In Memory of Prof. Naoya Yoshioka

Emeritus Professor of Kyoto University, Dr. Yoshioka passed away on Sept. 10. He served as the first editor-in-chief of KONA and was the former administrative senior vice-president of the Hosokawa Powder Technology Foundation. Until April he was out playing tennis with his wife and was enjoying a very active lifestyle and seemed to be in good health until the discovery of a polyp in June, unfortunately his health deteriorated rapidly. He was at the age of 78, but I wish that he lived longer because there was so much more for me to learn from him.

Prof. Yoshioka graduated from the former Naniwa High School and entered Kyoto Imperial University, Faculty of Eng. Dept. of Chem. Eng. in 1941. Upon finishing his doctorate studies he started working as an assistant professor in 1946. He devoted 38 years to research and education in mechanical unit operations in the field of chemical engineering. During this period he played a major role in the Society of Chemical Engineering, Japan, serving as administrator, Director and Vice-director of the Kansai branch, Editor-in-chief of the Japanese journal, Kagaku Kougaku Ronbunshu, Chairman of the Education Committee, Chairman of the Award committee, etc. Upon retiring from Kyoto Univ. in 1984 he became a professor at Okayama Science University and taught there for 10 years. Meanwhile, he put his efforts into the publication of the premiere issue of KONA and became the first editor-in-chief and built the foundations for an excellent journal.

His research interests in chemical engineering covered a wide range of mechanical unit operations, such as, thickening of slurry, liquid cyclones, aerosol filtration, and flow characteristics of non-Newtonian fluids. He was a researcher who was always ahead of his times. I had the privilege of being under his supervision during my doctorate studies, while I was a research associate as well as Assist Professor for a total of 8 years (1961-1969). At that time he was famous as an authority of thickener and liquid cyclone. When I entered graduate school he was busy working on his doctor dissertation putting together all of his great achievements. While I helped with his drawings and figures I read his dissertation and noticed how logical his writing was although I could not fully understand the contents. At that time unit operations were at a peak and everything was put away with dimensionless parameters, he always grasped the core of the phenomena, which triggered me to learn his attitude toward knowledge.

Being a quiet gentleman he never forced me to do anything. Anytime I had a question he answered with great patience and helped me find splendid solutions to my problems. Being humble and engaged in the study of wet powders he seldom attended the meetings of the Society of Powder Technology. But his contribution to chemical engineering was the bridging of theory and practice, which is well documented in "Kagaku Kikai no Riron to Keisan", which is so called the bible of chemical engineering text book. This will be remembered for many years together with his other fine achievements.

His life would not be complete without mentioning baseball. As a high school student he played against the famous Japanese professional baseball player, Kaoru Betto. Even after he became professor, students were unable to get a hit from him because he threw such an amazing straight fast ball and also a steep drop ball. Should a student get lucky and find himself on first he would be thrown out by Prof. Yoshioka’s quick flick of the wrist. Until he retired he was director of semi-hard Baseball Club of Kyoto University. After retirement he surprised everybody at the opening game by throwing his straight fast ball, a strike right down the middle.

The last time I saw him was on Aug. 19 and I spent an hour talking with him. It is hard to believe that he is no longer here with us and I hope that he is resting in peace now.

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