popular destination of the ladies is a correct answer.

Kakeru while studying at Aoyama Gakuin University used to play soccer. But after graduation he wanted to be a Bonsai master, so he now stayed at his master's house as apprentice. He is a handsome man swift in getting things done; a grown-up person who dares to express his own thoughts. I hope that in the future he will become a successful Bonsai artist.

As for younger grandson Noboru who loved soccer and played as back position at Jissen Gakuen High School in Hachioji, is a good athlete. After graduating from Hosei University, He is set to work at a trading firm. At university he was much engaged in soccer and hardly studied at all. We hope that he would finish his study well. It is our family custom that both our eldest son Kenji

and his wife never told their son “to study hard”. We think that he can be a good person in the society.

Now our grand daughter Juli the only daughter of our younger son Tetsuya who was born on July 29 2008 at the time I descended from Mount Tsurigadake after reaching the summit, was named Juli since she was born in July. At the moment she is in secondary school and understands other people’s feeling well. It is rumored that she has such character capable of befriending problematic children in the classroom. While at secondary school, she liked ramen so much and said that in the future she would open a ramen shop. So she started to experiment on different types of soup. She liked the soup that Taeko used a big piece of pork meat boiled with crispy ramen. Quite a strange girl and it is interesting to see how she grows up as an adult.

In Primary school she liked to play soccer with the boys. But when she reached Secondary school, physical body of boys and girls differs as well as body strength. But she also participated in track and field event. She learned piano but that was her mother’s suggestion so she was not interested. Before she was quite obedient with her parents, but since enrolled in Secondary school, sometimes she quarreled with her mother. This may be a period that one has to pass through for further growth. Some quarrelling may be all right, I am not worried.



### ③ Reminiscence of my childhood days

The unforgettable event that I can remember happened was while I was 3 or 4 years old, just before World War II. We were living in a western style house in Harajuku near the Meiji Shrine, so it was quite a thrill for me to stand at salute as officers on horseback passed by. I also remember there was a piano in the living room of our house.

What remains vividly in my memory was when I contracted dysentery, which at that time was considered a serious disease, with only 50% survival rate. When I was taken to the doctor for treatment, a hypodermic syringe usually looks very large in the eyes of children, but I did not cry and instead shouted to the doctor “Why wait, inject quickly”. I heard my mother say that the doctor was being scolded several times by a child. My mother was also ill with dysentery, so we both were admitted to hospital. Even though I survived the dysentery my stomach has always been the weakest point of my body.

Soon the war started, and Tokyo was bombed. When the sirens sounded everybody covered their heads with a cloth and ran to hide in the underground bunker inside the house. My role was to light the candles. If the house suffered a direct hit it was totally destroyed. Other houses were spared. As food was rationed, less was available and I still remember bringing a pail from home with my mother waiting for rice porridge from the delivery

truck. Seeing the recent difficult situation in Ukraine on television reminds me of the hardships at that time. Eventually Tokyo was also a dangerous place to live so our family evacuated to Tomobe City in Ibaraki Prefecture.

We stayed in a house in the fields near the Air Force airstrip. There was no electricity, so daily life began at sunrise and ended at sundown. The rationed food was sweet potato called Norin No.1 with no taste at one sack per month. My elder brother and I went to catch fish in the stream to provide a side dish. A daily chore was carrying back home a big load of herbs. We had no underwear in winter and we wore only one sweater. My mother had to take a fully loaded train to get illegal goods by bartering Kimono clothes for food. Our stomachs were always crying out for food. We reared a rabbit so we could have our own food, but then our parents told my elder brother and me to kill the rabbit. This was a horrible experience because we used to passionately feed it with grass everyday. We did not know what to do, so we wound a rope around its neck, but the rabbit just screamed and didn't die. We had to ask an adult from the village who twisted his hand around the rabbit's neck and killed it. We looked at the pink flesh of the rabbit, but even though we were hungry we did not feel like eating it.

Every morning, air force soldiers would march past our house to the airstrip. I enjoyed saluting them while they passed by.

However, once two or three soldiers suddenly sneaked into our house and asked for something to eat, but my mother did not know what to do. As soon as she handed them raw sweet potato, they ate it right there. Probably they escaped from their commander into our house. We children thought that starving the troops was no way to win the war.

American warplanes flew by and strafed the area with machine guns. Sometimes there were scars in the garden. Collecting the machine gun shells was a favorite game of the kids. They would be able to show off if they managed to link the shells together to shoulder height, but sometimes there were non-exploded bullets that exploded when touched and some kids lost their fingers. Parents had to sternly prohibit playing with such objects, but the kids secretly played with them anyway.

We had fun running to gather the leaflets thrown from the air by American soldiers. After bringing them to our parents to read we were told what was written on them, such as “Give up the useless war.” Our happiest event was when we went to the Air Force airstrip and sat in the officer’s jeep. Sometimes we also received rubber to be used in making catapults. Since the rubber was used in making parachutes, it was considered to bring good luck.

Hearing that this evacuation place was also dangerous, we moved to the temple where our uncle used to be the abbot in

Yachi village, Yamagata Prefecture, with the status of present-day immigrants, and we experienced defeat in the war while we were there. I still remember the scene of adults gathering to listen to the speech of the Emperor as I looked from the garden. Our uncle named Henmi Baiei, was one of the translators of Sanskrit Buddhist Sutra which Kawaguchi Ekai brought back from Tibet. Later he became a Professor in Buddhist Philosophy at Tama Arts University, whereas our aunt called Henmi, was the eldest sister of my mother, looked after all the Sudo family.

In our house, we had a servant named Kiochan living with us, who came from a farmer's family who rent my mother's rice field. In our aunt Henmi's house in the temple, there was also a servant. In my child's mind, seeing Kiochan being treated unequally, led me to be sympathetic towards her. Noriko-chan, the daughter of our aunt's elder brother also came to live with us. She was the same age as Hisako, my elder sister.



## ④ Primary and Secondary School Period

Not long after the end of World War II, I was enrolled in Yachimura Primary School in Yamagata Prefecture. I cannot remember much about this time of my life. It was the period of shortages; handwriting practice was on newspaper instead of plain paper. Japanese language text was the one approved by the authorities. I still remember that I did not understand what they meant when they said “guardian dogs”. The name Murai was written in the old version of hiragana which was no longer used.

The distance from the temple to school was one ri (4 kilometers). In winter we put on the geta (wooden clogs) and in other seasons we used geta made of grass for the bottom and woven with rope. In Yamagata Prefecture there was an abundance of snow in winter time. Going to school with barefoot in the geta, it was possible to enjoy the sound made by kicking the snow while walking, but on the way home the snow had started to melt and stick to the geta. So, I had to stop frequently to remove the snow from the geta and thus I felt very cold. After reaching the temple gate I cried but tried not to let other people see me. Since I was taught that men don't cry, I could not cry in front of other people. My resilience was probably developed at that time. Our schoolteacher was an ex-military man so we were quite scared of him. The punishment for forgetting something was to be slapped on both left and right cheeks. So if I forgot something, I opted to

run the return trip of I ri to fetch it. After moving back to Tokyo, at school I always clocked within the first three places in marathon races. This might be because I developed endurance by virtue of running an 8 kilometers return trip when I had forgotten something, when I lived in Yamagata Prefecture.

I cannot remember how we moved, but we evacuated to a warehouse Emata in Kanai village of Yamagata, which had no windows and hence was always dark inside. Around this area, there was a spring. We enjoyed very much when we put rice in a bamboo basket and washed it with cucumber pickles and then cooked them together. It was a difficult time because nothing was available. However, there were two happy moments that I can remember. One was during ripening of cherries, I climbed the cherry tree with my friends to pick the cherries and ate them joyfully. The second instant was the taro imo at the cooking festival of Yamagata in which 4 or 5 families gathered as a team and put the pots and food ingredients on the cart racing towards the river site to make a menu mostly consisting of taro imo. The meal after that was quite eventful. My mother used to tell us that a family of the team which evacuated here had very few ingredients to join in the team and felt quite embarrassed. It was also rumored that the hungry children would often steal vegetables from the fields. There was no free school lunch at primary school. Bento had to be taken by the students, but there was almost no rice inside; most contained potato or sweet potato. I felt sorry to see the teacher's

bento consisting only of chunks of potato.

Since our family could not stay in the warehouse forever, we then moved to live in the employee residence of the company where my father was working in Sendai city, Miyagi Prefecture. I was enrolled in primary school grades 3 and 4 at Kamisugi Yamadori Primary School. The American military seized the big houses for their own use and one of them had a Shepherd dog which often harassed children, so it was quite scary. The house at that time had fences so we climbed on the fence. Even children like us thought that losing the war was a bad thing. During that time, baseball was a favorite sport among children. Those wealthy people had money to buy gloves but, in our family, my mother made the gloves for us as well as the ball. The bat was made from shaving the wood to size. The red cap of Mr. Kawakami of the Giants team and the blue cap of Mr. Aota were coveted by the youths. The exhibition of the baseball team of American soldiers in the field of Prefectural Office left a great impression. We enjoyed the acrobatic show where the pitcher used his big hand to grab two balls and throw at two catchers at the same time each receiving one ball. When the ball was lofted very high by the batter the fielder went to catch the ball by sitting in a jeep. It was truly enjoyable.

At school in Sendai, in the beginning I was treated like a hillbilly speaking with a northeast accent but through a close friend named Sakurai Seiichi I was finally admitted to the group. There were many happy memories playing baseball.

Since my father, who worked at Dowa Fire & Marine Insurance Co.Ltd. was transferred to Tokyo, we then moved to stay at a house in Shimouma District of Setagaya close to Gakugei University. I was transferred to Komatsunagi Primary School. My teacher in charge Takashima Sensei, came to me and kindly taught me in a special way, because the schooling was more advanced in Tokyo. I could not follow the class so Sensei helped me out, while I also studied as hard as I could. At graduation ceremony I was selected as the best student and received a prize of an English dictionary. I am much indebted to Takashima Sensei for his kind guidance.

Next to Komatsunagi school was a housing quarter for those repatriated from Manchuria. There were many kids who liked to quarrel. When I prevailed in the quarrel, I would write this in the diary but did not understand the meaning. Our teacher wrote that “quarrelling is the thing children do”. After asking my mother about this, she taught me that it meant that quarrelling people could not be good adults. I became a close friend of Master Niiro who lived in a rich house nearby. His father used to work in Germany, and there was an exquisite train and rail model moved by electricity in his house. I looked at it in great wonder. His mother was beautiful and always accompanied Niiro for field trips or seaside vacation. There was no contact after that, and no news about him since.

