

## Profile of Junta YANAI

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**Specialty: Soil Science**

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### I. Research Topics



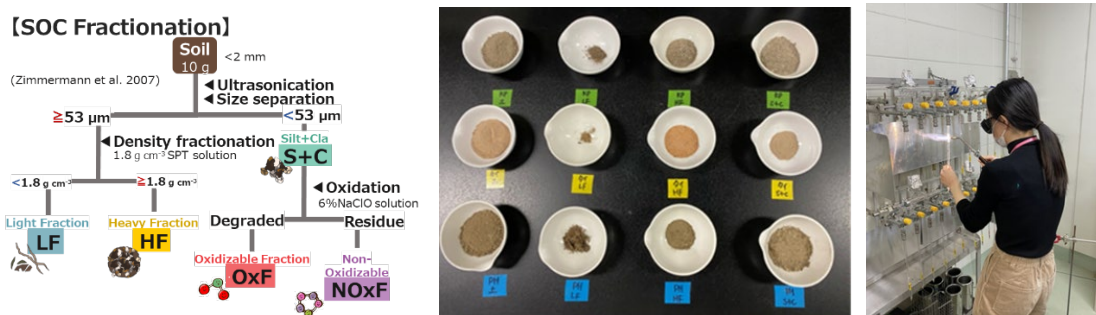
#### **“Analysis of Spatio-temporal Variation of Soil Fertility in Temperate and Tropical Regions and its Application to Sustainable Agriculture”**

In the era of paradigm shift in agriculture from optimization of food production to compatibility of food production and environmental conservation, I have accomplished extensive research on evaluation and management of soil fertility, which determines plant growth and crop production. Namely, with the aim of obtaining basic information to realize sustainable agriculture, I have investigated the long-term variation of paddy field soil fertility in tropical Asia during the "Green Revolution," fertility evaluation of Japanese agricultural soils and its determinants, analysis of spatial variation of soil properties at the field scale, and spatio-temporal analysis of soil nutrient status at the root zone and rhizosphere scale and the elucidation of nutrient supply mechanisms. Currently, I am engaged in comprehensive analysis of organic matter accumulation mechanisms in Asian paddy soils and development of accumulation optimization methods, comprehensive fertility assessment and sustainable management of Asian paddy soils, and establishment of new evaluation methods for soil fertility. In addition, to pass on the function of soil as a production base to future generations, I am also engaged in conducting research to elucidate the adsorption/desorption behavior of radiocesium in soil and to establish techniques to reduce the transfer of radiocesium to crops. Through these studies, I hope to contribute to sustainable food production based on rational management of soil fertility, conservation of soil resources, and conservation of the global environment.

#### **1. Comprehensive analysis of organic matter accumulation mechanisms in Asian paddy soils and development of accumulation optimization methods**

We conduct research to comprehensively understand the accumulation mechanism of organic matter

in temperate and tropical paddy soils, which leads to maintenance and improvement of soil fertility and alleviation of global warming, by combining extensive overseas soil surveys with advanced precision physicochemical analyses such as fractionation of soil organic matter, various chemical analyses, and  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating. In this study, paddy soils are grouped into four ecological environments, defined by climatic factors (temperate and tropical zones) and geological factors (volcanic influence): 1) soil organic carbon (SOC) is divided into four fractions (easily degradable, aggregated, mineral-bound, and chemically stable) with different degradability according to its stabilization mechanism; and determine the amount and mean residence time of SOC in each fraction 2) the determinants of the accumulation mechanism are determined as a whole and for each ecological environment by analyzing the relationship between the organic matter and climate, soil characteristics, and fertilizer management methods, and 3) accumulation methods of SOC are elucidated that enhance both fertility and carbon sequestration functions. Currently, research is being conducted in seven countries: Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Nepal. We believe that this will provide a new perspective on the evaluation and management of soil organic matter dynamics in the fields of soil science, ecology, and environmental sciences.



**2. Comprehensive fertility assessment and sustainable management of Asian paddy soils**

Supporting paddy rice cultivation in Asia, which is estimated to feed more than half of the world's population, is essential for sustainable food production in the world. I have conducted research to extract paddy field soil fertility factors, quantify the factor scores, and classify Asian paddy field soils based on these factors by combining evaluation of soil fertility-related characteristics with multivariate analysis for a large number of paddy soils in major paddy field regions in temperate and tropical Asian countries. Currently, we are elucidating the paddy soil conditions in South Korea, Taiwan, and Nepal, following Japan, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, and Indonesia.



