

Retirement of Professor Kenshiro Ogasawa



As of the last day of March, 2011, Professor Kenshiro Ogasawara of the Graduate School of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Tsukuba, was scheduled to retire.

Professor Kenshiro Ogasawara, born on August 27th, 1947 in Tokushima Prefecture, graduated from Institute of Mining Geology, Mining College of Akita University in March, 1971. After finishing the Master Course of Geology and Paleontology at Graduate School of Science, Tohoku University, he further followed the Doctor Course thereof, which he completed in March of 1976, thereby earning his Ph. D (Doctor of Science). In April of the same year, he was accepted as a Research Fellow at Japan Society for the Promotion of Science. From November of the same year, he further pursued his carrier as an assistant professor at the Institute of Geology and Paleontology, Faculty of Science, Tohoku University, where he entered the service as an associate professor in February, 1989. From March of 1991, assuming the position of professor at the Institute of Geoscience, University of Tsukuba, the position he held for more than twenty years, he continued his efforts at the education and research. While energetically pursuing the research on geology and paleontology, the Professor was appointed Chairman of Institute of Geoscience, University of Tsukuba, thereby serving the University as regard to its administration. His field of research, where he rendered distinguished service, covered all of the Japanese Islands, from Hokkaido to Okinawa, publishing many papers on taxonomy, strati-

tigraphy and paleobiogeography of Cenozoic molluscan fossils. The number of molluscan fossil species taken up and described in his papers tallies over 500 and the proposed new taxa include 10 Gastropoda species, two Pelecypoda genera, 17 species and subspecies of the same, one Cephalopoda genus, one Polychaeta species and one Foraminifera species. Specifically, the subject of the origin and migration of the Omma-Man-ganji Fauna and Neogene molluscan fauna of boreal element became his lifework, and in 1989, his paper “The Research on Japanese Upper Cenozoic Mollusca” brought him the Academic Award of Palaeontological Society of Japan. The active career of the Professor was not limited inside Japan. Through 1983 and 1984, he was dispatched to the Soviet Union as an Exchange Research Fellow of Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, during which stay he visited M.V. Lomonosov Moscow State University, Geological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Leningrad State University among others. The Professor established intimate connections and information network within the Soviet Union, and after the collapse thereof, planned and formed field researches in Sakhalin and Kamchatka, leading three successful international joint researches between Japan and Russia.

As noted above, Professor Ogasawara consistently persisted in empirical research based on field work, and was a true geology man (Chishitsu-ya in Japanese). When conducting research not only in Japan but also abroad, he favored to wear a pair of jika-tabis, Japanese heavy-duty outdoor footwear common among construction workers. In addition, the Professor aimed his researches be in perspective of the entire Eastern Asia. He emphasized the importance of connecting the issue of the origin and migration of Mollusca with the opening and closing of the Bering land bridge and Tethys elements in discussions. The Professor’s interest extended to every geohistorical events related to the Pacific Ocean and how he mobilized his wide knowledge of the tectonic history, paleoclimatology, paleoceanography, paleoecology and sedimentology related thereto surpassed all. In order to discuss the timings of various geohistorical events in connection to these, he ventured on an analysis with chronostratigraphically increased precision. As a result, integrated researches in combination not only with molluscan fossils, but with

phytolith, various microfossils, radiometric age, and strontium isotropic age were promoted. The research style much impressed many students and it is a well-known fact that many of those under his tutelage are active today in the education, industry, academic and other various fields.

Aided by his deep scholarly wisdom and past experiences, Professor Ogasawara also dedicated himself to administration of the academic society for many years. He served the Paleontological Society of Japan as a Councillor, Member of Standing Committee and Editor in Chief of its journal, the *Paleontological Research*. He further held the post of the President of the said Society for two years from June, 2007, and was a leader in promoting advancement of the Society and paleontology. He was particularly devoted to the editing of "The Database of Japanese Fossil Type Specimens Described During the 20th Century (Parts 1-4)", which was an enterprise carried out by the Society, published in 2001 and came to be a milestone of the century. Moreover, the Professor attended without interruption, ever since its inauguration, every International Congress on Pacific Neogene Stratigraphy (CPNS) held every four years since 1976, thereby supporting its activity. Specifically, in 2007, he hosted the ninth international CPNS and promoted the exchanges and development throughout Japan and abroad. In addition, since 1990, as a member of the international organizing committee and also as a representative, the Professor made important contributions to the International Symposium on Shallow Tethys. Furthermore, the Professor made various outstanding social contributions in participating as a visiting researcher of National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), member of the editorial board of National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo, Expert Member of Board of Examination for the National Civil Service, member and chairman of the National Committee on Paleontology of the Science Council of Japan, and external evaluation member of National Institution for Academic Degree and University Evaluation.

Meanwhile, Professor Ogasawara is a truly multifaceted cultural figure, who mastered calligraphy, plays guitar, enjoys fishing, and adores kokeshi dolls, Japanese traditional wooden limbless dolls. Upon field surveys and excursions, he was often seen with a fishing rod in his hand, enjoying fishing during lunch breaks. The goby fishing tournament that Professor hosted was an annual entertaining event anticipated not only by students of the department but also by many of the faculty and the research community. Whenever there was

a fossil excavation research conducted by a local museum, or a molluscan fossil excavation by fossil lovers, the Professor would often journey to the site and gladly take the trouble to coach fossil identification. Particularly in the case where Northeast Japan was concerned, not only did he show interest in fossil collection but also seemed to be absorbed in kokeshi collection, his earnest interest. It can be assumed that the Professor was fascinated by common factors between the origin and propagation of Mollusca and the origin and tradition of kokeshi dolls; namely, a taste for relishing the subtle differences in shape and design and in historical perspective such as locality and lineage embedded therein.

Professor Ogasawara thus contributed not only to the University and to the academic society through extended activities, but also to the progress and the development of science in our country. It is a sad occasion that such a personage should retire. However, there are many junior members in need of his instructions. So, dear Professor, we beg you to take care of yourself and give assistance in development of the science and in fostering the human resources.

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(This note is made based on a prefatory note of Commemorative Publication on Retirement of Professor Kenshiro Ogasawara, March 2011.)