Honorary IAWA Membership for Professor Ken Shimaji

It was a happy moment at the end of the IAWA business meeting in Tokyo on Sunday evening 29 August 1993 when the Honorary Membership could be bestowed on Dr. Ken Shimaji, Professor emeritus of Kyoto University. Professor Shimaji was noticeably surprised and moved by the announcement that the IAWA Council had elected him to this honour, because of his outstanding services to wood anatomical research and teaching throughout his career. On behalf of IAWA Dr Shimaji was presented with an IAWA Honorary Membership certificate and an old engraving representing two tree genera, of which he had studied the wood anatomy during his long career.

Ken Shimaji graduated in 1947 from the University of Tokyo and obtained his Doctorate in Agriculture in 1961 on the anatomy and phylogeny of the Fagaceae. Part of the research for this thesis had been carried out at the Department of Botany of Yale University in 1959 and 1960, where he worked with Dr. W.L. Stern. In 1964 he was awarded the prestigious Shirazawa Prize of the Japanese Society of Forestry. From 1948 onwards he held various positions at the University of Tokyo, until in 1975 he was appointed full Professor at the Wood Research Institute of Kyoto University. In 1986 he retired from this position, but he continued to be active in the field of wood anatomy.

Professor Ken Shimaji’s research interests range from systematic wood anatomy, developmental anatomy, and compression wood formation to wood identification of modern and archaeological artefacts. He published extensively in numerous journals and is also the author of some widely used reference books, including a textbook on wood anatomy, a wood anatomy atlas, a book on structure and function of trees, and one on wooden objects excavated in Japan. He trained many Japanese wood scientists, many of whom now have outstanding international reputations. We join them and all in congratulating Dr. Shimaji on this well-deserved honour and wish him all the best in the coming years of his active retirement: Kampei!!

Takao Itoh & Pieter Baas

Professor Ken Shimaji, 1993.