

Conference report  
Conference report of the 5th Japanese Symposium on the  
Chemistry of Biocatalysis, 13–14 December 2001,  
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Romas Kazlauskas\*

*Department of Chemistry, McGill University, 801 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal, Que., Canada H3A 2K6*

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As the field of biocatalysis evolves, so do the meetings of researchers in biocatalysis. Japanese biocatalysis meetings started informally in 1989 and evolved into formal meetings starting in 1998. The 5th such formal meeting took place in Okayama, Japan on 13–14 December 2001 superbly organized by Prof. Takashi Sakai of Okayama University. This 2-day meeting brought together 170 researchers to hear eight lectures and over 60 short oral summaries of posters. As is common for the interdisciplinary field of biocatalysis, this meeting brought together enthusiastic researchers from chemistry, microbiology, molecular biology and engineering.

This meeting also set the stage for further evolution of these meetings from Japanese meetings to international meetings. Unlike previous meetings where all presentations were in Japanese, this meeting included presentations in English. In particular, all of

the 2-min poster summaries were in English. The organizers recognized that communication in English is essential for international cooperation and visibility. Presentations in English presented an extra challenge to the researchers beyond the usual challenges of explaining complex experiments clearly in only 2 min. Nevertheless, the researchers succeeded and gave me, one of the few non-Japanese participants, an excellent overview of biocatalysis in Japan. The abstracts in this issue, organized by Prof. Yasuhisa Asano, will give the reader a similar overview. I predict that the Japanese biocatalysis meetings will continue to evolve toward more international participation and visibility.

I would especially like to thank Prof. T. Sakai for this unique opportunity and to Prof. H. Ohta, Prof. Y. Okahata, and also Prof. T. Ema for their warm hospitality during my visit.

\* Tel.: +1-514-398-7228; fax: +1-514-398-3797.

*E-mail address:* romas.kazlauskas@mcgill.ca (R. Kazlauskas).