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## A Tribute to Professor Naoki Inamoto on the Occasion of His 72nd Birthday

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Professor Naoki Inamoto celebrated his 72nd birthday on 19 March 2001. *Heteroatom Chemistry* takes great pleasure in dedicating this special issue to him on this auspicious occasion.

The first step in the scientific career of Professor Naoki Inamoto was the completion of his Ph.D. dissertation "On Decomposition Reactions of  $\alpha,\alpha'$ -Azobisisobutyronitrile (AIBN) in Solutions" at the University of Tokyo under the direction of Professor Osamu Simamura in 1959. He was appointed to the position of Research Assistant in 1954, Lecturer in 1961, Associate Professor in 1964, and then to Professor in 1965 at the same University.



In 1965, he started his work on heteroatom chemistry with special reference to phosphorus, sulfur, and selenium compounds. During his career, he has published about 330 original articles as well as about 30 reviews. In addition, he is the author or the co-author of many monographs and textbooks on organic chemistry. He served on the editorial board of *Heterocycles* from its inception in 1973, until 1998, and he has been a member of the editorial board of *Phosphorus, Sulfur, and Silicon* since 1983. He had also worked for the *Bulletin of the Chemical Society of Japan* as the editor from 1988 to 1990. He was the vice-president of the Chemical Society of Japan from 1986 to 1988.

Professor Inamoto's scientific accomplishments are spelled out in detail in his article of this issue entitled "Studies on Low Coordinated Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Sulfur, and Selenium Compounds in My Laboratory" but are also summarized briefly here. His earlier topics of interest included novel radical reactions using AIBN, syntheses of  $^{14}\text{C}$ -labeled compounds, and elucidation of reaction mechanisms using tracer methods. His main topics included new reactions of phosphorus ylides, diphosphanes, oxo- and thioxo-phosphines ( $\text{R-P}=\text{X}$ ;  $\text{X}=\text{O}, \text{S}$ ) as intermediates, and compounds containing P-S and P=S bonds; olefination using phosphonates prepared from heterocyclic cations; phospho-Cope and azaphospho-Cope rearrangements; reactions (including photolysis and cycloaddition) of S-containing heterocycles, such as 2,3-dihydrothiazoles, dithiolethiones, "Hector's base," and related compounds,  $\alpha$ -oxo and  $\alpha$ -thioxo ketene thioacetals, and *o*-thioquinomethanes; kinetic stabilization and reactions of unstable nitroxide radicals, nitrosoarene monomers, *N*-thiosulfinylanilines, thioketones and selenoketones and thioaldehydes and selenoaldehydes, *o*-thioquinomethane monomer, diphosphenes and their oxides and sulfides, dithioxophos-

phoranes, phosphathenes, and phosphallenes; spectroscopic detection and reactions of a thionitrosoarene; substituents effects on  $^{13}\text{C}$ -SCS, proposal and application of a new  $\tau$  parameter, and elucidation of the origin of the “inductive effect”.

His laboratory had produced a great many talented heteroatom chemists. Professors K. Akiba and R. Okazaki were on the staffs of his laboratory, while Professors M. Yoshifuji and T. Kawashima (also on staff), and Professors Y. Yamamoto, N. Tokitoh, and A. Ishii were some of the students who obtained doctoral degrees under his supervision. The following messages of congratulations have been offered to this special issue from these distinguished heteroatom chemists.

“Once upon a time, almost four decades ago, the young Professor Inamoto and I promised to talk and discuss chemistry at least once every day. The subject could be free, some discussion about the kind of chemistry for which the new laboratory should be devoted and some discussion about new papers of journals in which we were interested. This continued for about two years. In the evenings, when Professor was free, he came to me in the laboratory rather often to go out drinking and chatting in the town, and, of course, I was expecting and waiting for ‘the solicitation’. This is one of my most remarkable, unforgettable, and glorious memories.

When I came back to Tokyo in April, 2000, after 20 years of mission in Hiroshima University, Professor Inamoto had white-gray hair. But the Professor had not changed in the habit of drinking, and speaking cheerfully, openly, and loudly, which is in contrast to the usual silence of such occasions, and he can still drink much more ‘sake’ than any of his peers. Congratulations on his health and I wish it to continue in the twenty-first century.”

Kin-ya Akiba

“Professor Inamoto has been not only an excellent chemist but also an excellent teacher who has educated the potential ability of numerous young chemists in heteroatom chemistry in Japan in addition to the students of his research group. I would like to extol this particular ability of Professor Inamoto, which has contributed to the development of heteroatom chemistry in the world as well as in Japan.”

Renji Okazaki

“He is one of the first Japanese organic professors to have recognized the importance of heteroatom chemistry, and indeed he has been proclaiming and enjoying the similarity and difference between the traditional organic chemistry of carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen and the novel chemistry of phosphorus and sulfur.”

Masaaki Yoshifuji

“Congratulations on your 72nd birthday. Thank you very much for allowing me to freely investigate organophosphorus chemistry when I was a graduate student and a research associate. I think such an experience is still useful for my present education and research. I hope that you continue to take care of your health and enjoy a reasonable amount of sake. Please continue to work as a member of the nomenclature committee of the *Bulletin of the Chemical Society of Japan* and attend the “Punch no Kai,” an alumni association of Inamoto’s group and also the Symposium on Heteroatom Chemistry, which will be held every year. And hopefully he will continue to give me and my students encouragement and comments on our research.”

Takayuki Kawashima

“As an undergraduate student I was excited by Professor Inamoto’s logical, well organized course on organic reaction mechanisms. And as a member of his laboratory I was stimulated by the severe but warm atmosphere. This helped to form my backbone as an organic chemist.”

Yosuke Yamamoto

“As one of the alumni of Professor Inamoto’s Laboratory, I am very glad to see this special issue of *Heteroatom Chemistry* dedicated to him. Professor Inamoto is a man of large caliber from both the scientific and personal viewpoints. He has given us rope to extend our research as we like, but we have always finally found our steps guided to the very challenging wonderland, heteroatom chemistry. I think his enthusiastic activity for heteroatom chemistry must certainly be handed over to the next generations of chemists in this new century.”

Norihiro Tokitoh

“Five years in his laboratory as a student were a precious and unforgettable time for me. During that time, Dr. R. Okazaki was an Associate Professor, Drs. M. Yoshifuji and K. Kawashima were assistant professors, and Dr. Tokitoh was a Ph.D. student two years ahead of me. I learned an impressive amount of sulfur, selenium, and phosphorus chemistry from his laboratory, which formed the basis of my present study.”

Akihiko Ishii

On the occasion of his birthday, we wish Professor Naoki Inamoto many happy returns of the day and many additional years of success in his chosen profession.

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