

REMINISCENCE

PROF. TSUTOMU KIMURA RECEIVED THE JAPAN ACADEMY PRIZE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS MAJESTY, THE EMPEROR OF JAPAN

June 4th, 2012, Prof. Tsutomu Kimura got the highly prestigious Japan Academy Prize awarded for his long-term studies on mechanical behavior of ground. To celebrate this memorable occasion, an interview was made of Prof. Kimura by the Bulletin.

The Japan Academy Prize was established in 1910 and has been awarded every year to several distinguished people who made remarkable achievements in all the fields of academia. Prof. Kimura started his studies in early 1960s on bearing capacity of two-layered subsoil by means of analysis as well as 1-G model experiments. The experiments quickly developed into centrifugal model tests and his methodology was extended to other fields of geotechnical engineering such as shear failure in slopes, soil improvement, earth pressure on retaining walls, and earthquake problems as well as liquefaction. It was highly evaluated by the Prize that his studies gave rational verification to many empirical knowledge in traditional geotechnical engineering and has been applied to stability of cables of the Akashi-Strait long suspension bridge, stabilization of soft marine clay under Tokyo Haneda Airport, liquefaction mitigation measures of oil storage tanks and many others. The awarding ceremony took place in the Japan Academy with the attendance of His Majesty, the Emperor Akihito and Her Majesty, the Empress Michiko.



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Prof. Kimura graduated the University of Tokyo. After a few-year experience in the industry, he devoted most of his career to the Tokyo Institute of Technology as a civil engineering professor and finally as the President. He then became the President of the National Institution for Academic Degrees and University Evaluation. Currently he is an advisor of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology and working for policies on higher education. One of his current concerns lies in the problem of degree mills that are producing unqualified masters and Ph. Ds all over the world.

Furthermore, He was the President of the Japanese geotechnical Society from 1998 to 2000. In ISSMGE, he chaired TC2 that concerned physical modeling and was also a Board Member from 1993 to 1997.

When Prof. Kimura was a young undergraduate student, he was attracted by the academic flavor of Prof. Mogami's lecture on soil mechanics; later, Prof. Mogami served ISSMGE as an Asian Vice President. Although Prof. Kimura decided to conduct his undergraduate and master research programs in soil mechanics, he was late in attending the topic selection meeting. Consequently, easy topics had been taken by class mates and he had only one difficult choice that was running an elastic analysis with a senior student, Kenji Ishihara, on two-layered subsoil undergoing external loading. He studied this topic extremely hard and successfully solved the problem, leading to a full satisfaction of Prof. Mogami who was usually not very generous to students. After joining Tokyo Institute of Technology, Prof. Kimura further conducted 1-G model tests on two-layered subsoil and submitted his interesting findings to the Asian Regional Conference on SMFE in Bangkok in 1971. Because his paper was strictly criticized by a general reporter during the conference, Prof. Kimura understood the limitation of 1-G model tests and started his long history of centrifuge model tests. He is saying today that difficulties, both technical and financial, were overcome by his enthusiasm and that he fully enjoyed the development of new geotechnical technology.

In 2004, Prof. Kimura was also awarded from the United Kingdom the Honourary Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire, of which he is highly proud of because he can share the same honour with Sir Elton John. As the awardee of the two distinguished honours, Prof. Kimura advises young people "*Not only to Challenge but also to Enjoy Challenge.*"

The ISSMGE Bulletin expresses its wholehearted congratulations to the honourable career of Prof. Kimura.

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