



Shichiro Takatohi and his wife Elvira

Photo courtesy of Brazilian White Center - UNASP.

Takatohi, Shichiro (1912–2005)

THE BRAZILIAN WHITE CENTER – UNASP

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Shichiro Takatohi, pastor and teacher, was born March 11, 1912, in the city of Suhra, Nagano province, Japan, and his parents were Kyubeye and Etsu Takatohi. Since his parents cultivated silkworms, he grew up in a rural environment. At 17 years of age, in 1929, Takatohi graduated from Kiso High School, also in Nagano.¹

In search of better life opportunities, he went to Tokyo and enrolled at a Rokkokai institution, which prepared young people to emigrate to Brazil. Since his youth, Takatohi had wondered about the meaning of life and why human beings existed. One day, while walking through the streets of Tokyo in search of something to fill the emptiness of his heart, he saw a poster announcing a series of religious lectures. That evening he attended the lecture and found that it was not conducted by a pastor, but by a man with a doctorate in mechanical engineering. However, what he heard impressed him and answered many of his questions. At the end of the series, he decided to become a Christian and was baptized.²

He emigrated to Brazil in June 1932, arriving in the Santos port. From there he went by train to a city in the countryside of São Paulo, where he worked on a Rikkokai farm along with other Japanese immigrants. About a year and a half later, he moved to São Paulo city in order to learn the Portuguese language. There he became acquainted with an Adventist school located in the district of Santo Amaro, at the time called Brazil College (today UNASP-SP).³

The college was known for accepting many Japanese young people who wanted to learn Portuguese. After saving up enough money to pay a year's fees, he enrolled in Brazil College. Soon he admired how Adventists based all their religious practices and ideas on the Bible and, six months later, Domingos Peixoto baptized him into the Adventist faith (1935).⁴

After that, Takatohi decided to serve God as a pastor. He studied theology from 1935 to 1939 and, the following year, began as an office assistant at São Paulo Conference. In 1941 he became pastor of the Itararé district, state of São Paulo, where he served until 1942.⁵

In the meanwhile, on June 30, 1941,⁶ Shichiro married Elvira Echterhoff (1911-2003),⁷ who was born into an Adventist home in Porto União, state of Santa Catarina.⁸ The Takatohis had two sons: Jetro, who graduated in civil engineering from São Paulo University (USP), and Urias, who became a math and physics teacher at Brazil College. In total they had four grandchildren: Daniel, Carla, Jônatas, and Filipe.⁹

During World War II, the São Paulo Conference thought it better not to have any Axis citizens as employees, therefore, because of his Japanese nationality, they released Takatohi from his duties. Shichiro then went to work in the fields in order to support himself, relying on the help of kind Adventists who gave him land and a simple house in the middle of a pasture. The Takatohis lived there for three years. Besides working in agriculture, they also conducted evangelistic series about the book of Revelation and health principles:¹⁰

At the end of the war, the church asked Shichiro to return to be a preceptor and farm manager at Northeast Rural Adventist Institution (now referred to as IAPE) in Belém de Maria, state of Pernambuco. When he arrived in the city of Recife in 1945, the local authorities arrested him and jailed him for suspected subversive activities. Eventually they became convinced of his innocence.¹¹

He was preceptor at the college until 1949¹² and farm manager until 1953.¹³ In addition, he served there as a teacher from 1947 to 1954 in the following subjects: math, beekeeping, Bible, English, drawing, and science.¹⁴ In 1955, he accepted a call to teach at East Brazil Academy (IPAE), located in the city of Petrópolis, state of Rio de Janeiro,¹⁵ where he taught math, science, and Bible until 1962.¹⁶

Afterward, Takatohi moved to São Paulo, where he served as a math and art teacher at Brazil College from 1963 to 1978.¹⁷ During this period, leadership ordained him to the ministry in 1963.¹⁸ He also participated in the school's statistics department along with its director and teachers Nevil Groski, Júlio Azevedo, and Roberto Azevedo.¹⁹

After 35 years of ministry, Shichiro Takatohi retired in 1978 at 66 years of age.²⁰ Thereafter, he and his wife settled in Tatuí, state of São Paulo,²¹ where Takatohi dedicated his time to taking care of an orchard and vegetable flower gardens, as well as beekeeping. In addition, he developed his musical talents by practicing the flute, which he had started to learn in Japan while young.²² His wife died in April 2003,²³ and he passed away two years later in September 2005, at 93 years of age, in São Paulo city.²⁴

Shichiro Takatohi has a historical importance for the Seventh-day Adventist Church as one of the first Adventist Japanese pastors in Brazil. Despite many adversities, he left a legacy of humbleness and faith as a pastor, farm manager, and teacher on various subjects for 35 years.

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