

My Recollections on Professor Maruyama During My College Life

Fumio Arisaka

Graduate School of Bioscience and Biotechnology
Tokyo Institute of Technology

I was admitted to the University of Tokyo in April, 1968. Two months later, students went out on a strike, the so called "Student Riot" or "Todai-Toso". There were no lectures. Everyday, we students held meetings, discussed the problems and our direction to go. The strike went on, but some of us including me in our class decided that we liked to study anyway, visited professors and asked for seminars. Professor Maruyama, an associate professor at that time, who was teaching introductory biochemistry to us, suggested us to meet in a seminar room once every week, where we attended "Rindoku seminar". There, we read papers which he chose for us from Scientific American and translated sentences into Japanese in turn. From time to time, he made comments on our translation and the contents. Among the papers which we read, I still remember one by Arthur Kornberg on DNA replication and another by Hue Huxley on the "sliding theory" of muscle. At that time, I wanted to be a physicist, but in retrospect, this Rindoku seminar was an important momentum which changed my future direction from physics to biological science. He emphasized that the students who wish to study in biology should learn physics and chemistry. As I recall, it was not in the lab, but probably in a pub near the campus that he often talked to us on his philosophy of science while drinking "sake". The strike was eventually over.

While doing research, I often recall his saying that when there is an "activity" in the body, there must be some activity which counter-acts it. This is something which I remember when I think about gene functions of bacteriophage that I work on now.