



Obituary

In Memoriam

Yasuhiro Hosaka (1931–2002)

Yasuhiro Hosaka, a distinguished Japanese electron microscopist and one of the world's experts on *Sendai virus* structure and function, passed away on Friday, August 16, 2002. The cause was cancer. He was born in Kyoto on January 8, 1931, and was educated first at Nagoya University School of Medicine, where he received his Bachelor of Medicine degree in 1955, and subsequently at the Graduate School of Medicine at Osaka University, where he received the degree of

Doctor of Medicine in 1960. From 1955 to 1963 he worked almost exclusively on the Haemagglutinating Virus of Japan (HVJ) which subsequently became known as *Sendai virus*. Apart from some elegant structural studies of cytoplasmic polyhedrosis virus, he continued throughout his career to broaden our knowledge of *Sendai virus* as well as influenza viruses, particularly emphasizing the nature of fusion and hemolysis caused by these viruses.

He was employed as Assistant in the Research Institute for Microbial Diseases, Osaka University from 1960 to 1974, when he was made Associate Professor in the Institute, a post he held until 1988. The last ten years of his working life were spent as Professor in Osaka University of Pharmaceutical Sciences, from where he retired in 1998.

One of us first met Dr. Hosaka when he attended a meeting organized in Cambridge in 1969 with Richard Barry on "The Biology of Large RNA Viruses". This meeting became the first of a series now known as Negative Strand Virus Conferences, and Dr. Hosaka remained an ardent participant until we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the series in Estoril, Portugal in 1994. All those present who had attended the original Cambridge meeting in 1969 received a bottle of port wine; Dr. Hosaka was one of the few who had lasted for the quarter century.

Dr. Hosaka was amongst the first to describe the remarkable structure of the *Sendai virus* nucleocapsid. He had a magician's touch with negatively stained electron micrographs, and as early as 1966 he was able to show that these nucleocapsids (even inside their envelopes) were of unit length, and that polyploid paramyxoviruses were not uncommon and were fully infectious. He also described methods for purifying these nucleocapsids that are still in use today.

In 1994, Dr. Hosaka was honored by being elected President of the Japanese Society of Electron Microscopy. He was a very kind man, and a thoughtful teacher and inspiration

to the many young scientists who came into contact with him. His contribution to virology, especially in Japan was enormous, and he will be sorely missed.

For the community of virologists worldwide, respectfully,

Brian WJ Mahy
Atlanta

Dan Kolakofsky
Geneva