

In Memoriam Shigeru Takebayashi, 1926-2011

Professor Emeritus Shigeru Takebayashi, phonetician and lexicographer, passed away on 10 March 2011, one day before the devastating earthquake and tsunami hit Japan.

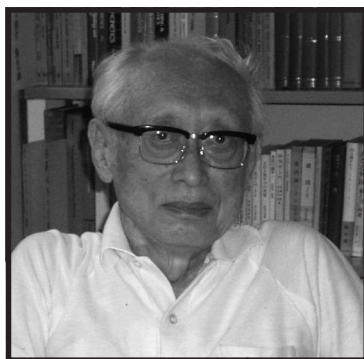
He was born on 22 September 1926 in Asakusa, Tokyo. In 1944, during the Second World War, he was admitted to the English Department of the Tokyo School of Foreign Languages (the present-day Tokyo University of Foreign Studies). Here, English phonetics lessons given by Tamihei Iwasaki fascinated the new student with refreshing insights. After the war, Takebayashi entered the University of Tokyo and enjoyed attending Yoshio Nakano's lectures on Shakespeare and studying linguistics with Shiro Hattori, when he was invited by his former teacher, Iwasaki, to join the team of writers for the Enlarged Second Edition of *Kenkyusha's New English-Japanese Dictionary*. He was the only student among the contributors of this famous dictionary, and later recalled that this experience determined his future course.

When he was a student at the University of Tokyo, Takebayashi suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis and was in and out of hospital throughout his undergraduate and graduate years. After graduation he taught English at the University of Electro-Communications and later moved to the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, where he taught phonetics and phonology for 23 years until his retirement in 1989.

He was one of the founding members of the Iwasaki Linguistic Circle¹, which started in 1962 and which will celebrate its jubilee in 2012. As president of this association of nearly 200 members, Professor Takebayashi

was very much looking forward to witnessing next year's publication of the commemorative edition of *Lexicon*, the Circle's journal.

As a phonetician, Takebayashi made immense contributions to the education of English phonetics in Japan by teaching the subject as well as writing textbooks about it, including the widely-read



Eigo onseigaku nyuumon [An introduction to English phonetics], Taishukan Shoten, 1982. After his retirement, he wrote the tome *Eigo onseigaku* [English phonetics], Kenkyusha, 1996—a voluminous work covering more or less all aspects of present-day English pronunciation, and comparing it with that of Japanese wherever possible, to accommodate Japanese learners. The book was published in time for his seventieth birthday.

As a lexicographer, his name can be found on the covers of well-known learners' dictionaries published by Kenkyusha of Tokyo, including the Lighthouse titles, which have influenced not only other English-Japanese dictionaries but also bilingual learners' dictionaries of other languages, in and out of Japan. A phonetician, he was always concerned with how to appropriately describe and transcribe contemporary pronunciations of

English spoken in North America and Britain, and how to incorporate the information in dictionaries. He used the 'hooked schwa' symbol [ə̃] to transcribe vowels whose r-sounds are pronounced in North American speech, and was the first to show stress marks on all idioms and phrasal verbs².

Not only was Professor Takebayashi spared from having to witness what happened to Japan the day after his death, he was also spared from feeling the pain of losing his wife, who passed away quietly, it seems, sitting in her chair at breakfast almost exactly 24 hours before her husband died in hospital. Neither knew about the other's (impending) death.

On May 15 the ILC held a party at the Rihga Royal Hotel Tokyo in honor of Professor Takebayashi. 108 ILC members, former students and colleagues gathered to pay tribute to the late professor's life and work.

The professor disliked formalities, loathed war, loved Mozart and was a keen gardener and photographer. The hundreds of his former students will miss him greatly and will always remember him.

Notes

1. A detailed account of ILC, by Kaoru Akasu, can be found in KDN 15, 2007.
2. *Kenkyusha's Union English-Japanese Dictionary* (1972).

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A list of selected publications appears on p. 31.