

In Memoriam: Professor Shun-ichi Watanabe (1934–2024)

The International Planning History Society (IPHS) mourns the passing of Professor Shun-ichi Watanabe, a distinguished scholar and cherished member of our community. Professor Watanabe, who passed away on 13 August, 2024, leaves behind a profound legacy in the field of planning history.

A revered academic, Professor Watanabe dedicated his career to the exploration and advancement of planning history, particularly within the Japanese and East Asian contexts. His insightful research, marked by rigorous analysis and a deep understanding of socio-cultural dynamics, has significantly shaped contemporary discourse on planning theory and practice.

Professor Watanabe was one of the strongest and the earliest members of IPHS. He made very early and fruitful engagement with both Tony Sutcliffe and Gordon Cherry, two pioneers of IPHS, and played a crucial role in ensuring that the society's study of planning history had a global basis from the beginning.

Professor Watanabe had participated in the most IPHS conferences with his wife Kikuko ("Kiki") from the first one in 1977. He organized the 3rd international conference in 1988 in Tokyo. Professor Watanabe brought about the IPHS East Asian Planning History Prize and was the former chair of the prize committee. And he was the first recipient of the IPHS Sir Peter Hall Award for Lifetime Achievement in Planning History, which was awarded to him in 2018 in Yokohama.

Professor Watanabe served as a long-term council member of IPHS, contributing his expertise, wisdom, and passion to our collective efforts. His commitment to the society was unwavering, and his contributions to our conferences, publications, and strategic initiatives were invaluable. His presence at our events, where he engaged thoughtfully with colleagues, young scholars, and students will be deeply missed.

His work not only expanded the academic boundaries of planning history but also inspired countless individuals across the globe. Professor Watanabe's scholarship was characterised by an exceptional ability to connect historical contexts with contemporary challenges, making his insights both timeless and relevant.

Beyond his professional achievements, Professor Watanabe was known for his kindness, generosity, and dedication to mentoring the next generation of scholars. His students and colleagues remember him as a figure of immense integrity and a source of inspiration.

As we reflect on his remarkable career and the impact he made, we take solace in knowing that his legacy will continue to influence and guide future research and discussions in our field.

The IPHS extends its deepest condolences to Professor Watanabe's family, friends, and colleagues. We honour his memory and are grateful for the enduring contributions he made to planning history.