Before graduating from Primary School, my mother told me to take the entrance examination of Komaba Secondary school of the Faculty of Agriculture of Kyoiku (education) University. This was a big turning point in my life. I did not know anything about this school, nor did my friends in the primary school. I went to apply for the entrance examination as I was told by my mother but did not make any special preparation. Since I thought in the beginning that I would fail, I did not ask my mother to go with me. I took the train to the venue alone. Thinking that I would fail, I went to see the results alone. Looking through the slit between people gathering there, I was shocked that my name was included in the list of those who passed. However, the number of those who passed was twice the quota to be admitted. The students who would be admitted must be decided by drawing lots. A big turning wheel like those used in temple festivals was used. After turning the wheel once, a blue or a yellow ball would be released. Blue meant pass and yellow meant fail.

I was surprised when the wheel started to turn. As soon as the yellow balls came out, mothers clapped their hands delighted that there was still a chance for their children. I was disgusted with such attitudes and thought that “My ball must be blue for sure”. I found out that there was only one kid who came alone without his mother and that was me. Kids who passed celebrating with their mothers, whereas kids who did not pass cried and hugged their mothers when returning home. When my

queue came up which was the last one, I took a deep breath and shouted “Eh” while turning the wheel at full force. The blue ball slipped out, meaning pass which exceeded my expectation. At that time, I did not know about telephones. When I reached home mother might have guessed that I did not pass so she remained silent. When I said in a soft voice that “i do not know how I pass”, mother was so happy. I did not know before that this secondary school was the coveted school of all mothers. At present this secondary school has merged with Komaba High school of Kyoiku University and is one of the top-class schools for entrance into Todai. In short, it was called “Kyokoma”

Entering secondary school, my student bag was changed from landsel bag to duffel bag. There was compulsory student uniform. Since my elder brother was three years older than me, he was in high school when I was in secondary school. Therefore, I inherited everything from him, whether it was student uniform or student bag and other items. My friends all had a new uniform and new bag, whereas for me all items were old except for my new school badge.

At that time, my house was in Yaraicho in Shinjuku. I had to walk past Kagurazaka and from there I took a train from lidabashi station. I passed through Shinjuku station and changed at Shibuya Station for Inogashira Line to Todaikomabamae station. It was a boy’s school with two classrooms. After class we played

soft tennis, samurai fencing and sumo wrestling until we were exhausted. On the way home, walking uphill at Kagurazaka from Iidabashi station was a hard job, so after dinner, I just rolled over with fatigue.

The most demanding sport was soft tennis, as I was the front player of the doubles team. The goal was to enter the finals of the Secondary School tournament of Tokyo. First it was necessary to win in Setagaya Ward. In second grade of Secondary school, I participated in the Tokyo level tournament but was defeated in the second game.

A happy moment during secondary school in my memory was rice planting. Since our school was attached to Faculty of Agriculture of Kyoiku University, there was a small rice field and every year in spring there was rice planting training. I felt marvelous walking barefoot in the rice field. Another memory was when we went to stay together in the forest. It was a dirty place by today's standard, but the company of boys making loud noises was quite enjoyable.

I barely did any study, and mainly played tennis. Maybe because my body growth rate was so slow. I was smaller than average, but in secondary school my body height was 170 centimeters, and I was the tallest in the class. Entering third year of secondary school I was still not interested in the entrance examination for high school. My 3-year older brother had already

studied at Toyama High School in Tokyo. Since our house in Yaraicho was a short distance from Toyama High School, it was natural that I should study there.

At that time, the top school for entrance examinations was Hibiya high school, with Toyama High school number 2 and Shinjuku High School number 3. My mother could have also agreed with the idea of my studying at Toyama High school, but I did not make any special preparation for the entrance examination. I was at a loss in deciding which school I wanted to attend. Concerning my performance, I achieved top level in mathematics but I was not good in Japanese language. I was confident that I could achieve 90 out of 100 in mathematics. For Japanese language, at worst a mark of 50 should be possible, which would be supplemented by my high mark in mathematics. This was my strategy when I sat for the entrance examination of Todai and the result did enable me to be enrolled at Toyama High School.



## ⑤ High School Period

Toyama High school was not far from our house in Yaraicho, Shinjuku Ward, requiring just walking for 25 minutes past Waseda University to reach the school. Nearby was a secondary and high school for girls of Gakushuin University, where children from high class families were enrolled. Before the war Toyama High school was called Yonchu (The Fourth Secondary School) and the alma mater of Tojo Hideki. Toyama High school had some annoying regulations. Every morning in front of the school our handkerchiefs and uniform caps had to be checked one by one. This was my most disliked custom. Morning line up to listen to the speech of the principal required students to be neat, which a ruffian boy like me could not bear. For the once-a-week morning line up, I would come late or sneak into the library, so I hardly attended this event. Friends who were not strict like me are Mr.Nakamoto Osamu and Mr.Yamamoto Koichi. Now we are still in contact with each other as close friends. Entering third year, I often skipped the morning class because of my dislike of handkerchief and cap checking and the morning line up.

I joined the judo club at Toyama High school. There was no tatami training floor, so we had to rent the training facility of Totsuka Police station. Regular judo teachers from the police station also came to teach us, but sometimes they used special tricks to strangle our neck until we almost suffocated. If the teacher was

a young officer, we would be handled quite severely. Since I was tall with big shoulders, my trick was to cross my legs for ippon victory, especially against shorter opponents. This technique was mostly successful, but the shorter guys would try to grab the opponent, throw him down to put him on his back. So, I needed to find out some technique to make the opponent suffer. When he was unprepared, I used my crossed leg to beat him. In the second year of high school, at the suggestion of my teacher I took a test to move up a level. The test consisted of 4 people in a team, and the one who performed best would be promoted to shodan (first level). I managed to win over the first two by using cross leg for ippon victory, but the last person had equal ability, so it ended in a draw. The result was two wins and one draw, so I received a black belt and promoted to shodan.

Toyama High school was the school in which everybody wished to enroll to pass the entrance examination of Todai. On entering third year, most of my friends stopped club activities and began to take special tuition for the entrance examination. But I continued to work out at the judo club until the third-year summer vacation. Since my elder brother was studying at Todai so I should follow the family tradition. As mentioned before, mathematics was the subject that would allow me to gain points and I had good memory, so I selected Japanese history and World History subjects. The compulsory subject that I was not good at was Japanese language for which I should achieve 60 points or at

least 50 points. Other subjects should enable me to achieve 180 points for the entrance exam. As for the science sector, total points for mathematics alone were 120, so I worked out the strategy that if I could achieve 100 points, I would pass the entrance exam.

I set my goal to Science 1 of Todai and started to study seriously for the entrance exam from the fall of third year. At any rate, I always concentrate more easily on mathematics than other subjects. Even though I was not sure of myself, I went to take the entrance exam anyway. However, it was deplorable that I made some mistakes in my favorite subject, i.e. mathematics which I felt would result in my not passing the exam. The result was indeed that I did not pass and since I did not apply for other universities, I became a ronin for one year which was quite acceptable. If it were two years, our family financial resources could probably not afford it, and I would hate myself so much. Thus, I began my ronin life.

In our family, my elder brother set his goal for Todai and my elder sister set her goal for Geidai and to do that she had to pay for piano lessons, so there was not much money available. Luckily my elder sister could pass the entrance exam of Geidai just first time, but the tuition fees seemed to be quite high. It did not look like there was money for me to get into the tutor school for the entrance exam. Fortunately, the teachers at Toyama High School used empty rooms when no classes were held in the afternoons

to give lessons to the ronin gathered there at a low price. Hearing this, I joined the group. In the first period in the afternoon, we had to move around according to the subject of instruction. We arrived at the school around midday with ronin playing softball for a change of atmosphere. Having ronin friends, my depression about not passing the entrance exam gradually dissipated.

I became close to Mr. Maenosono from Kagoshima who lived in a rented room, and we went to try out at trial entrance exams several times to see how we performed. The authorities not only announced the points for each subject but also total points. Moreover, the required grade for passing each university was also posted. Finally, I achieved the level which should be adequate to pass Science I at Todai as desired. My problem was in mathematics for which I needed to be properly prepared so as not to make even small mistakes.

Too much studying without exercising might be bad for the body and the brain might malfunction. So, I practiced skipping and ball dribbling. I could double skip continuously for 100 times. For ball dribbling I used the ball my mother made for my younger sisters. I practiced until I could handle it well. Moreover, I bought a harmonica to practice several songs. When I was a kid, my mother used to let me learn harmonica with a teacher. Since then, I have enjoyed playing the harmonica.

In summer, I went bike riding with my friend, just the two of us. We brought mosquito nets with us and reached Hayama beach to enjoy sea bathing. At that time, only big cities had concrete roads and the roads linking the cities were gravel with a lot of potholes, so it was quite difficult to navigate. We did not have any money to stay at a hotel, so we were obliged to put up the mosquito net on the sand, put the bicycles inside for sleeping. We did not have money to eat at restaurants, so we just depended on canned food. As a matter of fact, a friend's house was near the beach and we imagined that he would probably come back home. It turned out to be true, so we were treated to one meal at his house. Ronin life might lack some comforts, but still it gave me some good memories.

Just before the application deadline, although I stuck to my goal of Science I at Todai, my parents and other people said that ronin for two years was not permitted, so I should apply to other universities as well. But I had made up my mind for Science I at Todai only, and I did not think that I would fail. I was steadfast in making this big decision. Life after that remained the same. I did not think whether this was right or wrong, success or failure; just moving towards the goal of success. This was the mentality of unmovable spirit, that is, no turning back was my motto for all my life.

Consequently, I applied for entrance exam of Science I of Todai. I could do well in mathematics and should get 100 points, Japanese language 60% ; English, history, physics and chemistry 70 or 80%. On the following day newspapers printed the questions and answers of the exam but I did not look at it because I wanted to relax.

When I went to see the exam results at Komaba campus of Todai, my number was in the pass list. In front of the university gate there were posters soliciting new students to join various clubs. I was happy to be able to say that “well, I am now a university student” This was a relief for me and at the same time could make my mother happy.

In April Showa 34 (1959) while I was 19 years old, I was enrolled as a first year student of Science I of Todai. The happiest event was the release of my parents from the financial burden which was wasted during my ronin period. There were some financial expenditure as a student but this had already been anticipated. My brother and sisters were also happy with my passing the entrance exam. But after entering the university I had no idea about my future goal.

