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Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/title~content=t713597286>

Preface

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To cite this Article Ohtsuka, Eiko , Uesugi, Seiichi and Matsuda, Akira(1994) 'Preface', Nucleosides, Nucleotides and Nucleic Acids, 13: 6, ix — x

To link to this Article: DOI: 10.1080/15257779408012145

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15257779408012145>

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Preface

Professor Morio Ikehara celebrated his 70th birthday on January 1, 1993. His students and ex-collaborators got together for a celebration on March 29, 1993 during the Annual Meeting of the Pharmaceutical Society of Japan in Osaka. On May 12, 1993, Professor Ikehara received a decoration from the Emperor, the Second Order Zuiho-Sho, for his contribution to science and education. During the 2nd International Symposium on Nucleic Acids Chemistry held on November 9-11, 1993, in Sapporo, we had an opportunity to celebrate his 70th birthday together with his friends from abroad. The Symposium was the 20th Nucleic Acids Chemistry Symposium in Japan which was initiated by Professor Ikehara in 1972 at Osaka University.

In 1987, Professor Ikehara's friends and students sent a present to him by binding papers published in various journals, to mark the occasion of his retirement from Osaka University in March 1986.

To express our appreciation for his contributions to the field of nucleic acids and protein engineering after 1986, this issue is dedicated to Professor Ikehara in honor of his 70th birthday.

Professor Ikehara started his Ph.D. work on the chemistry of isoquinoline in Professor Ochiai's laboratory in The University of Tokyo and joined the faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at Hokkaido University in 1955 as Associate Professor. After spending two years in the USA in the laboratory of Professor Joseph Bunnett, he joined the team of nucleic acid chemists led by Professor Yoshihisa Mizuno at Hokkaido University. Professor Ikehara started his own laboratory in 1966 and moved to Osaka University in 1968.

His first accomplishment in nucleoside chemistry was the synthesis of purine-8-cyclonucleosides containing a fixed glycosidic angle. Oligonucleotides containing this unique nucleoside were found to form a left-handed helix and structural studies on nucleic acids using these models have been developed. His interests have been extended to the total chemical synthesis of tRNA and the modification of tRNA by

replacement of natural fragments with chemically-synthesized oligoribonucleotides. Chemical methods developed for the synthesis of RNA have been applied to the synthesis of DNA molecules including regulatory and structural genes. Following the synthesis of the genes for several peptides, for instance, human growth hormone, his interest has concentrated on the functional modifications of enzymes, e.g., RNase T1 and lysozyme.

After his retirement from Osaka University, Professor Ikehara became Director of the "Protein Engineering Research Institute" which was founded in 1986 as a joint venture between the Government and Industry.

During his directorship at the Protein Engineering Research Institute, the Institute has established a unique research collaboration system as the first example of this kind and accomplished works on protein engineering. He also organized the International Network for Protein Engineering Center (INPEC), which consists of several institutes of that kind around the world, to stimulate international communication for the development of the field. He also serves as a professor at Tokyo Science University. We wish Professor Ikehara a healthy life and continuing success in his various research activities.

Members of the Committee of the Special Issue
January 1994

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