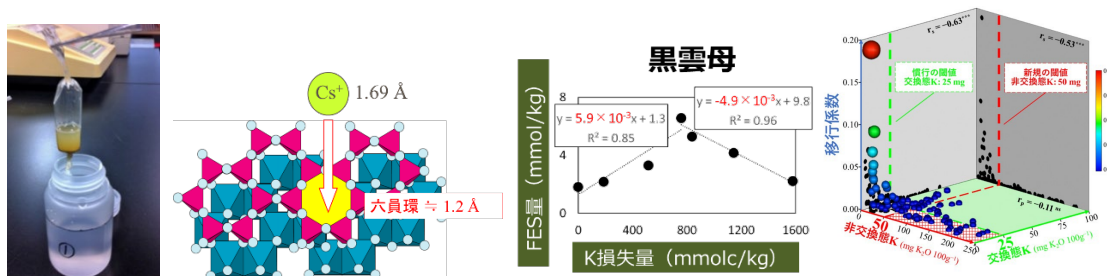
### 3. Establishment of new evaluation methods for soil fertility related properties

The current transition from intensive agriculture based on the application of large amounts of inorganic fertilizers, mainly nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P) and potassium (K), to regenerative agriculture that also uses organic materials, requires more precise evaluation of soil fertility in response to these changes. Based on this understanding, to evaluate soil K availability in detail, we are conducting research on the stepwise evaluation of soil K availability of non-exchangeable K and the analysis of the relationship between K availability and crop yield under K-deficient conditions. In addition, as a source of silicon (Si), a beneficial element for rice plants such as rice and sugarcane, we are evaluating the crystallinity (amorphousness) and leachability of phytoliths (plant-derived silica) as well as evaluating their importance in Si cycling at the field scale.



### 4. Elucidation of adsorption/desorption behavior of radiocesium in soil and establishment of technology to reduce the risk of its transfer to plants

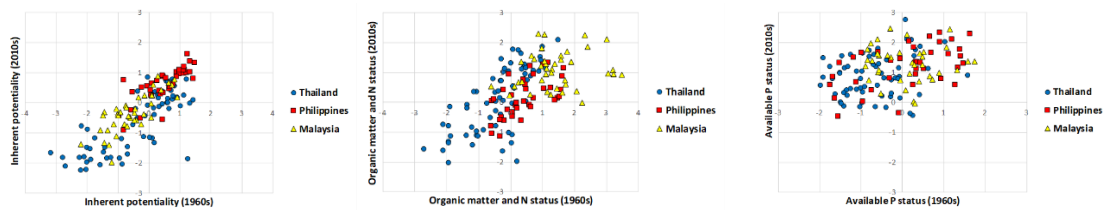
Radiocesium, which has attracted particular attention since the Great East Japan Earthquake, is strongly fixed in "frayed edges," which are caused by terminal expansion of mica (illite-like minerals), a type of clay mineral present in soils. We have investigated the mineralogical factors that determine the mobility of radiocesium by examining the amount and degree of expansion of mica and the effect of Al polymer, which inhibits the adsorption of cesium on the frayed edges, in various types of soils in Japan and around the world. Currently, we are conducting further research on the quantitative relationship between the adsorption/desorption capacity of radiocesium and the risk of its transfer to plants, as well as establishing a rational soil management method for crop production in post-decontamination agricultural soils without increasing the risk of transfer.



### 5. Analysis of long-term changes in paddy soil fertility in tropical Asia during the Green Revolution

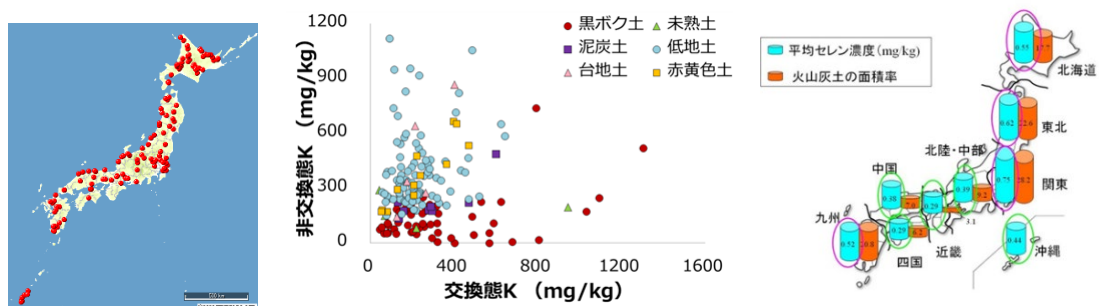
The "Green Revolution" that began in the 1960s increased rice yields in tropical Asia, but the impact of the accompanying increases in fertilizer application and removal of nutrients by harvesting on soil

