

IN REMEMBRANCE OF HARRY TSURU

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Forty years ago when I first joined ICU, there were basically four categories of faculty members: junior and senior Japanese, and junior and senior non-Japanese. I fell into the category of junior faculty members from abroad. Although the Tsurus were themselves young members of the ICU Family, Harry, as he was known to his non-Japanese colleagues, had already been on the faculty for seven years having joined it from the very beginning.

Shortly after our arrival on campus, Harry and his wife Nobuko invited us to a sukiyaki party at their home, which happened to be the magnificent Taizanso farm house that burned to the ground some years later. The site is now marked by several large stones just inside the gate of the Taizanso grounds. The Tsurus had invited all the junior faculty members to the sukiyaki party. We have never forgotten that special evening, the first of a series of dinner parties for junior faculty with the Tsurus as our hosts in the grand old Taizanso farm house.

Those first social events at ICU remain in our memory to this day as the initial opportunity to meet our young Japanese colleagues, including the Tsurus, in an informal setting. Until that evening the primary opportunity to meet my Japanese colleagues was at Division and faculty meetings, both very formal sessions. We junior faculty rarely spoke in front of the many distinguished senior Japanese and foreign scholars on the faculty such as Dean Hidaka, formerly Vice Minister of Education, Mrs. Cho, a leading Japanese social historian, and Dr. Maurice Troyer, distinguished psychologist from Syracuse University and the first ICU VPAA.

Harry and Nobuko were gracious hosts creating an environment in which we all felt "at home." The opportunity enabled us to socialize with our Japanese colleagues in a relaxed and most friendly atmosphere, exactly as the Tsurus intended. It was our first chance to experience the I in ICU, providing an ideal opportunity for both Japanese and non-Japanese to appreciate the humanity of each other. Little could we have imagined that first evening with the Tsurus that Harry and Nobuko would come to be our closest Japanese friends, beginning a forty year intimate relationship broken by the recent death of Harry.

Harry Tsuru was surely one of the true internationalists on the ICU faculty. Academically he worked closely with Dr. Maurice Troyer. In many ways Dr. and Mrs. Troyer considered the Tsurus as extended members of their family, such was the respect each had for the other. Dr. Troyer greatly influenced the career path of Harry by encouraging him to enter the graduate school of Columbia University for the doctoral course.

But Harry was also an internationalist in ways other than academic. Through him and his devoted wife Nobuko, we were able to start our own family. Through their personal efforts in locating a Japanese baby girl up for adoption, we were able through their close guidance to adopt her as our first child. Thirty four years ago it was a rare case for a non-Japanese couple to adopt a Japanese child. The Tsurus never hesitated for a moment to bring about this unusual development that has meant so much to us ever since. Consequently, the death of Harry Tsuru is like a death in our own family. We will always cherish the memories of this kind, gentle humanitarian who befriended us exactly forty years ago.