

OBITUARY

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Obituary: Dr. Keisuke Tubaki (1924–2005)



Professor Keisuke Tubaki was born in Oomori, Tokyo, on June 21, 1924, and died in Setagaya, Tokyo, on August 18, 2005. He had been recovering from a stroke that occurred about 2 years prior to his death.

As an infant, Dr. Tubaki lived for some years in Hakodate, Hokkaido, remaining there through kindergarten and elementary school, then returning to Oomori for junior high school and high school. He attended Takanawa Junior High School, followed by a preparatory course for Tokyo University of Agriculture before entering the Faculty of Agriculture of Tokyo University of Agriculture. Professor Tubaki graduated from this university in 1948 and began working at the Nagao Institute in that same year. He received a Doctor of Science degree from Hiroshima University in 1959 (his thesis title was “Studies on the Japanese Hyphomycetes”). Two years later, he obtained a position at the Institute for Fermentation in Osaka. He

became deputy director of the institute in 1974, and was awarded a professorship in the Institute of Biological Sciences, University of Tsukuba, in 1976. His outstanding knowledge of fungi, his teaching ability, and a pleasant, outgoing personality attracted many fine students to his laboratory in the Institute of Biological Sciences. After retirement from the University of Tsukuba (1988), he taught at Nihon University; at this time, he was also a Visiting professor at Tokyo University of Agriculture. He retired from Nihon University in 1994, but continued his appointments at Tokyo University of Agriculture until 1995.

Professor Tubaki was interested in many types of fungi and many aspects of fungal biology, but his publications mainly dealt with anamorphic taxa and their biological activities in nature, e.g., fungi active in decay of leaves, dispersal of aquatic hyphomycetes, fungi in scum, foam, and on snow, marine, and freshwater forms. He also published papers on heterobasidiomycetes of several types, including mating in *Tremella fuciformis*, ecological and taxonomic studies of some Sporobolomycetaceae and Ustilaginaceae, and others. The most active part of his research career was when the classification of anamorphic fungi was receiving much attention around the world. His studies in this aspect of mycology, together with those of S. J. Hughes and G. Barron, resulted in a classification system that became known as the Hughes–Tubaki–Barron System. His studies of anamorphic fungi went beyond conidiogeny, however, and included ecology and biology of these and other fungi, as noted above. In all, he was the author or coauthor of 203 papers. His interests and enthusiasm were passed on to many students who became fascinated by the same groups of fungi, and they continue to contribute greatly to our mycological knowledge.

During the course of his career, Professor Tubaki traveled widely and was an outstanding ambassador of Japanese mycology and culture. He spoke excellent English and comfortably entertained those he visited by describing and demonstrating Japanese art forms. He produced beautiful calligraphy in the form of *kanji* and liked to entertain foreign children and their parents (my family included) by

producing origami paper birds and other traditional objects. He seemed especially to enjoy children, and I am told that after retirement, he visited his old elementary school and conversed with the current students and their teachers. He was an amiable, very sociable person who enjoyed parties, especially those including his students and foreign visitors. My long acquaintance with Professor Tubaki started by chance around 1970, when Professor Gilbert Hughes mentioned that Professor Tubaki was coming to North America and would be passing through Vancouver on his trip. He suggested that we invite Dr. Tubaki to spend a few days in Vancouver and visit our laboratories on his trip. To my surprise, the invitation was immediately accepted and this started a long friendship. He continued traveling after retirement, having joined a Japanese travel club; he then traveled extensively within Japan. And although he always appeared gregarious and outgoing, he sometimes seemed to abandon traveling companions to “go it

alone”. Perhaps he liked to have some free time to contemplate his surroundings, the plants, animals, and people, quietly and without interruption from talkative traveling companions.

Professor Tubaki was an honorary member of the Mycological Society of Japan, the Mycological Society of America, the British Mycological Society, the Japan Society for Culture Collections, and the Japanese Society for Medical Mycology. He also served as president of the Mycological Society of Japan (1985–1987), and as an officer of several international mycology associations and committees, such as vice president of the International Mycology Association (1983–1990), chairperson of the International Mycology Committee for Asia (1983–1990), and general secretary of the 3rd International Mycological Congress in Tokyo (1983). In 1993, the Minakata Kumagusu Award was given to him for his great contribution to mycology.