



Dr. YUSUKE SUMIKI

Obituary

Dr. YUSUKE SUMIKI, the late president of the Japan Antibiotics Research Association, died after an operation for cancer on September 11, 1974, at the age of 73.

Dr. SUMIKI was born on February 10, 1901, in Niigata City where he received his education through high school. Dr. SUMIKI graduated from the Faculty of Agriculture, the University of Tokyo in 1925, and received a degree of Doctor of Agriculture from the University in 1932. He worked all his life in the Department of Agricultural Chemistry of the faculty, as a sub-assistant from 1929, as an assistant from 1932, as an assistant professor from 1936, as a professor from 1946 to 1961, and as a professor emeritus from 1961. He held the chair of agricultural product processing, and worked on plant growth hormones, including gibberellins, cooperating with Prof. TEIJIRO YABUTA, and on antibiotics, especially on those to be used to control plant diseases. He was appointed as a staff researcher of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research in 1953, and as a staff of the Institute of Applied Microbiology of the University of Tokyo.

His list of honors is long and varied: He was elected as a member of the Japan Science Council (1948), nominated as a member of the Board of Pharmacy of the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare (1953), a director of the Japan Plant Protection Association (1953), the dean of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Tokyo (1957), the president of the

Agricultural Chemical Society of Japan (1961), the Vice-President of the Japan Society of Agricultural Sciences and the President (1962 and 1966), and a member of the U.S.-Japan Science Cooperation Committee (1963). He served as Vice-President of the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research from October, 1962 to May, 1970.

His antibiotic research started with the organization of the wartime penicillin committee (February, 1944). Dr. SUMIKI played a most active part in the post-war antibiotic research promoted by the Japan Penicillin Research Association which was established on August 26, 1946, and later renamed the Japan Antibiotics Research Association. He devoted himself to studies of the practical problems of penicillin and streptomycin production as an executive secretary of the production committees and the central laboratories (1946-1950), and to the research for new antibiotics as a committee chairman (1950-1956). He served as a director of the Association since 1950, and as the President from January, 1963 to July, 1970.

Dr. SUMIKI was a good university professor who trained his students to become fermentation chemists. A number of new antibiotics had been reported by the SUMIKI group: actinone (1950), angustmycin (1954), grasseriomycin, actinoflavin, LA 889, cervicarcin (1955), blasticidin A, shinanomycin, antifungal 720, mikamycins A and B, homomycin, cellocidin, bovinocidin (1956), blastmycin, raromycin, tubermycin, tubercidin (1957), latmucidin, fungisporin, blasticidin S (1958), variotin, No. 20201 (1959), emimycin, primocarcin, questiomycin (1960), cytomycin, pathocidin, 9- β -D-ribofuranosyl purine (1961).

Among these antibiotics, variotin has been used as an antifungal agent for trichophytosis, mikamycins mainly as a feed additive, blasticidin S as an agricultural drug against rice blast and cellocidin as a drug against bacterial leaf blight of rice plants. It is especially noteworthy that blasticidin S is the first agricultural antibiotic effective against fungal diseases of the rice plant which had previously been controlled only by mercuric drugs. The award of the Academy was given to Dr. SUMIKI in May, 1963 for his research on blasticidin S.

The books named "Koseibusshitsu" (Antibiotics) were Dr. Sumiki's life work. He summarized almost all of the chemical and biological papers on antibiotics. The first two volumes were published in 1961, a supplemental volume I for 1961-1965, in 1970, and a supplement II for 1966-1970, in 1973. He was writing Supplement III in a small room in the central library of the University of Tokyo, after he retired from the Institute of Physical and Chemical Research. It is sad that he had to discontinue his life-work.

Dr. SUMIKI was a high-spirited boatsman and a good baseball and tennis player. He enjoyed saké party.

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YUKIMASA YAGISAWA