fertility has not been fully investigated. Therefore, we conducted a re-survey of paddy soils in the 2010s in the same locations as Kawaguchi & Kyuma (1977), who evaluated paddy soil fertility in 10 tropical Asian countries in the 1960s and 1970s and analyzed the changes in soil fertility over the past 50 years by the evaluation of soil fertility-related properties and multivariate analysis of the data. The results showed, over the past 50 years, a significant increase in available P and a slight decrease in organic matter, as well as the maintenance of intrinsic potential, while the release of N and K into the environment was strongly suggested due to largely unchanged soil contents despite the application of large amounts of fertilizer. This study contributed to the development of paddy field soil science in Japan and around the world and provided a new perspective that should be considered in the development of soil fertility management methods for agricultural lands, because it demonstrated the significance of harmonizing appropriate organic matter application with further improvement in plant nutrient use efficiency on a large spatio-temporal scale, which has not been done before.



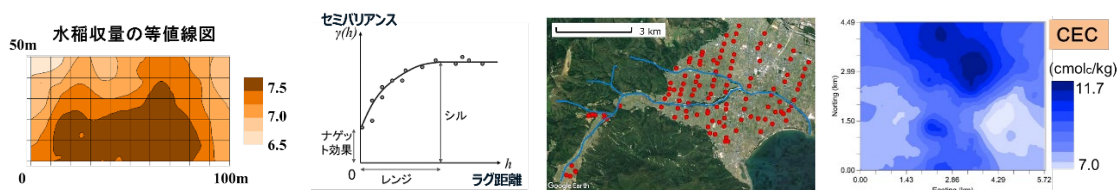
### **6. Evaluation of soil fertility and analysis of its determinants in Japanese agricultural soils**

Comprehensive analysis of soil elemental composition and their various chemical forms is important not only for evaluating soil fertility, but also as basic information on human health via soil-crop-human interaction in that it can determine the amount of essential elements/toxic elements for humans. Therefore, we collected a total of 180 samples of agricultural surface soils (97 from paddy fields and 83 from fields) and quantitatively evaluated total concentrations of N, P, K, Si, iodine (I), selenium (Se) etc., as well as N in different forms, available Si, nonexchangeable K etc. We also analyzed their relationship with other soil properties, soil type and land use to comprehensively determine their determinants. This research will provide basic information for food production and environmental conservation in Japan, and will also be useful in understanding the biogeochemical cycle of elements in the terrestrial environment in Japan by comparing the soil properties with those of rocks and river water. Furthermore, this will lead to the understanding of relative position of Japanese agricultural soils in Asia, by comparing with the results of the broad-scale assessment of agricultural soils in Asia.



## **7. Analysis of spatial variation of soil properties at the field scale**

Spatial variability of soil fertility-related property values in rice paddy fields was analyzed using spatial statistics (geostatistics) to elucidate the existence of heterogeneous distribution of various nutrients depending on microtopography and management, even in relatively even paddy fields. Spatial variability analysis of yield combined with multiple regression analysis revealed that 65% of non-random variability in yield can be explained by soil properties and that "precision agriculture" that takes into account spatial variability of soil properties and rice yield can reduce fertilizer application by 13% without changing yield, which can be regarded as the foundation for current smart agriculture. Spatial variation analysis of organic matter dynamics in semi-arid wheat fields in northern Kazakhstan revealed that the dynamics of organic matter is largely determined by topography and demonstrated the effectiveness of "topography-adaptive management" for harmonizing food production and environmental conservation. Spatial variation analysis of soil properties and crop yield and environmental load such as N<sub>2</sub>O emission in various agro-ecosystems was conducted. The relationship between soil sampling frequency and data reliability was analyzed to elucidate the rational spatio-temporal sampling frequency for each soil property value according to tolerance and risk factor. Currently, we are conducting research on spatial variability analysis of paddy soils and its application to site-specific fertilizer management in the alluvial plain of Takashima City, Shiga Prefecture, where soils derived from different parent materials are distributed.

