OBITUARY

Dr. Kempo Tsukamoto

Dr. Kempo Tsukamoto was born on 16th September in 1904 in Tokyo as the sixth and the last child of Mr. and Mrs. Michito Tsukamoto. His father, Michito, descended from the pedigreed Samurai family, was a noted biochemist and the mother, Hama was a pioneering leader in the women education in Japan. A few years after the graduation (1931) from the Medical School of the Tokyo Imperial University (now, University of Tokyo), Dr. Tsukamoto was employed as a member in the Division of Radiation Therapy in the attached Hospital to the Cancer Institute in Tokyo. Since then he continued for 40 years with great efforts the research and improvement of the radiation therapy which was a quite new field in medical sciences. Since 1946, he was in charge of the chief of the Division and was granted with the title of M. D. from the University of Tokyo in 1947. In 1958, he was appointed the Director of National Institute of Radiological Sciences which just started in 1957. The development of the Institute today was much indebted to the effective leadership by Dr. Tsukamoto in the earlier stage of its establishment.

In 1960 he was elected the President of the Japan Radiation Research Society of which he was one of the founders (1959). From the same year, he was dispatched very often as the chief delegate of the Japanese Government to the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effect of Atomic Radiation, for which he served for ten years with remarkable contributions to its activity by submitting to it many valuable reports from Japan.

Dr. Tsukamoto moved to the National Cancer Center as the Director of the Hospital in 1967, and then took the chair of the Director General of the Center in 1970. As the President of the 12th Congress of the International Society of Radiology (ISR) held in 1969 in Tokyo, he organized the giant-sized congress consisting of more than 5,000 participants with a great success. His earnest service as an expert in the World Health Organization of the United Nations was also much appreciated. Last October, 1973, he left home to attend the 13th Congress of ISR held in Madrid, Spain, in order to be
relieved by the next President, which was eventually became his last journey abroad.

Dr. Tsukamoto was one of the great pioneers in the radiation therapy of cancer not only in Japan but also in the world. As an internationally famed doctor, he helped many valuable lives by his devotion and marvellous skill. As an excellent administrator, he contributed greatly to the establishment and promotion of scientific institutions concerning the cancer therapy, radiology and radiation researches in Japan, as well as, to strengthening international friendship and cooperations in these important fields of science.

Dr. Tsukamoto's philosophy of life is best expressed in a passage in his autobiography which was just completed a few months prior to his death. “A clinical doctor should not have any sense of superiority above patients. He should also not treat patients differently according to their social status and property. This is especially important and true in case of remedy of cancer, in which a doctor and a patient must unite together. Only purpose of a medical doctor is to rescue patients from sickness.”

Dr. Tsukamoto died in the early morning on 7th June, Friday, 1974, due to cancer which was the only and main target of life of his own. His wife, Tei followed him 13 days later. Dr. Tsukamoto is survived by an only daughter, Ruriko who is an eminent pianist and her husband adopted by the Tsukamoto family, Tetsuya who is an able journalist on foreign affairs in the Press Mainichi.

(Yasuo MIYAKE)