

## Rihito Kimura

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Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical at that time) and chose our employees. Finally on November 2, 1990 (October in the USA) we founded the Japan Center and thanks to the support of all of you are now coming up on our 20<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary.

I want to express my gratitude for the 23 year period in which he warmly and sympathetically guided me in this field where I am a relative newcomer. At the general meeting in Paris last year when in my greeting address I mentioned that I was resigning and this would be my last attendance at the general meeting, I couldn't help but feel emotional at hearing his heartfelt parting words of praise at the dinner that night from a person I regard as the finest of human beings. Prior to Paris he was as healthy as usual and 5 years younger than me it never occurred to me that he would be the first to leave us. It seems even now I can hear his voice saying, "Hi Shigeo!"

I think that humility, sincerity, and trust are the basis and the yardstick for human relations regardless of geography or the times in we live in.

My first impression of him is still unchanged today even after some 23 years. He was not only warm, generous, humble and sincere to everyone, but also creative and skillful at looking ahead, and a great leader and pioneer skillful both with spoken and written words.

I had two great teachers in life. One was Chairman Kenji Yamauchi the founder of Yamanouchi Pharmaceutical (currently Astellas Pharma Inc.). The other was Dr. Butler founder of the International Longevity Center. I was blessed with two of the greatest teachers one could have and I feel nothing but gratitude.

Bob, See you again!

I first met Dr. Butler when he was invited to Japan for the "Challenge for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Dreams and Human Recovery" Yomiuri Shimbun's 120<sup>th</sup> Commemorative International Medical Forum held on October 5 through 7, 1994 in Tokyo. Dr. Butler, who was giving the keynote address, mixed humor along with a casual speaking style that charmed his listeners. I was also a speakers participating in the forum and so I listened attentively to Dr. Butler's speech.

I remember writing a memo at the time, it said, "Dr. Butler mentioned that rather than the English word "Aging", the word "Longevity" which is similar to the Japanese word, "Choju" is a good term and more positive." I had the chance to talk directly with Dr. Butler after that keynote address. He had a deep knowledge and understanding of my specialty which is bioethics, and

expressed his interest in bioethics and Japan's elderly.

The White House Conference on Aging was held in Washington D.C. in the US in 1995 the next year. After the speech by then President Clinton, Dr. Butler who was the conference chairman rose to the podium and delivered the keynote address leaving a strong impression on me that still remains.

The contents of the keynote address given by Dr. Butler carried an extremely strong message about a full and satisfying lifestyle for the elderly and touched on the federal government's handling of the elderly and also called for work towards basic reform in health insurance and medical treatment of the elderly. I attended that conference as an international observer and so I had the chance to meet and talk with Dr. Butler. While saying our goodbyes, he gave me a firm handshake and asked me to give



Prof. Kimura giving a lecture at the 120<sup>th</sup> Commemorative International Medical Forum held in 1994

his best wishes to President Shigeo Morioka and everyone else at the International Longevity Center (Japan).

I have tried summarizing what I learned from my encounters with Dr. Butler and through his various achievements into the following three points.

First of all, from my own experience on individually meeting and talking with Dr. Butler I can say that he has a great and abundant personal appeal and is quite a sincere person.

Words supposedly reveal the person, so the contents of his Pulitzer Prize winning book, “Why Survive? Being Old in America (1975)” overflow with humanity and show the doctor’s outward

protective stance.

The doctor’s abundant clinical experience and reflections led him to summarize these in books such as “Productive Aging” (1985) or “The Longevity Revolution” (2008), and also the “The Longevity Prescription” (2010), etc. His concepts on an innovation in how we see the elderly and in the positive significance and rating of growing old, take firm root even when viewed from an international perspective rather than just that of the US.

As a second point, the English word ‘Ageism’ as is well known was coined by Dr. Butler in 1968, and he made every effort to fight age discrimination. Dr. Butler’s ideas, enthusiasm and efforts for

medical treatment for the elderly resulted in policies and established laws by the US federal government and contributed to the formation of a new understanding new image of the elderly as ‘productive’, full of abundant options that allow one to fully enjoy life.

As a third point, based on his vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Dr. Butler restored medical treatment of the elderly to its rightful position of priority, and besides medical care he also showed where the US is heading amidst a widening society as viewed from the vantage point of the elderly. He guided America to new reforms, the effects of which are spreading throughout the world.

Namely, along with carrying responsibility within the United States after being appointed as committee chairman of the White House Conference on Aging by President Clinton, he also greatly contributed internationally through his work on the “Declaration of Rights for Older Persons” at the 2<sup>nd</sup> UN International Assembly on

Aging. In this way, we could say that Dr. Butler’s concepts were truly spreading across the world.

I would also like to point out that Dr. Butler exhibited fine leadership owing to careful deliberation that is highly regarded internationally in his work towards the creation of the ILC Global Alliance. He helped establish an organization spanning the two countries of Japan and the US in 1990 which undertook joint projects and research and that has currently spread to 12 countries world-wide.

My fervent hope is to continue learning from the wealth of concepts that this splendid individual has passed along to us. By doing this, we can work along with the numerous people joined together by Dr. Butler to realize his vision and take responsibility for creating an elderly society that is mutually supported by all generations while respecting the lives of each and every individual.



Article in Yomiuri Shimbun dated October 24, 1994 announcing a revolution in the current medical world (These articles and pictures are provided courtesy of the Yomiuri Shimbun)