Obituary

PROFESSOR UICHI KUBO PHD

1928 ~ 1997

It is with deep regret that we hereby mourn the untimely death of Professor Uichi Kubo, former Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Kinki University, Japan, of oesophageal carcinoma on October 22nd, 1997.

Born on December 28th, 1928, Professor Kubo accomplished a large variety of tasks and filled a staggeringly varied number of posts, culminating in the Chair of Engineering and finally the Deanship of the Faculty of the Kansai-situated Kinki University.

The onset of the disease which took Professor Kubo from us was in the autumn of 1996, and he battled bravely with the carcinoma for a year before, most sadly, losing the fight in October of this year. Until the very end, Professor Kubo refused to let the disease rob him of his famous sense of humour which endeared him to colleagues and students alike. Professor Kubo was a real inspiration and an invaluable ally of many young doctors and scientists in Japan, and his cheerful disposition will be very much missed at the large number of national and international meetings at which Professor Kubo was present.

The last meeting at which I met Professor Kubo was the ninth annual meeting of the Japan Association for Laser Therapy (JaLTA) held in Hirosaki City, Aomori Prefecture, in June 1997, under

the Presidency of Dr Chiyuki Shioto. At that meeting, only four months before his by then inevitable death, Professor Kubo was his usual ebullient self. He was a staunch ally of mine when I first arrived in Japan as a green '*Gaijin*' (foreigner) more than twenty years ago, and he became a firm friend and advisor, with an increasing interest in laser therapy and photobioactivation. Professor Kubo was one of the behind-the-scenes architects who finally drew the International Association for Laser Therapy (ILTA) and the International Society for Low Power Laser Applications in Surgery and Medicine (ISLPLASM) together in Barcelona in 1994, resulting in the formation of the World Association for Laser Therapy (WALT).

Professor Kubo will be sadly missed as a pre-eminent scholar, a researcher, a scientist, a statesman, but most of all, as a good friend. Professor Kubo's last words to me in Hirosaki City were remarkably similar to those of the English author W Somerset Maugham to his son Robin Maugham (as quoted in "*Escape from the Shadows*."

"'Dying,' he said to me, 'is a very dull, dreary affair. Suddenly he smiled. 'And my advice to you is to have nothing whatever to do with it.'"

And a final thought from the Greek philosopher Epicurus:

"So death, the most terrifying of ills, is nothing to us, since so long as we exist, death is not with us; but when death comes, then we do not exist. It does not then concern either the living or the dead, since for the former it is not; and the latter are no more."

R Glen Calderhead, Tochigi City, December 1997.