TAKEO WADA, 1914–1999

Dr Takeo Wada, former President and Professor Emeritus of Sapporo Medical University, passed away suddenly of a heart attack in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on January 30, 1999, at the age of 84. He was very active as a scientist and a leader until the last moment of his fruitful life.

Dr Wada was born and spent most of his life in Hokkaido Prefecture. Following his graduation from Hokkaido University, School of Medicine, Dr Wada fulfilled his military duties as a Medical Officer in the Imperial Navy. His experience in the Navy had a profound influence on his life. After returning from the war, he worked in the Department of Internal Medicine of Hokkaido University under the supervision of Professor Satoshi Nakagawa. Dr Wada looked up to Professor Nakagawa as his teacher throughout his life. Then he was invited to Sapporo Medical College and became professor of the Department of Internal Medicine in 1954. Dr Wada went abroad to UCLA in USA in 1959 and the collaborative study on the immunochemical diagnosis of cancer by using body fluid had been continued for more than eight years between Dr Wada’s group and Professor Carpenter at UCLA. His work on immunochemical analysis of gastric juice was outstanding and he gave many invited lectures at the variety of international congresses.

When Dr Wada went around the Middle-East with Professor Namio Egami of the University of Tokyo in 1967, he was so impressed by the people there who survive under the poor medical service as well as by the ever lasting wild nature and the ruins, that he decided to start an international exchange program between more than 14 countries including developing countries and Japan. He actually contributed to the construction of the Medical Center for Endoscopy in Saudi Arabia and sent many established Japanese doctors to teach and help them for developing the Center for nearly 10 years. Recently, he donated his own money to the Chiang Mai University to develop the Cancer Research Fund, where there was an International Symposium last year.

In 1973, together with the late Dr Hidematsu Hirai, Dr Wada established the International Society for Oncodevelopmental Biology and Medicine (ISOBM) in Sapporo. This Meeting has been held internationally annually for more than 25 years and has greatly contributed to the translational research between fundamental cancer research and clinical application.

In 1980, he became President of Sapporo Medical College. He served as President of the Japanese Cancer Association in 1986. He was also Chairman of the Council of the Comprehensive 10-year Strategy for Cancer Control of the Japanese Government and has been Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Princess Takamatsu Cancer Research Fund. His contribution to the development of cancer research programs in Japan has been enormous.

Dr Wada was also one of the initial 15 Editorial Committee Members when the Japanese Journal of Clinical Oncology was founded 28 years ago in 1971. Since then, he had served about 25 years as a Editorial Board Member and had graciously supported the Journal.

The memorial service of Dr Wada was held solemnly in Sapporo on February 4 and 14, 1999. His old and new friends, established scientists as well as young students paid their last respects before his recently taken portrait, which reflected his distinguished and warm personality. He is survived by Mrs Yuriko Wada to whom he was married during World War II.

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