Professor Takeo Wada

It is with great sorrow that I have to inform you all, members and friends of the society, of the sudden death of Professor Takeo Wada, at the age of 84. He unexpectedly passed away on January 30, 1999.

He was an Honorary Member of the International Society of Oncodevelopmental Biology and Medicine (ISOBM) as well as of the Japanese Cancer Association. In 1973, the first meeting of the Research Group for Carcinoembryonic Proteins was held in Sapporo: this group, the embryo of today's ISOBM, was founded by the late Professor Hidematsu Hirai cooperatively with the late Professor Takeo Wada.

Dr. Takeo Wada was born in 1914 at Hiroshima village near Sapporo, where his grandfather migrated from Hiroshima Prefecture in 1884 for exploitation and became a farmer of the village.

Dr. Takeo Wada graduated and obtained his MD from Hokkaido University School of Medicine in 1940, then trained at the Department of Internal Medicine (Head: Professor Satosu Nakagawa). Until 1945 he served in the navy as a physician. During the war he experienced the fierce battle of Midway Sea in the Pacific and miraculously survived.

After the war, he started his research work in the Departments of Physiology, Biochemistry and Internal Medicine, Hokkaido University, School of Medicine. On April 1, 1950, he was appointed Associate Professor at the De-

partment of Internal Medicine, Sapporo Medical College, and on June 1, 1954, he was appointed Full Professor and Chairman of the department, a position he held for more than 20 years, i.e. from 1959 to 1980.

He was invited to UCLA as a visiting professor for a collaborative research project on cancer control in 1959 and 1960. The research work was mainly centered on the development of immunochemical diagnosis of gastric and lung cancers.

The studies on gastric cancer were done in Sapporo, while those on lung cancer were per-

formed at UCLA. The research projects developed methodologies for diagnostic application in gastric juice specimens and later for serum diagnosis using oncofetal proteins such as AFP and CEA.

Dr. Takeo Wada and his colleagues have made electrophoretical, polarographic and biochemical analyses of high-molecular constituents in gastric juice and focused on changes of carbohydrate components associating with cancerous alteration of the gastric mucosa [Wada, T. et al.: *Gann* 49(4), 249–259, 261–270, 271–280, 1958]. He also developed a new diagnostic test for gastric cancer detection known as ‘Diphenylamine reaction of gastric juice’ [Wada, T. et al.: *Ärztliche Forschung* 18(5), 231–236, 1959]. This reaction is based on the carbohydrate content of gastric juice, i.e. including sialic acid, glucosamine, and others.

Besides cancer research, Professor Wada had a wide interest in many other research fields of internal medicine. One of them was the clinical investigation of gastric secretion and digestive hormones. He is known as a pioneer of this field, not only in Japan, but worldwide, and he was therefore also named Honorary Member of the Japanese Society of Gastroenterology.

Professor Wada was also a great teacher. He educated innumerable physicians and researchers now dedicated to medicine and science and actively contributing to community medicine or working in research institutions.

In 1980, he was elected President of Sapporo Medical College. During 6 years of hard administrative work, he created spectacular improvements for the college, such as providing a new medical education system and constructing new hospital buildings, buildings to house the Nursing, Physical and Operational Therapy School, furthermore a building for research in clinical medicine.

In 1986, he had the honor to be the president of the Japanese Cancer Association and held the annual meeting in Sapporo. He also became an Honorary Member of the Japanese Cancer Association.

He also contributed to the establishment of the first and second 10-year Cancer Control Research Projects supported by the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan. He was a counselor in the National Cancer Center in Tokyo since 1990. He was also appointed Chairman of the Board of Directors in the Princess Takamatsu Cancer Research Fund, Tokyo, in 1990.

It is especially noteworthy that since 1967 Professor Wada dedicated himself enthusiastically to international medical cooperation and medical education with and in many countries, such as 17 Arabic countries, including Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia, and Asian developing countries, including Thailand, Indonesia and Laos. At Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, he cooperated in the foundation of the GI endoscopic center in 1967. Since then, he organized to send there more than 20 specialists from Sapporo Medical College and other Medical Schools in Japan, and this for about 15 years.

In 1988 he made great efforts to establish the Cancer Research Fund and Cancer Center at Chiangmai University, Thailand, which he visited every year for teaching and consultation. Since January 18, 1999, he visited the university to give lectures. There he suddenly fell ill due to myocardial infarction in the early morning of January 30 and passed away at 4 p.m. in the university hospital. The great life of an outstanding Clinician, Scientist and faithful humane Christian ended. The funeral service took place at Kita-Ichi-Jo church, Sapporo, on February 4, 1999, with more than 700 attendants. We will all miss him.

Akira Yachi, MD
Professor Emeritus
Sapporo Medical University