



Surajit Kumar De Datta <skdedatta@gmail.com>

Our trip to the Philippines

Santiago Obien <sobien735@gmail.com>

Wed, May 30, 2018 at 6:38 PM

To: Surajit Kumar De Datta <skdedatta@gmail.com>

Dearest SK and Vijji:

You honored us with your presence - the two of you - in a memorable appearance that we will always treasure in our life. You are an intellectual treasure of the science community, of our farmers, and of the whole country.

It is true - no other IRRI scientist has ever worked with the nationals more than SK ever did. What kind of character is that? Where did he get that kind of heart for the Filipinos - as friends and colleagues? You persisted to work for the Filipino farmers.

Yes, it is true that President Marcos even offered to give SK a Filipino citizenship. That was a sincere offer. Because the President was impressed of your briefing him of the virtues of IR 8 in that instant summer visit in 1966? Rice sufficiency was his promise during the Presidential elections of 1965. And he fulfilled it because there was IR 8, the line that was first identified by SK in his experimental plots.

But, of course, what the President could not do because you refused to accept the citizenship offer, the PMCP (formerly PCCP) did it and you could not refuse. The Presidency of PMCP -- although the PMCP constitution reserves the post for Filipinos -- Dr. Feliciano B. Calora moved to set aside the PMCP constitution and declared SK President of PMCP. That took courage on the part of Dr. Calora.

Those were dramatic days of our scientific society. For there was complete satisfaction on SK's contribution to rice agronomy, soil fertilization, and weed science. And the only way we can show our gratitude and honor is to bestow the presidency of PMCP to Dr. S. K. de Datta.

Our last PMCP golden anniversary and scientific conference was a success and worthy to remember. Many of the founders have passed away. But we are lucky to have two of our illustrious leaders were able to attend, namely: Dr. Feliciano B. Calora and wife Delia Galvez Calora and Dr. S. K. de Datta and wife Vijji de Datta. Your presence did all the difference. The ambiance changed to a much higher level of respect and honor.

And more than that: your plenary paper has a lasting impact in our appreciation of the work of IRRI and your contributions not only in science of rice but in the application of the results of research, the adoption of those rice technologies by farmers in the Philippines and among rice producing countries of the world. We are therefore very