



In life or death, nothing is more important than friendship. Masahiro Iio and I were friends for a long time. Masahiro Iio and I will always be friends. All who knew him have been greatly shocked and deeply saddened by his untimely death on December 21, 1990. Dr. Iio influenced the lives of tens of thousands of students, nuclear medicine physicians, scientists, and technologists throughout the world, and helped save the lives of hundreds of thousands of sick human beings.

Dr. Iio was a joy to his parents, a loving husband and father, an outstanding physician and scientist, a faithful colleague, and a dear friend. As a pioneer nuclear physician, he followed in the footsteps of Professor Nishina, who built the world's second cyclotron in Japan in 1937 and the world's largest cyclotron for the production of radioisotopes in 1939. Dr. Iio also was guided by Professor Hideo Ueda, who early recognized Dr. Iio's great abilities as a leader, physician, and scientist.

Three decades ago, Dr. Iio was chosen by Professor Hideo Ueda to study for a few years in the United States and then return to Japan to establish the first group of nuclear medicine at Tokyo University. Dr. Iio's stay at Johns Hopkins corresponded to the period from the inauguration to the death of President Kennedy, whom he greatly admired. While at Hopkins, he studied the reticuloendothelial system in patients with typhoid fever and viral infections and helped develop the first lung scans in the diagnosis of pulmonary embolism, initially in studies of dogs and subsequently in studies of patients.

Dr. Iio's integrity, enthusiasm, intelligence, and great energy were immediately apparent to all who met him, whatever their nationality. These qualities persisted throughout his life. Upon his return to Japan, I was invited for a visit of 16 days, during which time he undertook the task of explaining Japanese culture, customs, and traditions as we visited Japanese cities and institutions. These discussions on American and Japanese cultures were to extend over the subsequent decades, during which our friendship grew stronger and stronger, just as did his influence on Japanese and international nuclear medicine. After his return to Japan, Dr. Iio initiated a steady stream of younger colleagues to study nuclear medicine at Johns Hopkins. Since 1961, over 60 Japanese physicians and scientists from Tokyo University and other major institutions throughout Japan have spent at least a year at Johns Hopkins studying nuclear medicine.

In addition to his presiding over many Japanese scientific and clinical societies, Dr. Iio was the Secretary General of the First World Congress of Nuclear Medicine and Biology held in Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan, between September 30 and October 5, 1974, working with President Hideo Ueda and Treasurer Sadatake Kato, who undertook the great responsibility of sponsoring the Congress.

The World Federation of Nuclear Medicine and Biology is now well established, but, in those formative days in the early 1970s, the concept of a World Federation was novel and its success uncertain. Under Dr. Iio's leadership and natural organizational skills, the Japanese took all the risks and assumed all the responsibilities for the first Congress, setting the standards of excellence that have characterized subsequent World Congresses. A highlight of the Tokyo Congress was the address at the Opening Ceremony by Crown Prince Akihito, now Emperor of Japan. Forty-five national societies of nuclear medicine were represented.

Among his many honors was receiving the Hevesy medal in 1980. Originally trained and board-certified as an internist and nuclear physician, with a strong interest in the aged, Dr. Iio became director of the department of nuclear medicine and radiology at the Tokyo Metropolitan Hospital and the Institute of Gerontology. He subsequently became board-certified in Radiology, prior to being elected Chairman of the Department of Radiology at Tokyo University, a position that he held until his mandatory retirement at the age of 60.

Throughout his career, Dr. Iio was interested in fundamental and applied research using radioactive tracers. Throughout his career, he worked with the Japan Radioisotope Association, which was charged with the responsibility of distributing radioisotopes and disseminating information about radioisotope applications in biology and medicine.

We who have been privileged to be friends of Masahiro Iio plan to establish a Masahiro Iio Fellowship to enable Japanese physicians and scientists to attend future World Congresses of Nuclear Medicine and Biology.

Dr. Iio had a passion for excellence in everything he did, as a person, as a physician, and as a scientist. He was receptive to ideas from all over the world and taught us how to amplify national voices in the promotion of the field of nuclear medicine. His world extended far beyond himself as he worked toward the achievement of shared goals that overshadowed national differences. He was an inspiration to all of us. We will never forget him.

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