## ⑥ University Period (Indulgence in boat racing)

I was delighted to be admitted to Todai, even though I was assigned to a certain classroom where I did not know anybody. The lecture rooms were large and quite different from classrooms in primary, secondary or high school, so I was lonely sitting in the lecture room by myself. I could not understand the lectures of the professors at all. In other words, I was at a loss. Since my goal was to get into Todai only, the future was foreseen.

My elder brother who graduated from the Faculty of Law and just started working persuaded me to join the orchestra club, since he used to be a member of an orchestra club at school. He said, “Go and play contrabass” and brought a large contrabass from the club to our house and showed me how to play with great enthusiasm, but I was not interested at all. In fact, I was more inclined towards sports. To free myself from the demands of my elder brother was an uneasy situation for me. At that time, Mr. Senpaku who passed the entrance exam of Todai straight from high school and was in second year at that time, was selected as a junior rowing athlete. He sent me a postcard persuading me to join the rowing club of Todai. He was my classmate at Komaba Secondary School of Kyoiku University. Even though he did not have a strong nerve for sports, he could be selected as a representative of second year students and junior crew. Hearing this I thought that I could perform well in the rowing club of Todai.

I hurriedly joined the initiation party, but I was anxious because there were almost one hundred new students who wished to join the club sitting in the large room, which surprised me. Those coming from other prefectures all had strong physiques, whereas I was quite lean, caused by my preparations for the entrance exam. I felt quite scared. Sitting in front of me was Mr. Mizuki, who was a junior crew and feeling pity for me sitting alone, he talked nicely to me. Later Mr. Mizuki was the athlete participating in Rome Olympics together with me, but at that time. I did not imagine that there would be such a happening in the future.

Someone gave me some beer to drink but this was the first time for me, so I just took a sip. I was shocked to see some freshmen received a beer from their seniors and they drank it all in one gulp. Soon the Eight-man crew from third- and fourth-year students from the Fusoryo dormitory Todai rowing club at Toda city in Saitama Prefecture showed up. They had nice physiques with large muscles, so from my perspective they looked like giants. Together with the cox, they turned to each new applicant to convince them, supported by their experiences, that rowing was a good sport. At the end it was customary that everybody sang the song “Haru wa Haru wa” (spring is coming) which was the club song. Everybody clapped their hands while singing with a loud voice in unison. I made up my mind to apply on the spot. This was partly due to my thoughts of escaping from the orchestra



club recommended by my elder brother.

I joined the training immediately, most of which was concentrated on onshore training to strengthen my stomach muscles which was necessary for rowing. After almost one-month of onshore training we were led to boat training at the Todai boatyard situated near the Sumida River. This would be the first time everyone would experience boat training. First year seniors who were second year students divided the rookies into Science and Arts teams, to be seated in different boats, and taught how to row. I became a captive of the sport called rowing which used completely new equipment. While attending lecture classes in the big university room, first year senior Mr. Kitamura would come and say to me “it is no use listening to the lecture, it is better come to Sumida River to train.” It seemed I was being kidnapped, but I thought the same way, so I took the train at Shibuya to Asakusa Station, then changed to Ginza line for Sumidagawa Station and went to the boatyard and was immersed in rowing.

Sumida River at that time was very dirty, almost black in colour and it was rumoured that septic tank vacuum boats unloaded waste into the river. There was even some news that there were some victims infected with ‘flunkel’ (in German), appearing on their buttocks. But I was happy to be rowing so there were no bad feelings.

The purpose of the training was to prepare for races between the Science and Arts teams to be held before the summer vacation. I was tall but skinny, so I was selected to be No.2 of the eight-crew (meaning first league) of the Science team (called Ritan). The opposition was the Cham crew (Buntan) of the Arts team. I intended to train as hard as possible under the guidance of our senior, second year student. But I thought that there were some defects. The opposing Cham crew conducted harder training. Since I was a rookie, it was not appropriate for me to complain about the training by our senior second year student. Finally, the racing took place watched by our parents and seniors. After the races of the Third and Second leagues were over, the race of Cham (First league) got underway. At the beginning both teams were even but gradually we were left behind and lost the race. My friends did not feel sorry about the defeat but were happier that the race had finished, but I did not like being defeated, so I felt sorry and dejected.

After the race there was a party at the boat yard, where everybody drank beer at noisy celebrations. But I did not enjoy celebrating so I went out to cry silently alone beside the boat on the shore. The question was “why were we defeated?”. The answer was quite clear: the opposition had better training. Although I knew this, I remained silent, but that was unforgivable. I should have said that we should train as hard as necessary for victory, even risking some reproach from our friends or seniors. Since this was a team

sport, hard training was a must for every member.

Rowing training of rookies was over at this point. Selected first and second year students would join in the junior level racing of the university. I was the first-year student to be selected. Rowers at other universities had good physiques and so there was no way we could win. But I thought it was a good experience, so I participated. Since I did not want to lose, I trained vigorously. The result was a defeat at a group tournament. I did not feel hurt as I did after the race between the Science and Arts teams, knowing I would reap benefits of the training after the race. The training at the rowing club took a pause, except for the race between second year and third year students (lineups), with the objective of participating in the selection process for Japan's rowing team for the 1960 Rome Olympics the following year. In such cases the athletes would move to camp for long-term training. It was already decided to send an eight-man crew, whereas the four-man crew was deemed as the second league. Some private sector crews only participated in a four-man crew team.

I did not foresee this but unexpectedly Mr. Akamine, the captain ordered me to go to the Todai boat yard as one of the athletes to be trained for the tournament. Two first year students with good physiques who had joined in the four-man crew had already entered the camp. Four more rowers were needed to join them to become the eight-man crew for the tournament, so that the eight-man crew training could start.

This eight-man training was over by the end of the year. After the New Year there should be separate training for the eight-man and four-man crews in preparation for the Olympics. But Mr. Kawazu, a first-year student who was one of the four-man crew contracted tuberculosis and could no longer row. The past training season had been rainy, and training had been conducted in the rain, causing him to contract tuberculosis. An urgent call for the replacement was announced and I was selected, even though the physiques of several other first-year students were better than mine. Maybe the coach Mr. Arakawa and Mr. Sugita had assessed my training attitude as a positive attribute. As soon as I received the order, I immediately carried my futon mattress onto the bus heading for the boat yard at Toda. I was both happy and worried. I was happy because it was an opportunity to leave my house, but I was worried because I was anxious whether I would be able to follow the strict training and compete against strong opponents. While still thinking about the future, the bus reached the camp and the captain Mr. Akamine wearing only a white loin cloth, though it was at the end of November and beginning of winter, came out and said “Murai, it is good you have come. Go and sleep in the six-mat room with the four-man crew.”

I spent my life with four-man crew and one cox totaling 5 people, where we lived and slept in the same room. There were 6 tatamis in the room, one for each person, the remaining was set aside for members' belongings. The four-man crew were Mr. Okubo,

second year (Captain), Mr. Mizuki and Mr. Fukuda in first-year and me, with Mr. Saito as cox, a first-year student. Mr. Fukuda, who was from Tottori Prefecture, while in High School was a basketball player having a good physique. At the rowing club he was both a good competitor and good team member. Whereas coach Sugita, who worked at Express Way Authority, was a famous coach who later brought several victories to the Todai rowing club.

Let me describe the camping life at that time. Sixty years ago, there was no bathroom in the living quarters. After training under the leadership of Captain Akamine, we sang dormitory songs while walking to sento (public bath shop). Food was prepared by an employee for miscellaneous jobs, called the manager, using a charcoal stove; meals comprised miso soup, called suppe in German, together with rice which was refillable. Breakfast consisted of fresh eggs with natto (fermented soybean) and rice. Lunch and dinner depended on the manager but was mostly tasteless. Sometimes minced meat was purchased from the shop for preparing meals. The washing machine could only do washing, and a hand roll was available to squeeze the water out of the clothes. We were thankful for nylon clothing being available on the market because cotton shirts and trousers worn previously for training would never dry. Once nylon jumpers were available, we were all very happy.

The morning call was at 6.00 am. At that time Todai just introduced the training called Scientific Training comprising interval running, repetition, weight training devised by Ishikawa Sensei of Koishikawa Branch of Todai hospital. Morning training was mostly 200-meter interval running with jogging speed, followed by 400 meters running with speed of 15 seconds in 100 meters, totaling 10 repetitions over 6000 meters to be accomplished in a prescribed time. As for repetition training that had to be practiced sometimes, this was very hard because we had to run 400 or 600 meters for 10 repetitions at full speed. The last one was the most difficult because of lack of oxygen. This training was meant to build a strong heart for our rowing. While athletes at other universities were loitering with toothbrushes in hand, Todai athletes were running at full force. In the evening after dinner, we regularly did weightlifting using barbells everyday. After training at 9 pm the lights were out and we all went to sleep exhausted.

On Sundays, our seniors and coaches would go on a motorboat to watch our training thoroughly. Arai Sensei who was a medical doctor, as mentioned before, never missed once and after the training would always speak kindly to us. The happiest moments were when some seniors brought delicious cakes called “Sashiire” and some fruit for us. The camp training started in November 1959 and lasted until May 1960, which was the time for the tournament for selection of the Japanese team for the Rome Olympics. After Sunday training until the next Monday evening

was the holiday called “Frei” (free in German) and I went to do some tutoring at different houses to earn some pocket money. Therefore, it was only on Mondays that I could attend lectures. However, I also had to rest so I ended up with no attendance at the university. Since taking the exams was mandatory for graduation, I had to show up at the exam following memorizing of what appeared in the notebooks of my diligent friends, which normally I could memorize quickly. Though the points I achieved were not high, they were sufficient for me to pass the exams. During the 4 years of study, I managed to study only for 6 months since I was attached to the rowing club all the time. However, I was able to achieve Todai Doctor’s degree and was subsequently appointed as a Todai professor. Man’s life can really be intriguing.

Concerning the selection tournament to determine who should represent Japan in the Rome Olympic Games regatta in 1960, our victory was a special event, so I will leave it to the next chapter. In this chapter, I will describe only my rowing activities for 4 years in Todai, until returning from the Rome Olympics and including my graduation.

The Tohoku University eight-man crew represented Japan at the Rome Olympics, since they beat the Todai team in this regatta. Todai had failed to win the championship for 7 years. So, after returning from the Olympics the most important goal for Todai was to win over Tohoku University to become No.1 in Japan in this

category. Coach Sugita then selected a new eight-man crew and I was selected as No.6 with the duty called engine. All the four-man crew who were in the four-man crew in the Rome Olympics were selected to be included in the new eight-man crew. The captain was Mr. Miura, one year senior whereas the cox was Mr. Saito who was well known for his spurt call during the tournament and was great at stimulating the crew.

