Yasuo Tano, MD, passed away in Osaka on January 31, 2009, at 59 years of age. His sudden passing, a result of a heart attack, was unexpected, and his colleagues and friends in Japan and throughout the world continue to grieve. The loss is enormous.

Dr. Tano was born in 1948 in Nishiwaki, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. He graduated from Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University, in 1972. In 1977, he had a chance to study abroad at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, under the direction of Robert Machemer, MD, for whom Dr. Tano had great reverence and respect. When Dr. Machemer moved to Duke University, Dr. Tano followed him to continue his studies. Dr. Tano was greatly influenced by the experience that he gained from Dr. Machemer.

After returning to Japan in 1980, Dr. Tano was appointed Assistant Professor of Ophthalmology at Osaka University and, subsequently, Director of Ophthalmology at Osaka National Hospital. In 1991, Yasuo was appointed as Professor and Chairman of the Department of Ophthalmology, Faculty of Medicine, Osaka University. At the time of his death, he was also the Vice President of the Osaka University Hospital.

Throughout his career, Dr. Tano was a pioneer of vitreoretinal surgery in Japan, making significant contributions to advances in clinical retina and vitreoretinal research. Because of his intensive work in vitreoretinal studies, Dr. Tano received several awards for his contributions to retina and ophthalmology, including the Edward Jackson Memorial Lecture of the American Academy of Ophthalmology. He was only the second Japanese recipient of this award in history.

Dr. Tano had great vision for the future of ophthalmology and was responsible for the organization of the Japanese Ophthalmological Society (JOS; President, 2001–2003). For approximately 20 years, he served on the board for JOS, providing deep insight into issues that affected the future of ophthalmology.

Any issue that came before Dr. Tano was faced with intensity and great effort, and even in the most difficult of situations he always strived toward a solution. He contributed his effort to many societies such as the Club Jules Gonin (President, 2008 to the time of his death) Asia-Pacific Academy of Ophthalmology (APAO; President, 2005 to the time of his death) the International Council of Ophthalmology (ICO; Treasurer, 2006 to the time of his death) and the Academia Ophthalmologica Internationalis. Additionally, Dr. Tano served on the editorial boards of many prestigious journals including the American Journal of Ophthalmology, Investigative Ophthalmology & Visual Science, Survey of Ophthalmology, and Graefe’s Archive for Clinical and Experimental Ophthalmology. He was a truly great leader.

Although he had a strict appearance, Dr. Tano was warm, kind, and considerate person. He had great insight, and he united wisdom with bravery, intelligence, and a sense of humor. I am privileged to have had the opportunity to know him and learn from him.

Dr. Tano was blessed with a lovely wife, Ryoko; his sons, Ryotaro and Kojiro; and his daughter, Sayaka. Dr. Tano also had five grandchildren.

We express our deepest condolences to Ryoko and his family.

Dr. Tano will be missed tremendously. He will be remembered as a great ophthalmologist, a warm-hearted gentleman, and a fabulous friend.

Tatsuro Ishibashi, MD, PhD, is Professor and Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at the Graduate School of Medical Science, Kyushu University, in Fukuoka, Japan.
A Tribute To
Yasuo Tano, MD

Dr. Tano’s contributions to education, surgical education, and innovation will endure.

BY SHINOBU TAKEUCHI, MD

It is with shock and sadness that my Japanese colleagues and I learned of the passing of our friend and colleague, Yasuo Tano, MD, a true leader within the retina community. The loss of Dr. Tano is compounded by the fact that only last year, we also lost Tetsuo Hida, MD, who was Professor of Ophthalmology at Kyorin University in Tokyo.

In 1981, Drs. Tano and Hida first met while traveling with a visiting group of vitreoretinal surgeons in United States. After their first meeting, they found they shared an interest in furthering the development of vitreoretinal surgery in Japan. As a result, they organized an academic retina society that met twice a year. Additionally, the two doctors organized a seminar for Japanese ophthalmic surgeons. Their efforts helped to eliminate barriers to education and information-sharing for young ophthalmologists.

Dr. Tano published many papers and books on the topic of retinal detachment and vitreous surgery. He was passionate about education and would often invite pioneers of vitreoretinal surgery, including Robert Machemer MD; Brooks W. McCuen, MD; and Stanley Chang, MD, to come to Japan to speak to doctors and students of medicine. His efforts to improve training and education in the field of vitreous and retina had a direct impact on the improvement in vitreoretinal surgical techniques within Japan.

Dr. Tano was an exceptional and accomplished vitreoretinal surgeon in his own right, and he invented many surgical instruments and created novel surgical techniques during his career. One of the techniques that Dr. Tano developed was the use of perfluorocarbon liquid to remove a dislocated IOL.

Dr. Tano was a prominent lecturer, both in Japan and throughout the world. One of the most prestigious lectures that he was honored to deliver was the LIX Jackson Memorial Lecture at the 2002 American Academy of Ophthalmology annual meeting in Orlando, for which his topic was “Pathologic Myopia.”

Dr. Tano was a devoted husband and a good father. His beloved wife, Ryoko, often accompanied him to both domestic and international conferences, and he always found time to spend with his three children regardless of how busy he was.

Dr. Tano was a good friend to many and a role model for all. Neither his name nor his influence will be forgotten.

Shinobu Takeuchi, MD, is the Director of Takeuchi Eye Clinic in Tokyo, Japan. He is also an Auditor for the Japanese Ophthalmological Society and Visiting Professor to the Department of Ophthalmology and School of Medical Science, Toho University, also in Tokyo.