In memoriam – Riichi Sakazaki

DR RIICHI SAKAZAKI, the eminent Japanese microbiologist, passed away on 11 January 2002. He was born on 21 August 1920 in Yokkaichi, Mie Prefecture in Japan.

He majored in veterinary medicine and graduated from Nippon Veterinary and Zoo Technical College (now, Nippon Veterinary and Animal Science University) in 1939. After World War II, he joined the Mie Public Health Laboratory in 1947 and, from then, he studied *Salmonella* serotyping. He moved to the National Institute of Animal Health in 1953 and then to the National Institute of Health (NIH), Japan (now, the National Institute of Infectious Diseases), in 1959. He retired from NIH, Japan in 1981. After retirement, he had his own laboratory and continued to study clinical microbiology and to educate young researchers.

He received a doctorate in Veterinary Science from Hokkaido University in 1958. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate in Veterinary Science from Denmark Veterinary and Agricultural University in 1973.

His research was mainly focused on Gram-negative bacteria that were isolated from clinical specimens. For epidemiological purposes, he developed and established several serotyping systems for *Salmonella*, *Hafnia*, *Aeromonas* and *Plesiomonas*. He was also a renowned bacterial

**Riichi Sakazaki
1920–2002**

taxonomist. On the basis of polyphasic taxonomy, he proposed many novel taxa such as *Leclercia*, *Yokenella*, *Enterobacter kobei*, *Enterobacter cowanii* and *Klebsiella ornithinolytica*. In commemoration of his contributions to bacterial taxonomy, the species *Enterobacter sakazakii* was named after him.

Dr Sakazaki was a member of the International Committee on Systematic Bacteriology (ICSB) as well as of three Subcommittees of the ICSB, for *Vibrio*, *Enterobacteriaceae* and *Campylobacter*. He made numerous contributions to the international literature on clinical microbiology and bacterial taxonomy.

For his brilliant achievements in clinical microbiology, Dr Sakazaki received a number of domestic and international awards. Among them were the Asahi Science Award for his *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* study in 1965, the Bergey Medal for his contributions to bacterial taxonomy in 1994 and the Hideyo Noguchi Memorial Award for Medical Science for his contributions to Clinical microbiology in 1998.

He devoted himself mostly to research in microbiology. Dr Sakazaki will be remembered as one of the pioneers in microbial taxonomy, clinical microbiology and public health.

Yoshimasa Kosako, Japan Collection of Microorganisms