Coach Sugita had prepared many hard training menus such as spurt 100 times for a total of 100 times, which was really hard and focused on only one opponent, Tohoku University. Our mission was how to beat the crew of Tohoku University who had built up their own rowing style devised by Horiuchi coach who had participated in the Olympics.

As everybody expected, the national tournament in August 1960 was the final round of championships between Todai and Tohoku University. Since the performance of the rowers from Tohoku University would be stronger in the second half of the race, coach Sugita thought that the race would be determined in this half. Cox Saito also planned his strategy with the same idea, but we needed to maintain a lead. I had made up my mind that win or lose would happen in the last 500 meters.

Our team was a bit slow at the start of the race, but we caught up to Tohoku University crew at the 1000-meter mark. At the 1500-meter mark we were ahead and finally the race was



decided by the team with the better endurance in the spurts, and we won by 2/3 boat lengths. This was Todai University's best performance in 8 years.

At the closing ceremony Mr. Kishi Michizo our Todai senior alumni, who used to be chairman of Rapid Transit Authority and President of Japan Regatta Association, presented the winning pennant and certificate to Mr. Miura, our captain. Mr. Saito, who had been cox all the way, was by tradition thrown into the water at the Toda course. At the celebration party held at Toda Secondary School, not only the athletes, but many senior alumni came to congratulate us including Mr. Kishi Michizo, Mr. Kaidai Yodo, Mr. Arai Michio, Mr. Morita Minoru, etc.

The above is an account of my life as a rower until the end of my third year. After the national tournament the most senior student Mr. Fukuda, captain and assistant, asked me to assist him in arranging new crews for the coming year. The Japanese Regatta Association had decided to send a no-rudder four-man crew, a no-rudder pair and a single scull to participate in the World Championships to be held in Lucerne Switzerland the following year. Therefore, the arrangements for the crews were set up for these categories. Coach Sugita decided that the no-rudder four-man crew would be the leading crew by selecting two fourth year students and two third year students. I was not included. As for no-rudder pair, Mr. Fukuda who was captain and assistant,

selected me to join him. I was not happy initially that I was not selected in the no-rudder four-man crew, but I changed my mind and thought that I must represent Japan with my buddy Fukuda in this World Championships. Coach Sugita from Rapid Transit Authority was responsible for the no-rudder four-man crew, whereas the no-rudder pair was the responsibility of the coach Kanaya. Coach Sugita's goal was that the pair of Fukuda and Murai pair should be able to win the Japan representative title, so he looked after the four-man crew, hoping to have both the four-man crew and the pair from Todai representing the Japanese team.

The results of the Japanese regatta missed coach Sugita's target. The four-man crew was defeated by Keio University, whereas the pair in which I participated won the race and represented Japan in the World Championships. Three of the crew that lost the race in no-rudder four-man crew, namely, Sawazaki, Horiuchi, Kurasawa from Todai were selected for the newly formed eight-man crew and joined us in the World Championships. The rowing course that was situated in the outskirts of Lucerne in Switzerland was very beautiful, like a dream land. The standard of the Japanese in the small boat categories was still quite low and both my no-rudder pair team and no-rudder four-man crew of Keio team were defeated in the group matches. We knew from the beginning that European athletes were strong, but we joined them to learn more about competitive rowing.

Overseas travel at that time was quite rare but I managed to travel abroad twice during my university period, thanks to competitive rowing. I would like to express my gratitude for the Japanese Regatta Association for the opportunity to travel. Even though I did not receive a gold medal from rowing, I made up my mind that I will achieve a gold medal from some other branch of my activities.

The period of my indulgence in rowing occurred 60 years ago. I would like to consider the case in which one did not study hard at university but immersed himself in rowing. The people that societies hope to watch are not those who are good at studying but human resources that can study and research to solve difficult societal problems. To achieve well at studying means the person can memorize what is written in lecture notes or in textbooks and present the material at an exam, without discussing the material with friends, or not cheating, and could answer the questions within the allotted time. Studying and education/research are totally different. I found out from my experience that education/research are not the straight-line extension of studying. I entered Todai and became a professor of Todai. But studying just to enter Todai may have limited benefits if seen from the point of contributions to the society. I would like to tell parents involved in educating their children that, instead of seeking the target of entry to Todai, they should help their children to have good friends, to play sports, to be healthy and strong.

When they enter society after university, they should become good team leaders. Parents who set the goal towards societal fame or education records or large enterprises should know that these are the wrong goals. My juniors, seniors and contemporaries of the Todai rowing club, who did not attend classes but spent time in athlete's camp have all become active in society. My friends from the rowing club of other universities after graduation, also had good positions and left their marks on society. The fact that they used to participate in rowing enabled them to conclude business negotiations in a positive way. Kenji, our eldest son was also very immersed in rugby football in Keio University and did not pay close attention to his studies. However, once he entered society, I heard that because of his connections with rugby football, his work progressed smoothly.

Many parents in this world misunderstand that if their children graduate from Todai, they will become leading individuals in the world. Looking at the societal positions of my classmates in civil engineering at Todai, not all of them were successful in their careers. Those who studied and graduated from private universities were as successful as those who graduated from Todai, and also became leaders in society. It can be said that emphasizing the importance of educational performance constitutes a negative factor towards healthy development of individuals in society. It should also be realized that assessment of individuals according to their family background is not appropriate.

From my experience, there have been many cases where families who have wished to have their children enter famous universities such as Todai, but the children have endured abnormal lives and encountered some tragic incidents. Education records and societal positions except in government circles, have no relationship to contentment. If parents wish their offspring to become productive in society, they should give them freedom to do as they wish at their own pace. The important advice is that parents should support the children as much as possible. Parents have no right to destroy their children's future. They should not stand in front of the children but extend their help in whatever direction their children want to proceed.

In summer of my fourth year, I participated in the World Championships in no-rudder pair Regatta together with Mr. Fukuda Koji in Lucerne, Switzerland and we were defeated in the Group Match. After that we toured Lisbon, Portugal and Madrid, Spain before returning to Japan. Then I had to write up my thesis, so I attended the university after a long absence. My thesis professor, Professor Okumura told me to do strength tests of steel used in civil work. However, after completing 60% of the testing, the test machine became faulty and with no budget for replacement, my professor told me to sum up the results of the tests that had been completed and write up the thesis for submission.

With this situation, I had some leisure time. Mr Takahashi Daisuke (called Daichan) who was my classmate but he was in the rugby club, was in the same situation. Every morning the two of us ran in the field of the University. After physical exercise to strengthen our bodies, we had breakfast on the roof of the building. Daichan was quite a villain and is still close to me. However, there was no communication with other classmates. I did not want to contact those classmates who on the one hand were quite serious, but on the other hand were interested in only their own advancement and not the achievements of other people. I had another friend like Daichan who was affiliated with the Alpine Club. He was Mr. Suzuki Hiroaki but died young. Later Daichan became Chief Engineer, the position next to Vice President of Rapid Transit Authority. I became a Professor at Todai. Some classmates who were quite serious just said that the two of us knew how to push our way around, thus becoming successful in life. I therefore do not want to associate with those people. To be serious in studying has nothing to do with the progression in society. In the real world, the important thing is not knowledge, but it is the human capacity to be able to lead. After submitting my so-so thesis, I hoped for graduation. Daichan set his target to tour Europe by bicycle with his friends and would stay there for one year.

The new year arrived, and I was expected to complete my studies. I received an invitation from Daichan's family to visit Iyosaijo City in Shikoku Island. We toured by bicycle from Iyonishijo

to Uwajima as our post-graduation vacation. The road along the seashore in January was windy and cold. It was difficult for cycling on the unpaved roads and we had to face the heaviest snow in 30 years. On the way we stayed at the ancestral house of our classmate for one night in Uwajima and enjoyed ourselves very much. As mentioned before, my university period was almost totally immersed in rowing at the rowing club and acquiring a close friend like Daichan was my biggest bonus.



**Shunji Murai with Koji Fukuda  
a crew mate of Rowing Club  
University of Tokyo, 1962**





## 7 Participation in Rome Olympics

The selection regatta for Japanese representatives for the Rowing Regatta at the Rome Olympics in 1960 was set for May 8 of the same year. Todai dispatched an eight-man crew and rudder four-man team to the contest. I participated as an athlete in the rudder four-man category with the following crew. Bow (no 1 rower in front) - Mr. Fukuda Koichi, first year student (from Kurayoshi City, Tottori Prefecture), No. 2 was me, first year student (from Tokyo), No. 3 was Mr. Mizuki Shigeru, second year student (from Noshiro, Akita Prefecture), stroke was Mr. Okubo Naotake, second year student (from Sapporo City, Hokkaido Prefecture), cox was Mr. Saito, first year student (from Tokyo). The coach was Mr. Sugita who worked at Rapid Transit Authority (from Marugame City, Kagawa Prefecture). None of us had entered a regatta during high school since we had all started to learn row after entering Todai. Team body heights were as follows: Mr. Okubo 170 cm, Mr. Mizuki 172 cm, myself 177 cm and Mr. Fukuda 178 cm. When we were compared with crews from other universities, we were just like novices, and nobody would have picked us as crew members.

However, coach Sugita had two secret techniques. Since rowers with short body lengths would have shorter range, this could be remedied by changing the ratio between the oar's inner and the outer lengths from the fixing point, so that the inner

length was shorter and the outer length longer, resulting in longer range for the rower. But this would make each oar heavier, so the pitch had to be increased accordingly. Therefore, in a 2,000-meter race the tactics must be planned so that rowing times for the first and second halves must be maintained, and crew must not slacken off in the second half. For this tactic we might be a bit slow at the initial dash, but we would not slacken off in the second half, so we could catch up and finally win the race. Daily training was carried out at Arakawa for 300 times over long distances of about 2500 meters, and the tactic must be accomplished. In the actual race, this was the same situation; for the first 1,000 meters we were behind but could catch up at 1,300 meters and we turned out to win in several cases.

The betting circle gave the thumbs up to Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Tokyo Gaidai) that won the race on the previous year (athletes were bigger and taller than 180 cm). There were two runners up, Asahi Denka Co. team and Furukawa Denko Co. team with athletes coming from university graduates who worked in the company. They were permitted to leave their workplace in order to participate in the selection tournament for representing Japan. Looking at the past record of those hopeful teams, it seemed that our crew was ignored by all.

