



Editorial



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Neurosurgery Society

A Neurospine Surgeon With the Mind of a Neuroscientist: Makoto Taniguchi, MD, PhD (1958–2020)

Makoto Taniguchi, MD, PhD, the deputy editor of this journal, *Neurospine* and a board member of the Neurospinal Society of Japan, passed away on Sunday October 11th in Tokyo. He was 62. The cause of death was colon cancer. The diagnosis was made in September and the course thereafter was rapid.

He was the director of Neurosurgery at Tokyo Metropolitan Neurological Hospital. He had worked there for 23 years after completing his assignment as an assistant professor in Neurosurgery, the University of Tokyo. Since 2019, he was the Editor in Chief of the *Spinal Surgery*, the official journal for the Neurospinal Society of Japan (NSJ). He was one of the leaders in our society who advocated and advanced the notion of neurospinal surgery based on neuroscience. Having worked and contributed to the field of intraoperative monitoring since his study in Bonn around 1990, his creed was that spine surgery conducted by neurosurgeons must be based on a sound knowledge of neurophysiology. He also maintained interest in movement disorders and pain mechanisms, and was an expert in the treatments. Recently, he published an excellent paper which described his technique in lesioning of the dorsal root entry zone for intractable pain after cervical root avulsion.

Apart from neurosurgical practice, he was an aficionado in functional and correlative anatomy in an encyclopedic fashion. He invited researchers in these fields to write review articles in our society journal, and his interest is symbolically illustrated in the poster drafted by himself for the combined meeting of the NSJ and the ASIA SPINE (Fig. 1). He was to preside the meeting, originally scheduled in June 2020 but postponed for the pandemic. The meeting was held this November as a hybrid web meeting. However, to our great grief, he passed away without seeing the meeting.

He was a great educator and trained many fellows, who typically spent a few years under his wings. They advanced knowledge and techniques in the spinal and functional neurosurgery in their home institutions. After returning to their home institutions, they used to have alumni get-together surrounding Dr. Taniguchi, on occasion of annual national meetings, and their affection and respect for him were very much visible there.

Being an independent thinker with intellectual prowess, he engaged himself in discussions with persuasive logic and with solid basis. In private conversations, he always maintained a great sense of humor peppered with appropriate sarcasm, which helped to unite his fellows as well as members of our society.

Personally, being a friend for 40 years since Makoto Taniguchi as a medical student visited myself as a Neurosurgery resident, and a colleague in Neurosurgery ever since, I am profoundly stricken by his departure. Besides many ex-fellows and disciples, he is survived by



Makoto Taniguchi, MD, PhD

his beloved wife, Yumi, whom he met in a college theater company.

It is our sincere hope that the sense of direction for neurospine remains to be shared in our 3 neurosurgical spine societies, with his creed for neuroscience-based spine surgery, embedded together with memories of his effort and life.



Fig. 1. Poster for 2020 ASIA SPINE and NSJ (Neurospinal Society of Japan) meeting which late Makoto Taniguchi was to preside.