It is a great honor to have been invited to speak at the Memorial Workshop for Masaki HIRABARU. I am sad that I am unable to be with you in person, and appreciate the kindness of the organizers to permit me to send a few words that they will read on my behalf.

Many years ago, the IETF and the Internet Society Trustees adopted a new organizational structure for the IAB and IETF to accommodate continued growth of the standards making process. This new structure was documented in RFC 1396 titled "The Process for Organization of Internet Standards Working Group (POISED). One of the key effects of this new structure was to install a nominations process to select new IAB and IESG members. Such a nominations process had not existed previously. So in the fall of 1992, both Jun MURAI and I were nominated and appointed to serve on the IAB along with four (4) other new members and six (6) previous members. Our appointments to the IAB helped to solidify my friendship with Murai-san; a friendship that had begun earlier because of WIDE and Japan's connections to the NSFNET backbone.

In those days, I was the Associate Director of National Networking at MERIT in the state of Michigan. MERIT along with its partners, IBM and MCI, had won the award from the United States National Science Foundation (NSF) to build a National T1 Backbone (NSFNET). That probably sounds very slow, but in 1987 that was the fastest network around, and most routers did not even support T1 interfaces. By 1995 the NSFNET had been so successful in providing the Internet to universities and research centers around the world that companies and businesses were clamoring to connect to the NSFNET. That resulted in the growth of the commercial Internet and the decommissioning of the NSFNET Backbone.

With the decommissioning of the NSFNET Backbone, MERIT won another NSF award to continue its development of the "Routing Arbiter Database". It was just about this time, late 1995, that Murai-san contacted me with a very interesting proposal. Murai-san asked me if MERIT would be interested in hosting a visiting scientist. Well, we were looking for talented individuals who understood networking and were willing to experiment and develop new routing technologies. This seemed like a wish come true, so I accepted Murai-san's proposal. That is how I came to know Masaki HIRABARU and how Hirabaru-san came to MERIT in Michigan in 1996.

Hirabaru-san became a very important member of the MERIT family and of the team that developed the Multi-threaded Routing Toolkit (MRT) as part of the National Science Foundation award. It was he who added IPv6 routing support to MRT. This work has persisted even after Hirabaru-san left MERIT to return to Japan and today, MRT is still maintained by MERIT.

This is just one of the contributions of Hirabaru-san during his time at MERIT and the University of Michigan. In collaboration with Craig Labovitz, MERIT, and Farnam Jahanian, Professor of Electrical Engineering at the University of Michigan, Hirabaru-san is listed on the sponsored research project "Development of Ultra High Speed Next Generation Internet Technology" 1999-2000. In addition, along with Labovitz, Hirabaru-san is a co-author of the "Routing Technology Final Report (NCR-9318902)".

Hirabaru-san became a valued colleague and friend during his time at MERIT. His breadth of knowledge enhanced MERIT's ability to successfully deliver on its research grants, and everyone appreciated his kind and gentle personality.

When Hirabaru-san first arrived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, we were not sure how he would contribute and even how long he might want to stay at MERIT. At first, he was very quiet. But as he grew to know us better and he became more involved with the Routing Arbiter Project, it was clear that MERIT was very lucky that Murai-san had suggested hosting a visiting scientist. Who could have foreseen that the simple request to host a visiting scientist would result in these valuable contributions to Internet technology.

Hirabaru-san was a distinguished scholar, an expert on Internet routing and Internet registry functions, a respected colleague and a friend. The Internet community and those who knew Hirabaru-san are richer for knowing him and it is a loss to all of us that he passed away in the prime of life.

Elise Gerich

Previously, Associate Director National Networking, MERIT

Currently, VP IANA, at ICANN

This is a picture taken with Hirabaru-san at APII WS 2007 in Seoul.

I found this nice photo at my photo album. This photo was taken at the occasion of APII meeting in Seoul, March 23, 2007.
After the official meetings, we went to a small bar near Gwanghwamoon, and spent a couple of hours, assisted by (many) drinks (as usual). Even though I met Hirabaru numerous times, this was the only photo that I have.

I really hope that he spends happy times in the heaven, waiting for us to arrive sooner or later. I will bring a bottle of whiskey, if I will be admitted to the heaven.
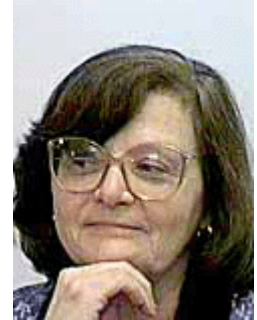
So a little patience, my friend.

Yanghee Choi
from Seoul National University, Korea

Hirabaru-san, a man of soft and warm heart. A superb Internet engineer, yet so humble and friendly
Kim Dae Young (CNU, Korea)

Dr. Hirabaru made extraordinary contributions to research and education networking. He was taken from us all too early and we miss him. I raise a glass of wine in his memory and to celebrate his life.

Jacqueline Brown
Director, Strategic Partnerships
Pacific Wave, Distributed International Exchange

Many Chinese friends keep talking about him for his great help for the IPv6 development, we will remember him in many years to come.
Xing Li, Deputy Director of CERNET Center