The New Year came, and every team was very enthusiastic to participate in the selection of Japanese representatives to be

held in May. On the shore of racecourse at Toda, there appeared 5 or 6 spies riding on bicycles taking time checks of other university teams. They ran back and forth to check which team had good times. We also wanted to know our time, so we went for the time trial. In the beginning there was no spy following us, but by March, several bicycles were following us. Finally, it seemed that our time trial was better than expected. One day in March, the Japan Regatta Association made the announcement for the teams to enter the selection tournament for the Olympics to participate in 1000-meter time trial. Our team also joined but did not fare well because we were too excited. So, after discussion, we decided not to find out the result. But Mr. Mizuki secretly went to see our time and found out that we were No 1. The race of the eight-man crew, which was the leading event, the result was according to the rumors, that is, Tohoku University was No. 1 and Todai was No. 2. Every university has an eight-man crew. As for rudder four-man crew, the individual team (private sector) made the most effort. Asahi Denko Team, the favorite team did not participate in the time trial so we could not rest assured that we would win.

Finally, May 8 arrived. The regatta race to decide which team would represent Japan at the Rome Olympics was held. In the first round, Tokyo University of Medicine and Dentistry (Tokyo Ikashika) that rowed smoothly was our main opponent. At the start, we were behind, but at 1000 meters with spurt shout of cox Saito, we could overtake them in no time, and win the race.

In the semifinal round we must face Furukawa Denko team, but by now there was a strong wind. Normally, in the case of a strong opposing wind, the Association would reverse the direction so that the teams could record a good time. Rowing against the wind would suit us better, since we used to long range rowing which was effective for the finish of the race. In the semifinal round rowing windward, we could not catch up to Furukawa Denko team in the lead, no matter what. The waves were strong, and we were also rowing windward, so they were doing much better than us. However, with a full-strength spurt, both teams finished with the same time and the decision flag was not raised for quite some time. After discussion by the committee, it was decided that both teams had finished at the same time, and both could enter the final round. We felt reborn but confused.

In the final round there was the Furukawa Denko team, but the more formidable team was Asahi Denko. At the start dash to the 500-meter mark, our team was last, but after careful rowing past 1000 meters, we could see our opponents' boats. Passing 1200-meter cox Saito shouted spurt forcing us racing up to be No. 2 and we were seesawing with the Asahi Denko team. Passing 1400-meter cox Saito ordered the second spurt and later this was called double spurt that was Today's trump card. This spurt enabled our team to pull slightly ahead and we tried to finish with meticulous rowing against the wind, while watching the opposing team. Finally, we won by just two thirds of the boat length.

At the finish no one in our team could stand up immediately. After a while when we reached the mooring near the Todai boat yard, we received loud cheers from our cheer squad. Cox of the winning crew, Mr. Saito was carried aloft and thrown into the pond in accordance with custom. Coach Sugita came to give inspiring words that the rowing was excellent. For Todai the race for eight-man crew, the leading and most important event and cheer squad was waiting while cheering “Better to win, better to win.”

The result of eight-man race was as expected. Tohoku University won the race with Todai trailing second. From what I saw, the oar handling of Tohoku University was excellent. All Todai athletes were disappointed. The rudder four-man crew, with second league status even though it was selected to represent Japan in Olympics, but our eight-man crew with first league status, was defeated. Therefore, our four-man crew could not simply show our joy at being selected for the Olympics, but Captain Akamine walked to us and said “Murai well done.” This made me feel relieved to hear the voice of the defeated commander.

Having decided which team would represent Japan in Rome Olympics, the Japan Regatta Association started to survey various statistics, such are, winning time of champion Europe and U.S. teams. At that time there was no internet, so data collection had to depend on the assistance of Japanese trading firms in the locality. We were shocked to find out that according to

the statistics, over 2000 meters, the teams were more than 10 seconds faster than us, a level which would be unbeatable, whereas for the eight-man crew, the difference was smaller but still quite difficult for us to pass in the first round. At this juncture, we felt gloomy about the tournament which had the catchphrase “To participate in Olympics is meaningful”. However, for the athletes, we could not take such an easy attitude.

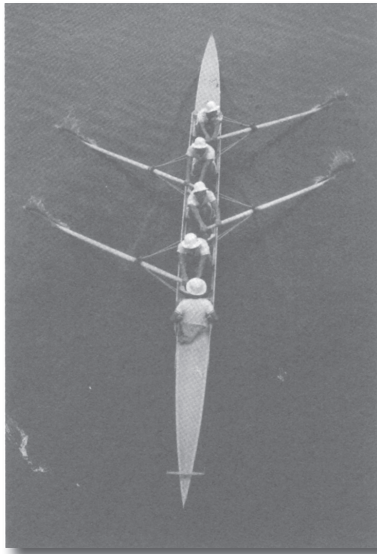
With a backdrop of a cheering crowd, we boarded the plane at Haneda Airport, despite some uneasy feelings. At that time, the plane was propeller drive, not a jet. So, the plane needed to refuel 6 times before reaching Rome with a total travel time of 31 hours. Each time the plane stopped to refuel; food was served. I ate too much and had diarrhea, but this was my first overseas travel. Rome was so beautiful, like a dreamland. We stayed at athletes’ village in a western style room and were thankful for the excellent arrangements. It was the first time we saw a bidet on the toilet and did not know how to use it. After coach explained that it was an apparatus for woman, we were taken aback. The food was buffet style which was different from the way food was served in the camp of Todai. We were pampered and lived palatially. We trained in Albano Lake, the venue of tournament with pristine water so clear that we could use it to gargle. For our training, we competed a short distance with the rudder four team of Russia, but we were so far behind them that there was nothing to mention about win or lose.

For the opening ceremony, the participation of attendees was by drawing lots. When entering the main stadium, only Japanese and Republic of Korea team walked in line like soldiers in an army, whereas the rest of the athletes had one hand holding a camera, walking leisurely. We were forbidden from bringing a camera with us, so there was not even one picture of us in the stadium, whereas other national athletes took pictures of each other.

Let me talk about the result of the tournament. Although we knew from the beginning about the real power of other countries during the training, but still we were defeated in the first round and again failed in the selection tournament among first-round losers. Of course, we were very disappointed. We went to see the semifinal and final races and were very impressed. The most surprising thing was to see athletes who had rowed so hard and with full force that they almost fainted and had numbed legs at the end of the race. At that moment, I decided that even though I could not fetch a gold medal in the world regatta, I will win a gold medal in another field.

As for eight-man crew, Tohoku University clocked in No. 2 of the selection among first round losers. If they had achieved No. 1 they would have a guaranteed place in the final round, which was a much better result than for our rudder four-man crew. After the Olympics we travelled to Paris and London. The result of the boat racing was horrible, but for me, this was a great benefit

for my life. In London, we stayed at the dormitory of the Regatta Club with the courtesy of Oxford University.





## ⑧ As staff of an overseas trading firm

Sometime in the spring of my 4<sup>th</sup> year, after the selection race to decide on Japanese representatives at World Championship in No Rudder Pair with Mr. Fukuda, Professor Okumura who was responsible for employment of graduating students of Civil Engineering ordered me to see him. My friend told me because a leaflet was placed on the notice board. When I met him, Professor Okumura said, “How about your employment?” I answered, “I have not thought about it, sir.” Then the Professor said “I have a classmate who is the divisional director of an overseas civil engineering consulting firm called Nippon Koei Co., Ltd. Go and see what he has to offer.” I immediately went to the company’s location in Shimbashi and was told to “Go to have health check-up at a nearby clinic.” After confirming my good health, I was told that on “April 1<sup>st</sup> next year, please come to the new recruit welcoming ceremony”. For me, the World Championship Tournament in Switzerland was more important, so I decided that the earlier I could arrange my employment the better. So, I agreed to the employment without knowing the profile of the company.

I hardly attended lectures during that year and just borrowed lecture notes of my friends for studying. Then after the examinations I received sufficient units which enabled me to complete my study program without any obstacles. Though I managed to graduate, the only book I bought during my studies

was “Concrete Engineering”. Since I have a good memory, I could memorize most of the content of the lecture notes, enabling me to pass the exams. Rowing races at university had already finished, and I graduated without any problems. When I attended the new recruits’ welcoming ceremony of the company on April 1<sup>st</sup>, seeing my name displayed, realized that I had achieved employment.

At that time, Nippon Koei Co. Ltd. which had just been listed on the stock market, was a small company engaging in civil work design, especially in the design of hydro power dam construction in Indonesia. There were senior engineers advising us on the stability calculations of the land filled dam construction. The head of the section was a disgusting man. Even one made a small mistake, he would respond sarcastically with his habitual loud voice “You graduated from Todai, but do not understand this, is that correct?” Stability calculations were done by using a ruler and a compass on the segment drawing of the dam, calculating the area and finding its stability. For finding the sliding surface with the lowest stability value, it was necessary to construct many illustrations, then determine the stability value. Even if it was just one drawing, it could be a big job. When there were several construction plans, this was the job nobody wanted to do even though it was a simple task.

Since I thought that civil engineering design was dependent on concepts developed by humans, I was disappointed in this

process. At the same time I thought about the possible use of computers which had just been debuted for automatic calculation. The memory of computers then was so unbelievably small, while programming was by machine language. The company had no computers, so it was necessary to rent one from a dealer. I negotiated with the company and the dealer to automate the stability calculation of the dam for the first time though it was difficult to achieve. This was successful but the company said that the cost must not exceed the company's computer rental budget, which I made sure that I complied with. No matter what the shape and size of the dam was, the stability calculation could be determined. Therefore, it was possible to find out the best form of land-filled dam.

I submitted the best design to the head of the section, who said "It is not fashionable to build a dam according to another design, so your design is not usable" I did not know what to do since I had wasted time. However, later the international audit unit sent in the report that the design proposed by the company did not have good stability, and a new proposal had to be resubmitted which was my design. As a result I lost my confidence in the company.

By chance, at a lunch break, there was debate about the bonus of employees by the union. Because of my curiosity I went to participate. It was the discussion about whether the union

should propose how many months of bonus should be paid. Two years ago they got 3.6 months and last year 3.7 months, so this year they wanted to propose 3.8 months bonus. I was a new employee but raised my hand and said that “It is funny to propose bonuses like this. Bonuses are decided by the profit of the company at that time, not by progression of each year. The company had entered the stock market, so the profit should be large. So, we should propose more than 4 months.” At that time, I stayed in the single dormitory in Kawasaki; my subordinate who finished high school shouted in support of my opinion. The union did not know what to do. So they turned down the proposal of the company and proposed a bonus of more than 4 months and entered into negotiations.

