

In Memoriam
Justice Takeso Shimoda (1908-1995)

By Shigejiro Tabata

Justice Takeso Shimoda, former President of the Japan Branch of the International Law Association, former Ambassador and former Justice of the Supreme Court, sadly passed away on January 22, 1995, at the age of 87, after a life entirely devoted to the pursuit of peace and justice through diplomacy and law. We are greatly indebted to Justice Shimoda for the many contributions he made over the years towards the development of our Branch. We are saddened by the loss of a man of such character, integrity and magnanimity.

Born in 1908, Justice Shimoda graduated in 1931 from the Faculty of Law of Tokyo Imperial University, which is now the University of Tokyo. In the same year he entered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from then he played an important role in the post war era diplomacy of Japan.

In his diplomatic career, he successively held important posts in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and left behind brilliant achievements with each post. In 1965, he was appointed Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, and, in 1967, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to the United States. His outstanding diplomatic ability was an indispensable help to the Government of Japan in successfully concluding such difficult negotiations as those for the revision of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between the two countries, and trade negotiations on textiles between the Government of Japan and the Government of the U.S.A.

Justice Shimoda's life was not confined to purely diplomatic activities. His profound knowledge of international law led him to the world of Justice. In 1971, he was appointed Justice of the Supreme Court of Japan. In a time when Japanese society was rapidly opening up to the international community, the presence of Justice Shimoda in the Japanese Supreme Court was all the more valuable. In fact, he played a leading role for the Court in making decision bearing on such delicate matters as the Lockheed payoff trial (1976) and the Kuala Lumpur Incident (1975).

What is of special importance to us is the fact that Justice Shimoda became President of the Japan Branch of the International Law Association, a post which he held until the time of his death. Strongly impressed by the vigorous efforts of Justice Shimoda as a member of the Council and also as the chairman of the Committee for Contributions to promote the Association's activities, the previous president of the association Kisaburo Yokota earnestly requested Justice Shimoda to take the presidency. Under his presidency, many reforms were undertaken to develop the Association, and the branch made dramatic progress. Among his many reforms, were the establishment of the committee for research and planning, and the post of its chief

director. He also recommended many more members than ever before to international committees in every field of public and private international law. To support their activities, he established numerous national committees corresponding to the international ones. Furthermore, with a view to disseminating the achievements of studies undertaken in the field of international law and to enhancing the quality of this discipline, Justice Shimoda began to hold an annual meeting named "Academic Conference" in 1992, gathering practicing lawyers, government officials and other people interested in international law. Through these activities, Justice Shimoda enhanced significantly Japan's contribution to the world in the fields of public and private international law.

Even after his retirement from public office, Justice Shimoda served vigorously in the name of the peace and development of Japan through activities in various organizations. For example, he took the post of the chairman of the Japan-British Society, and was a member of the Public Security Examination Commission. And he was appointed a member of the Permanent Arbitration Court in 1972 and was* reappointed three times.

Mr. Shimoda's diplomatic accomplishments as well as his strong sense of justice and integrity were the very source of the extremely high prestige he enjoyed in the post-war era, culminating in his being conferred the Grand Cordon of the Order of the Rising Sun, in 1977.

Justice Shimoda was famous for his integrity and fairness. In 1979, he became the President of the Japan Professional Baseball Organization, and carried out one reform after another to realize "the spirit of fair play" It was a challenge to his sublime ideal. He was a president who was respected and loved by many baseball enthusiasts.

If Justice Shimoda was regarded as being conservative at times, it was because his deeply installed creed sometimes forced him to put forward opinions opposed to the volatile aspirations of the masses. Justice Shimoda was an irreplaceable "witness of the history", whose death was indeed a paramount loss.

Surrounded by his family, he passed away at the advanced age of 87. His passing is a great and sad loss not only for the Japan Branch but for this country. May we offer our sincerest blessings to his memory.