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This issue’s cover features Takashi Sugimura, who recently retired from the Presidency of the National Cancer Center, Tokyo, after serving seven and a half years. He has had a brilliant career spanning over 40 years. He is one of the most distinguished and honored Japanese scientists and is a cancer researcher of worldwide renown. During his tenure, the National Cancer Center developed from its early, poorly equipped condition in 1962 to one of the world’s foremost institutions in the cancer field. He plans to continue an active career in research as President Emeritus and has assumed the role of Advisor to the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Japan.

Dr. Sugimura received the M.D. and the Doctor of Medical Science from the University of Tokyo in 1949 and 1957, respectively. Only a small part of his accomplishments can be cited here. He is well known for his early discovery, with Waro Nakahara (Cancer Research cover, September 1977) of the carcinogenicity of 4-nitroquinoline 1-oxide. He was the first to relate bacterial mutagenicity to carcinogenicity when he established that the mutagen N-methyl-N'-nitro-N-nitrosoguanidine was a carcinogen, inducing glandular stomach cancer. Of key significance from the standpoint of human cancer, his pioneering research uncovered a series of multisite carcinogenic heterocyclic amines, produced in meats and fish during cooking (Cancer Res. cover, October 1981). This last finding constitutes an area of much current activity at the Center and elsewhere. He and coworkers demonstrated the parallel action of mutagens and carcinogens (UICC Bull. Cancer, No. 2, 1974; Annu. Rev. Genet. 12: 117–159, 1978). He observed the carcinogenic and mutagenic action of nitrofurans. In this area, a notable discovery was the potent carcinogenic action of furylfuramide, used for many years in Japan as a food preservative (Cancer Res., 34: 2266–2273, 1974). His finding of the switching on and off of various genes encoding certain isoenzymes has added depth to our concept of gene regulation in cancer (Methods Cancer Res., 12: 259–315, 1976) and contributed to the current emphasis on multiple genetic steps in tumor development [Science (Washington, DC), 258: 603–607, 1992]. On the basis of specific properties of inducing ornithine decarboxylase or inhibiting phosphatases, he discovered a number of natural promoters, teleocidin, aplisiatoxin, and okadaic acid (Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA, 85: 1768–1771, 1988).

Dr. Sugimura has been involved in many international activities, particularly between the United States and Japan. He plays a role in the programs of the Princess Takamatsu Cancer Research Foundation and the Foundation for Promotion of Cancer Research. He is Editor-in-Chief of the Japanese Journal of Cancer Research and the Japanese Journal of Clinical Oncology and serves as a consultant and counselor to numerous foundations, societies, and institutions in Japan and abroad. His colleagues regard him as an open-minded personality with a sense of humor, but a decisive leader, with a strong commitment to cancer research, particularly the mechanistic aspects and cancer prevention. His success in promoting excellence at the National Cancer Center is attributed to the recruitment of outstanding scientists, physicians, and surgeons and to the creation of a spirit of unity among the research and clinical staffs and the administration. His dream of many years, a grand design of the future was the recent construction of a 350-bed hospital located 30 kilometers east of Tokyo (see cover) and the start of construction of another hospital on the main campus of Tokyo University. In addition, Dr. Sugimura played a role in the establishment of the AACR/Japanese Cancer Association conference series, the first one of which was held in 1989 in Hawaii. The third in this series will be held in Maui in 1995.

Among his many honors are membership in the Japan Academy; foreign membership in the United States National Academy of Sciences; and Honorary Membership in the AACR, the American Society of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and the Korean Cancer Association. Among his numerous international awards are the Charles S. Mott Prize of the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation (1991), the Ernst W. Bertner Memorial Award (1981), the Tinuzi Yoshida Prize of the Japan Cancer Society (1992), and the Outstanding Work Award of the United States Environmental Mutagen Society (1978).

We are indebted to the staff of the National Cancer Center for information and photographs.

Sidney Weinhouse