Since I was not on the committee of the union, I was not included in the negotiation team. I found a strategy around this by going to the nearby police station to request a demonstration in my name. Actually, I did not mean to hold a demonstration but just to intimidate the company. I provided some knowledge to the committee members of the union such that if they kept on negotiating as long as possible, then the company would give in. However, the company also intimidated some committee members, so finally it was settled at 4.2 months bonus without asking for my opinion.

After the negotiations ended, the reprisals from the personnel department of the company started. Union committee members were ordered to be dispatched to work overseas in company projects in Indonesia or Korea. As for me, who was considered as a black sheep in the company, I was sent to work in hydro power dam survey project in Ghana in Africa as the worst case.

Therefore, at the beginning of my third year at the company, I was dispatched to work in the survey planning of a hydro power dam on White Volta River in Ghana. The survey area was located in the north of Ghana, an undeveloped area with three endemics, namely, malaria, Sudden Unexpected Death Syndrome (SUDS), and microphalaria. The English colonizer called this area as “Graveyard of White people.” My responsibility was to measure the water level and the flow volume of the upper reaches at the location of the planned dam construction on White Volta River. Measuring water level was easy; it meant just putting up a measuring pole and recording the level. But to observe flow volume was not easy. We selected five suitable locations, drilled concrete poles on both sides of the river, which was more than 50 meter wide, stretched a wire across the river and installed the equipment to measure the flow volume. A boat was fixed with the wire and the measuring equipment which was gradually lowered to measure the flow speed. In the dry season the water was shallow almost to the bottom of the river. However, in the rainy season, water level would rise rapidly up to 10 meters and the flow speed might

exceed 3 meters per second. Therefore, measurement during high water was quite dangerous. My assistant hired local people for this job but I got abnormal heartbeat every time I saw naïve young men unaware of the danger.

The area of the construction was a wide river over a distance of more than 300 kilometers. Road conditions were bad as it was a remote area, and it was difficult to move around. Even though we started work in the early morning, by evening we could finish measurement of water flow at just one location. In rainy seasons, mosquitoes were a hazard and among Japanese surveyors, some contracted malaria.

The survey office was also used as living quarters at a village called Walewale. In the adjoining village, there was an Indian doctor, to whom I took Japanese patients who contracted malaria, I was close to the servant and the cook of the residence because I could speak African English. People who contracted malaria had high fever of 40 degrees for three days. After three days the fever would subside a little and by this time the Indian doctor would give the prescription. i.e, to drink a lot of cow's milk, but the Japanese patients requested to have congee instead. Having to take care of the patients during this period, I did not observe the river flow volume.

Then I started to analyze why Japanese contracted malaria and I found out that the reason was quite simple. Food intake was

not good, leading to low immunity against malaria. Only I who ate spicy food like local people, whereas other Japanese people depended on instant noodles and instant miso resulting in an unhealthy nutrition balance. Moreover, the money given to the cook as food expense was embezzled. The supervision by the company's head office was quite careless. If such situations persisted the dam construction survey project would inevitably fail. I thought that sweating in a hot country in Africa was normal. So, I wondered why other Japanese staff did not exercise. Together with Mr.Sato who graduated from high school we set up a village level football team to compete against each other. I did not know how to play, so my duty was like a sponsor to throw the ball for kick-off. I Joined in the training and sweated so my physical health was strong.

Once I almost engaged in physical assault by demanding the head of the office to hand over one month's food expenses as indicated in our budget. At that time, I was weighing more than 80 kilogram with strong muscles. The office head then had to unwillingly oblige. With this money, every Tuesday morning we went to Mami market 100 kilometer away to buy vegetables, fruit, meat and fish. Fully loaded, we drove our jeep even without a driver's license, since driving was easy. We also bought a live pig and had the cook killed for a barbecue pork party. Beer was available at one's own expense, but since there was a lot of money we bought beer and let the Japanese staff drink for free. My handling was almost like

a revolution, but after that no Japanese staff contracted malaria.

However, my physical provocation was reported back to head office in Japan by the office manager. It was considered as messing with the company's regulations. One year passed while the survey of the area was going well, I was permitted to take one month's leave. Just a few days after returning home I was called to report at the office. Arriving at the board room, I saw five to six board members sitting there who told me to kneel and apologize for what I had done. But I argued that my action was necessary to accomplish the mission of the work. However, this was not accepted. The arguments remained unresolved. Thereupon I said that I could not go back to work in such conditions and offered to resign, which was duly accepted. I was thus unemployed and the job compensation after deducting the borrowed money, amounted to only 30,000 yen.

Let me give an account of the happy memory on Sunday in Ghana that might not be seen in Japan. The first memory was cruising downstream without telling the company. Since I used to row in the river while at the rowing club of the university, I asked the local people to build two boats like canoes facing front. Besides, I bought one similar to Japanese O-one boat, which had the rower facing to the rear. About 10 kilometers farther out on the White Volta River, we surveyed a place suitable for mooring and put up a red flag. Then I had the fisherman who was hired



as local employee to sit on the boat and I was the rower. At first, the flow was serene with crocodiles lying in the sun along the shore. The flow was gentle and the local people were singing by squeezing the nose. After a while, there was a rumbling sound and the fisherman said that there was swift current and we must be careful. I used the oar to navigate the boat to the best of my ability in the swift current so as not to let the boat hit the rock and luckily I escaped. There were big stones in the swift current and between the rocks the flow was swift. It is important not to let the boat hit the stones. This was a dangerous venture and was achieved because I was still young.

Another memory also concerned with the adventure in the river. Just before the dry season, in order to preserve drinking water, we used a bulldozer to fill up the soil on the shore of the small river to make a reservoir. Since the rivers in Africa were different from the rivers in Japan in that the slope was very small i.e. 1 : 10,000, building an embankment 3 meters high ended up with 30 kilometers long reservoir. There were no roads along the shore, while upstream was uninhabitable land. Surveying the river was carried out by using two canoes in parallel with two local people sitting in each canoe. After travelling for 10 kilometers we reached a village. It happened that people were preparing to cut the neck of a crocodile they had caught. I asked the local employee to negotiate for the head with a small tip. The head of the crocodile was neatly dried. When I returned to Japan, I put it in the suitcase

and passed the quarantine check. Now the crocodile head with the upper teeth crushing the lower teeth is still kept in my house. It is quite scary to look at it. The cat in my house jumped away immediately after seeing it.



## ⑨ Murai Lab Period of IIS, Todai

After resigning from the company and receiving unemployment insurance, I could not tell my parents, so I acted as if I was going to work as usual. At the end of March Showa 42 (1967) Mr. Takahashi Daisuke and Mr. Shimoda Koichi, my classmates at the Civil Engineering Department of Todai called and asked me to go with them to visit Professor Masuyasu Takakazu, who taught us photogrammetry, to report on our activity after employment. I went with them thinking that we would be treated to lunch. After reaching Sensei's house, and finishing lunch brought from the shop, Sensei said, "Now report about your work." This was beyond my expectation. Mr. Takahashi said that "I work at the Rapid Transit Authority doing project design of highways" and Mr. Shimoda said "I work at the Housing Authority doing new city planning." Next was my turn but I did not want to say that I was unemployed, so I spoke without thinking that "During my university time I did only rowing without any studying, so I would like to study under Sensei's guidance." And Sensei said that "You don't seem to pass the postgraduate entrance exam, so you will just pay a monthly tuition fee as a research student."

Thus, I began my life as a research student at Maruyasu Laboratory of IIS of Todai in Roppongi. Since I had no money, it was quite difficult to pay the monthly tuition, so I had to save on lunch and bus fares. At that time, Nakamura Hideo Sensei, five years my

senior at Civil Engineering of Todai, worked as a lecturer at Maruyasu Lab, and was tackling analytical aerial photogrammetry by computer using complex mathematics. I did not study much during university period, but by nature I was good at mathematics, so I could solve the complex mathematics of analytical photogrammetry. Then I was advised by Nakamura Sensei to undertake the difficult task of writing a machine language program for use in the only computer in the lab at that time. Professor Maruyasu entrusted the total supervision of the lab to Nakamura Sensei and rarely showed up. Since Nakamura Sensei was a young and energetic researcher, I learned many things from him. However, at that time, Nakamura Sensei's salary as lecturer was considered poor. I still remember at a drinking place in Shimbashi quite often I just asked for a glass of beer, but I brought my own relish.

Soon Nakamura Sensei finished his doctoral dissertation and received his doctoral degree, and thus was promoted to the position of Associate Professor. He said to me "Murai, you seem unable to make ends meet financially, so I will ask Maruyasu Sensei to replace me with you as lecturer. He also said "The salary of lecturer is low but you can still make a living" Thus I advanced to lecturer from the research student. In the meantime, Nakamura Sensei presented a research paper at the International Photogrammetry Society Symposium held in Tokyo. Since it was an excellent paper, it drew the attention of the renowned professor from Stuttgart University in Germany and Nakamura Sensei was invited to that university

as a researcher. Of course, Nakamura Sensei wanted to go to Germany but Professor Maruyasu who had entrusted him to look after the Maruyasee Lab opposed the move. However, Nakamura Sensei finally left for Germany despite the unresolved opposing opinions of both professors.

In such a situation, it was inevitable that I was given the task of supervising the Maruyasu Lab. I was entrusted with the job of advising master's degree research students' thesis and bachelor degree students' thesis who were dispatched from Hosei University, as well as conducting contract research. Despite my thoughts of coming to Maruyasu Lab to study, now my position was changed to teaching. The complete supervision of the lab for Prof. Maruyasu was my responsibility. This was the situation just before my marriage.

Professor Maruyasu ordered me to write up the doctoral dissertation but without giving me a research theme or content, he just told me to work it out for myself. This was just after my wedding. After my newlywed period we were living in a rented house in Asagaya. At that time, I was grappling with civil engineering design of numerical topography data derived from aerial photogrammetry. The determination of the amount of earthworks derived from cutting and filling for golf course developments or for housing development projects was in high demand. So, I developed the algorithm to minimize the amount of earthworks

and called it optimal design. This was released at cost to nearly 30 civil engineering companies and the income was useful for the operation of the laboratory. Besides, putting in some original ideas I completed the doctoral dissertation which passed the fastidious examination of the professors and was blessed with the title of Doctor of Engineering. The result enabled me to be promoted in due course from lecturer to Associate Professor under Professor Maruyasu. This was an evolution of my career that was totally unimagined earlier. At this time, I could move to stay at government residence at Musashimurayama City. We had an extremely poor newlywed life, but now life became easier. My elder son Kenji was born during our stay at Asagaya and my second son Tetsuya was born when we stayed at Musashimurayama. When I became Associate Professor of Todai, I was shocked to see that suddenly society looked at me in a completely different way. Even though I had not changed anything, I think society overvalued the title of Associate Professor of Todai.

