



## Correspondence

## In memoriam, Nobuhiko Matsuo, 1931-2025

Nobuhiko Matsuo, MD, PhD, died of old age surrounded by his family at home in the early evening on October 20, 2025. He was born on August 21, 1931 in Soja, next to Okayama City, Japan. He graduated Okayama University Medical School in 1955 and finished one-year internship to become a medical doctor. He chose ophthalmology as his specialty and had PhD degree from Okayama University in 1960. His academic interest in the earlier phase of the career was electron microscopic observation of eye tissues in the normal and diseased conditions. He became a professor of ophthalmology at Okayama University Medical School in 1974. He also served as president of Okayama University Hospital from 1992 to 1994 and dean of the Medical School from 1995 to 1997.

In his research career, he got a postdoctoral fellowship of Fight for Sight and studied at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York, from 1968 to 1970 under the guidance of Professor George K. Smelser. Using his electron microscopic techniques, he elucidated the role of macrophages in apoptotic death of capillary endothelial cells in the process of pupillary membrane regression<sup>1</sup>. In the clinical application of electron microscopic techniques, he discovered photoreceptor outer segments in the aqueous humor in young patients with blunt eye trauma-related oral dialysis in the process of examining aqueous cells in different types of uveitis<sup>2,3</sup>. These young patients often showed high intraocular pressure which returned to the normal after surgical repair of retinal detachment. Photoreceptor outer segments which flow from the subretinal space of retinal detachment through oral dialysis to the aqueous humor would clog the outflow pathway to induce the high pressure as ghost cell glaucoma (hemolytic glaucoma). The condition was named photoreceptor outer segment glaucoma or Schwartz-Matsuo syndrome<sup>4</sup>.

As one of pioneers in photocoagulation at appropriate timing for retinopathy of prematurity in Japan, he made witness in the court for civil trials for compensation for damages, regarding poor visual outcomes as a sequel to failure to take action based on the standard treatment at that time. Through these lawsuits, it was argued when photocoagulation was established as the standard treatment for retinopathy of prematurity in Japan<sup>5,6</sup>, that was concluded to be around 1972. He worked as a local eye doctor in his seventies and eighties and made a pilgrimage (O-Henro) at many rounds, as a follower of Kobo Daishi, Buddhist priest in ninth century, at 88 temples in Shikoku Island, across the Seto Inland Sea from Okayama, which are connected by combined highway and railway bridges. Walking with use of public transportation as buses and trains in the pilgrimage kept him healthy until the death (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Nobuhiko Matsuo at age 91 years, in local television interview to talk about his old high school days.

## Declaration of competing interest

I declare no conflict of interest.

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## Obituary

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