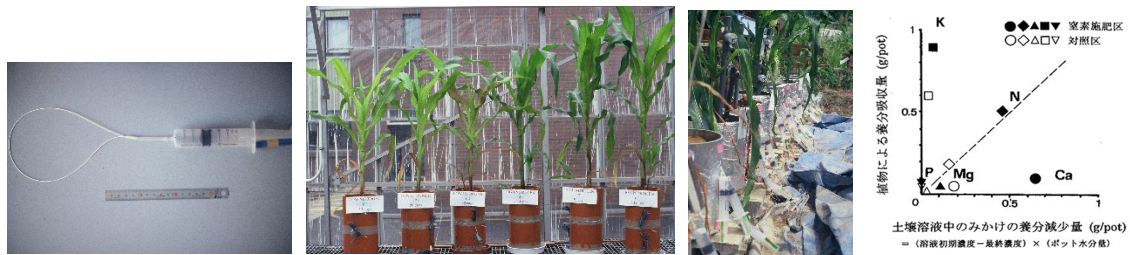


## **8. Analysis of spatio-temporal variation of soil nutrients in the root zone and rhizosphere and elucidation of nutrient supply mechanisms**

A soil solution sampling device using hollow fibers was developed to investigate soil nutrient dynamics by sampling soil solutions in the root zone of individual plants in space and time. By applying this method, we found that the concentration of various nutrients in the soil solution decreases and the nutrient composition, using AR<sup>K</sup> (activity ratio of Ca, Mg, and K) as an indicator, also changes dynamically with plant growth, and that nitrate ion, the major anion and the major nitrogen form, controls the dynamics of other nutrients. We have also demonstrated that appropriate fertilizer management that suppresses the concentration of soil solution in the early stages of plant growth can significantly reduce leaching potential without significantly affecting growth rate, nutrient uptake, or the nutrient supply mechanism. In addition, we clarified the effects of various management practices on soil nutrient dynamics in the rhizosphere, the direct interface between soil and plant, and proposed a method for evaluating soluble nutrients based on this understanding. Furthermore, we demonstrated the absorption of non-exchangeable potassium in soil by paddy rice by elucidating the reduction of



non-exchangeable potassium and the associated expansion of mica mineral layers in soils of the potassium-deficient plots of long-term field experiments.



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#### **IV. PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICES**

- + Japanese Society of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition (Editor-in-Chief of *Soil Science and Plant Nutrition*)
- + Japanese Society of Pedology (Council member)
- + Soil Science Society of America
- + British Society of Soil Science
- + International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS)

#### **V. AWARD RECEIVED**

- Apr-2006: Encouragement Award of Japanese Society of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.
- Apr-2006: Best Paper Award of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.



April-2018: Best Paper Award of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.

April-2021: Best Paper Award of Japanese Journal of Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.

March-2023: Best Paper Award of Tropical Agriculture and Development.

## **VI. UNIVERSITY EDUCATION**

Apr-1986 – Mar-1990: Department of Agricultural Chemistry, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyoto University, Kyoto Japan, Bachelor Degree Candidate.

Apr-1990 – Mar-1992: Department of Agricultural Chemistry, Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto University, Kyoto Japan, Master Degree Candidate.

Apr-1992 – Jul-1995: Department of Agricultural Chemistry, Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto University, Kyoto Japan, Dr. Degree Candidate.

Apr-1993 – Jan-1994: Scottish Crop Research Institute, UK, to make collaborative research as a visiting Doctor course student under the supervision of Drs. Iain Young, Denis Linehan and David Robinson.

Mar-1998: Doctor Degree of Agricultural Science, Kyoto University, Kyoto Japan.

## **VII. PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Jul-1995 – Mar-1997: Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Kyoto University

Apr-1997 – Mar-2002: Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto University

Apr-2002 – Mar-2005: Assistant Professor, Graduate School of Global Environmental Sciences, Kyoto University

Aug-2002 – Aug-2003: Visiting Researcher, Rothamsted Research, UK (by JSPS Program, in collaboration with Prof. Steve McGrath and Dr. Fangjie Zhao)

Apr-2005 – Mar-2007: Associate Professor, Graduate School of Agriculture, Kyoto Prefectural University

April-2007 – March-2011: Associate Professor, Graduate School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Kyoto Prefectural University

April-2011 – Present: Professor, Graduate School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Kyoto Prefectural University

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