After some years had passed, an event occurred that was a big turning point in my life. The Ministry of Education approved a new professor chair of photogrammetry in Civil Engineering Department of the Faculty of Engineering of Todai. Professor Maruyasu was appointed chair professor of this new position and moved from the IIS at Roppongi to the Hongo campus, resulting in the closure of the Maruyasu Lab in IIS and the establishment of the Murai Lab. Thus “Murai Lab” was born.

At the Muria Lab, the guidance of doctor and master's degree students, the guidance of thesis students dispatched from Hosei University, the preparation of my own research papers, applications for scientific research funds, the handling of contract research business, etc. came under my supervision and responsibility. It was fortunate that teaching staff of IIS had to lecture only once or twice per week for master's degree courses and could concentrate on research. This for me was the ideal workplace.

For the Murai Lab, the especially important responsibility was how to guide the students who were expecting to be active in society in the future. Comparing the Todai and Hosei students, no matter how I judged them, after entering society, Hosei students would seem to be more active in enterprises. Certainly, Todai students were more intelligent, but when a big cleaning of the Lab occurred, Todai students did not cooperate or just sneaked away. At drinking or food parties at the Murai Lab, Hosei students were more prompt in preparation and cooperated to create a happy atmosphere. Therefore, I set up a plan to recommend students who were active and interesting people, when they were ready to enter society. As for the Todai students, even though they were left alone, they were capable of preparing research papers, so I needed only to discuss with them the themes they will undertake in their research which would contribute to society.

Then just before the noon lunch break, I asked the students to secure the tennis court in the inner grounds of IIS. I enjoyed noon break tennis with everybody in the lab. After working hours sometimes past five in the evening, we took beer from the refrigerator which we enjoyed with relish. I bought tofu from the shop at Roppongi, which would close in the evening but if we went just before closing, we would get a good discount. We relished this opportunity for food and drink. At Murai lab, photogrammetry was the research theme, so there was a large refrigerator for storing film, so I used my pocket money to buy the beer and store it there. In spring and autumn, I took students to stay at the lodge for tennis or mountain climbing. In winter it was the ski lodge and in summer, sea bathing. Lodging expenses were paid for by Murai lab and the students just took care of their travelling expenses. Incidentally, at that time China had just opened up and there were several Chinese students coming to Murai Lab. All the expenses of Chinese students were the responsibility of Murai Lab. Chinese students could make Tianjin dumpling, so everybody helped in making 500 dumplings and have a big party from time to time. I also guided them that it was satisfactory even if their master's degree thesis or bachelor's degree thesis was not rated excellent, just passing the examination was adequate.

From Showa 41 (1966) to Heisei 12 (2000) is a total of 34 years that I worked at IIS of Todai and there are too many accomplishments to write about in one chapter. So, I present



here the activities which were outstanding in Chapters 10 to 12. If I were to rate my accomplishments, no.1 would be my international activities. Concerning research papers including submitted papers and peer review papers, there were about 350 each in Japanese and English. My 300 overseas trips including tours of duty was an especially high number for a university professor. There were also nine authored books.

My three main international activities are as follows. The first concerned with the task as ISPRS President and Director from 1984 to 2008 for 16 years, which appears in Chapter 12. Second was the involvement as the originator of Asian Association on Remote Sensing (AARS) with the first conference held in 1980, and as Secretary General of AARS, I organized the Asian Conference on Remote Sensing (ACRS) in various countries in Asia outside Japan for 30 years. The story is described in Chapter 11.

As for domestic accomplishment, this was the rejuvenation of the almost extinct Japan Society of Photogrammetry and put back on the right track as appears in Chapter 10. Now let me continue with the activity of Murai Lab.

It was a blessing that almost all of those who graduated from Murai Lab said that they were happy at the Lab. It was gratifying to see the setting up of OB Club called “Samurai Club”. Students who graduated from Murai Lab were not especially eminent but entered into the society and worked in enterprises

or government offices with healthy societal attitudes. By and by some approached retirement age. Now the custom is not to have a matchmaker at the wedding ceremony. In the past I could not refuse when asked by the graduated students to be a matchmaker of nearly 30 couples, mostly former students, but Taeko my wife disliked this. Mr. Asakura Kengo, first year graduate of Murai Lab was the first instance.

Self-styled Murai Lab continued with smooth operations and supervision but for me another big turning point occurred internally. Around 1990 Dr. Shibazaki who graduated from Murai Lab was promoted to the position of Associate Professor. At that time in the case of the promotion of teaching staff who had held the position of Associate Professor for many years to the position of Professor, an existing professor had to make a position vacant. I thought that it was good to leave the post to Dr. Shibazaki. It happened that I was approached to take up the post of dispatched professor of JICA for long term stay at the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT) in Pathumthani Province of Thailand. I also would like to give guidance at AIT for mainly graduate students of Asia. As soon as I accepted, it was decided to send me to AIT for three years from December, Heisei 4<sup>th</sup> year (1992) to December Heisei 7<sup>th</sup> year (1995).

Actually, around the same time of my dispatchment to AIT a big turning point occurred for our family. As described

before, from the inheritance struggle of Murai family, I received 7 million yen. I asked Taeko my wife “Is it all right to use this money freely without consulting you?” And she replied that it was O.K.

Then there was a proposal from Dr. Sukit Visetsin who graduated with a doctor’s degree from the Murai Lab and had returned to Thailand. His mother was in the real estate business and possessed eleven pieces of land. I was instructed to choose the land I liked, and the rent would be free. I immediately went to Thailand and Dr. Sukit’s father drove us to see several pieces of land. Among these there was one which was situated near the shore of Thailand’s largest river, called Chao Phraya River, that caught my attention. Since I used to row during my student period, I would like to have a house on the shore of the river. The contract was immediately signed for rent-free occupation of this one-hectare piece of land. I was told that building a new house would cost 5-million-yen, furniture around 1 million yen and air conditioning, etc. another 1 million, with a total cost of 7 million yen. This was the same amount I received from the inheritance, so I immediately requested the new house to be built, which was decided without discussing it with Taeko. I made the decision without even looking at the map to see how far this land was from Bangkok.

One can never foresee one’s fate. Soon after ordering the new house to be built, I was persuaded to become teaching staff at AIT under the JICA project and I accepted. Now it was not

possible not to tell Taeko, my wife of my decisions. As soon as I told her of my decision, she was angry saying “how could you decide such an important matter without discussing with me?” and did not talk to me for one month. Since these two incidents happened almost at the same time, I was very excited about future prospects.

After a while, Taeko suddenly said to me “I will go with you to Thailand.” She did not give a reason but I found out later that she was instructed by her friend that if a well-to-do Japanese man went to stay alone for a long period in Thailand he would take on a Thai girlfriend resulting in family breakdown. At any rate I decided to work at AIT and live in the yet to be finished new house with my wife.

Since my new house would only be finished just before our departure to Thailand, Bedding, tables, utensils, etc. were bought in advance but there was no time for trial living. At that time, we had one dog called Cotton, one cat called Chibi and two kittens called Tokon and Anton, so we brought them along with us. After passing through animal quarantine at Narita Airport, we received the dog and the cats at Bangkok Airport and brought them to our new house at the corner of a village near the shore of Chao Phraya River. A young maid called Wandee was waiting for us. Being a new house there were no trees around, and even with air-conditioners it was so hot. There was no tap water, so canal

water was filtered for use. 20 litre bottles of drinking water had to be bought. The most inconvenient aspect was no telephone. At that time, smart phones did not exist, so we bought a wireless phone, but the battery ran out very quickly. It was like a house at nowhere. Soon after living there, we found a small village near the shore of the river just a small walk from my house. The villagers used to come-and-go freely out of curiosity about the Japanese people. In the one-hectare plot of land there was a small canal with a village alley passing through, so people just peeked into the house. Nearby there was a gardener called Charoon, so we asked him to take care of the plot. He was a good guy but just so-so at taking care of the garden. Food purchases were entrusted to our maid Wandee, but she was just a 16 years old girl, not shrewd and not a good maid. I had to go to the Pathumthani market with our driver Jon in our new car. Soon after, we changed the maid to an older woman called Da. She was very good at cooking and was impeccable in cleaning the house. She could communicate closely with Taeko and was very useful helping us out with our living in the village. We only ate Thai food and the fruits were delicious, so we could eat Thai food without difficulty. Fresh food ingredients were bought at the market by the maid. We were also invited to different functions at the Buddhist temples.

I had had experience in under-developed areas of Asia but for Taeko this was her first experience, so she had to face continuous ordeals. However, in no time, primary school girls and

boys were brought to our house and Taeko was asked to teach them Japanese. It seemed that those who could speak Japanese even a little would have an advantage if they worked at some Japanese company. Once Taeko agreed to teach them Japanese, those children were very happy to come to our house. They wanted to come because this was the only house in the village which had air-conditioners. Japanese lessons were no more than 30 minutes, after that it was playing and dancing and jollification, and then going home. Taeko also learned some Thai from the children and eventually could speak a little. She also learned to read and could write some simple words. I also joined in the lessons from the Thai language teacher but for me I could only speak very simple Thai words.

Soon we could communicate with the villagers and were invited to attend the events of the temple nearby on full moon day. After chanting the sutra, before noon the villagers would offer food that they brought with them to the monks for lunch. After that they would form a circle of about ten people to have lunch together and I was also invited to join. At the end it was customary to present donations in front of the monks. Since I was called “Doctor Murai” in the village and the donation was announced, it was a must for me to donate a large amount, several ten of thousands yen each time. By doing so, the maid and the gardener could feel proud. I stayed at AIT for three years, then after a short interval, another two years, totalling five years and reaped valuable

experience from living in the village. After returning to Japan, Taekeo wrote and printed a book entitled “From Village in Thailand” at her own expense.

I started to live in this house without knowing how far it was from AIT. Actually, it was only about a 15-minute driving. However, there was expressway construction at that time, so it took 30 minutes. It took about one hour to reach downtown Bangkok. Japanese teaching staff at JICA who stayed in high end mansion at Sukumvit area were amazed to see us staying in the village. Looking back, by living in the village, we could come to grips with not only the culture and traditions of Thailand but also the thinking of the public. I thought this was a really good experience.

Soon after I arrived, Dr. Suvit Vibulsresth Director of Remote Sensing Division, NRCT (later changed to GISTDA) requested me to give special lectures in his office. So, I began to give monthly lectures. At that time, information technology, such as image processing and output generation by computer in Thailand was out-of-date. The lectures ranged from theory to real applications. Then came the request from the Air Force and I visited several facilities. Normally there were about 30 attendees but at times of a special topic, there were about 80 people participating. Of course, this was a free service. Such activities and the regreen movement under the auspices of HRH Princess Sirindhorn were highly valued, resulting in my receiving the decoration of the order of Knight

Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the White Elephant from King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in 1997. Although I did not think that this was very special, later I learned that an English Professor who was AIT President received a lower order of elephant family decoration. I was quite surprised and could not tell other people at the university about my conferment. Besides the certificate, there was a pendant and star crest. I put the decoration on the ceiling of the house and did not show it to my sons.

Among the staff of NRCT there were Miss Ratana, Mr. Ittipon and Mr. Thongchai who invited us to join in playing badminton every Friday evening at a badminton club. Since we had enjoyed playing badminton in Japan, we started to go with them. Even in the evening in a hot country like Thailand, to play in the gym without air conditioning made us sweat profusely. After playing and shower, we went to a Thai restaurant for Thai food. Having dinner with Thai people we were taught different ways of eating and could enjoy delicious dishes. It was always I who paid the bill. In Thai custom, the boss or senior people are obliged to treat, and a Dutch treat is not accepted. Thus, I gained valuable experience in eating Thai food.

During vacation, together with these Thai friends we were invited to tour some famous tourist spots together, enabling us, husband and wife, to enjoy Thai style travel. It can be said that Thai



people are expert in enjoying travelling and living without using a lot of money. We were also taken to interesting places not visited by Japanese people. For example, the tiger farm where tigers were set free to roam, Koh Surin Island where aborigines still lived like in the old days or staying in the bamboo cottage on the Kwai River. We also visited Chiangmai, Ittipon's birthplace, and we were guided through his house, seeing the lifestyle of Thai people with much interest. The birthplace of Thongchai was in the south and after visiting, we could see that manners and customs differ from the north of Chiangmai.

During my stay at AIT, I hired a secretary called Wandee whose birthplace was in Khaolak in the south of Thailand. The Sumatra Earthquake occurred after my retirement, with a Tsunami (M 9.1) and Khaolak was totally destroyed. Six of her family including her mother lost their lives. To pay condolences I left with my wife to visit the site. I was told that in the orchard operated by Wandee's relative who survived, there were many corpses swept by the tsunami. Wandee's house was destroyed by the tsunami but I paid the cost of rebuilding.

Let me report on my five-year activity at AIT. At first, I was placed in the Computer Science Department. There were staff of different nationalities, from Thailand, India, Vietnam, etc., each with strong individuality and they were always fighting. Once at the election of Head of Department, I discovered wrongdoing by

the Indian staff member and his elected Department Head position was cancelled. The result of the re-election turned out that I was elected as Department Head. The budget of the Department was meagre. Even though it was called the Computer Science Department, there was only one computer for the students to use. Since I was also elected in the name of representing Japanese staff, one part of JICA budget was used to purchase 30 sets of personal computers including software so that each student would have one personal computer to use. After that there was no more fighting among teaching staff. Students were very satisfied with the conditions in the department.

Around this time, a student called Krishna from Nepal, told me that there was a soccer tournament in the university and as classroom representative, asked me for some support. On asking about past results, the answer was that they were defeated in the preliminary round. I then gathered all the players and stimulate them that “if we win the championship, I will invite all of you for dinner party with no-limit on the beer.” At that time beer was expensive alcohol and affordable only by rich people. Common people normally drink only Thai whisky. Suddenly all the students were in high spirits. Winning the preliminary round, semifinal round to reach the final round, I participated to cheer them on as Head of Department and cheered them with a loud voice “Must win to drink beer.” We won and became the champions. How delightful it was to see the joy of the students in the party

with no-limit beer. The party expense for 30 students was no more than 50,000 yen; it was not a burden for me.

AIT was established by United States to prevent communist domination in Asia. At the time it was established, it was an international graduate school hitherto non-existent in Asia. There were only master's and doctor's degree courses consisting of students and staff from different countries. At that time JICA dispatched five to ten Japanese teaching staff with a minimum posting of two years. As for me, at first it was for three years, and one year after another two years, for a total of five years. The salary was 70 percent (minus bonus) of the present affiliation plus 100 percent of the salary at AIT, so it was quite a high salary, i.e., yearly income was 1.7 times my current salary. Since living costs were cheap in Thailand, we could save a lot of money.

Let me introduce my biggest contribution to AIT. After two years at AIT, I came to know the limitations of AIT. Graduate education was great but there was no research to tackle problems that should be solved in the Asian region. Despite the UN, Asia Development Bank (ADB), World Bank etc, providing the budget to solve the problems of Asia, AIT lacked research capability and power to handle research problems. Therefore, I thought of setting up an independent research center. Although I requested AIT for some room for the center, I was provided with only about two classrooms. Then I requested AIT to provide some land, and we would use our own funding to build an independent building.

The funding was financed from my savings and Thai Obayashigumi Co. was commissioned to construct the building. I designed and planned the rooms of the two story building. Since land subsidence from excessive underground water pumping was quite severe, Obayashigumi was requested to drill 30 meter long piling down to the firm solid foundation so as not to risk subsidence of the building. Thence “Geoinformatics Center (GIC)” was completed and provided the space for staff of about 30 people. The name of the Center at first was different, but it was later officially changed to Geoinformatics Center (GIC). On February 19,1999 we received the blessing of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn to preside over the grand opening ceremony. This was the event just before completing my five-year assignment at AIT. It is fortunate that at present Mr. Manzul, alumni of AIT from India is the Center Director hiring 15 research staff with exclusive independent operation. I hope to join the 25-year anniversary celebration in 2024 to give felicitation remarks as the originator.

Let me introduce one activity worthy of mentioning among my activities in Thailand. Once there was organized a seminar on the conservation of tropical forests at Khao Yai National Park. HRH Princess Sirindhorn graciously presided over the opening ceremony and attended the landscape tour. I presented a talk on how satellite imagery could monitor the depletion of forest due to deforestation. HRH Princess Sirindhorn was very interested and asked me how to prevent the destruction of tropical forest.

To which I replied without thinking, that just using remote sensing to analyze the forest decrease was of no use. But if HRH Princess Sirindhorn would graciously lead Thai citizens to plant the trees, this would be most important. As I added that tropical reforestation movement should be carried out, HRH said that “I will support it but Professor Murai please lead the project”

Thus, I started Re Green Movement (RGM) Project as a Princess Project of HRH Princess Sirindhorn with the cooperation of Royal Forestry Department. The planting method was taken from Ecological Planting Method proposed by former Professor Miyawaki of Yokohama City University with his kind guidance. It was regrettable that Professor Miyawaki died several years ago. Since 1991 in the remote areas of Thailand with border police stationed, activities of RGM have continued once a year. The reforestation was continuously carried out at the hilltribe village near the border, where around 500 villagers and primary school students worked together with 10 to 20 volunteers from Japan. Royal Forestry Department provided about 10 different species of seedlings totalling up to 30,000. It was reported that HRH had visited the area of RGM. It was a great honor to be graciously invited with Taeko my wife, for dinner with HRH at the palace and report on the RGM activity. From this endeavor I received the Society Contribution Award. At present the ecological planting method of RGM proposed by us is being adopted as a national project for reforestation of the whole of Thailand.

The activity of RGM was put on hold for 4 years due to COVID pandemic but has since been revived from 2023 at Suan Phung in Rachburi Province, where there were 17 volunteers from Japan participating. Before travelling to carry out the activity, besides myself, Mrs. Kataoka Richi, Dr. Suvit Vibulsresth, former Director of GISTDA and Miss Sudchai Naikaset, four of us received royal gracious permission from HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for an audience. I reported that among the volunteers this year there was one senior aged 93, Mrs.Kataoka Eiko and HRH was very surprised. HRH said that RGM activity would continue to be supported as a Princess Project. I also said that the name of RGM was difficult for the general public to understand, so I proposed the name to be changed to HRH Princess's Forest Project and hoped that this would be approved. I would like to thank Dr. Aphisit Pongporn, Director, Office of HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Project for great support in the restarting of RGM activity and assistance in granting us the HRH audience.

The activities during the period at IIS of Todai will be described in the chapter to follow, but I will make a quick summary here. Probably I am a rare person among Todai professors.

I did not graduate from the graduate school. During my bachelor degree study I hardly attended classes, since I was immersed in rowing and participated in the Rome Olympics. I finished my doctoral dissertation without any guidance; during the tenure for overseas activities I travelled abroad almost 300

times and stayed abroad for five years during which time I set up Geoinformatics Center (GIC) with a new independent building at AIT; built a new house in Thailand and lived with my wife and one dog and four cats in the village ; I received royal support from HRH Princess Sirindhorn for tropical forest re-green movement which continues to the present.

In retrospect, from my vigorous action I might have caused some uneasiness to people. I feel sorry for this, but each time it was the power of acting recklessly based on the inspiration derived from my unique original creativity. No wonder that I have a lot of enemies, but I think that many supported me. I am sure that I have caused a lot of trouble to Taeko, my wife, but for Taeko who graduated in geography from Ochanomizu Women's University I venture to say that she had tasted valuable living experiences geographically on site in Thailand.

Kenji my elder son with his wife Mihoko had their honeymoon travel to Bangkok and stayed at our Bansuan house. At the same time, my younger son Tetsuya also came with his bride-to-be Kawana Mizuho to visit our house near the shore of Chao Phraya River. That was before their marriage and were wondering about their future, but finally they got married and it turned out well. It happened that Bansuan was in the middle of flooding, water came 1 meter above the floor. It gave me memories of rowing the boat to guide them around the house.



Professor Murai with friends celebrating his decoration from the Royal Thai Government.



Taeko, with the children of the village coming to learn Japanese.





Bansuan during flooding.



Travelling with staff of Gistda.



With graduating students of AIT.



Scene of Regreen Movement planting activity.



With remote sensing training course participants from Asia organized by RESTEC.



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May 19, 1997

Dr. Suvit Vibulsresth  
Secretary General  
NRCT  
196 Phaholyothin Road  
Chatuchak, Bangkok 10900

Dear Dr. Suvit :

I am pleased to accept your invitation to serve as an advisor to National Research Council of Thailand for the period of May 1997 to May 1998.

I wish I can contribute myself to NRCT's development in remote sensing and GIS technology.

Sincerely yours,

Shunji Murai  
Chair Professor