



WINDS FROM JAPAN

The Licensing Executives Society Japan

Obituary; Dr. Mifune

By Masau Takayanagi*

I would like to express my condolences on the death of Dr. Mifune, past president of LES Japan. When I heard sad news of his passing, I was shocked and saddened.

Dr. Mifune joined LES Japan in the 1970s, and served as president of LES Japan from 1987 to 1989, and as president of LES International in 1991 and 1992. He was awarded the LESI Gold Medal in 2003. He was an active member of LES for 40 years and was one of the finest leaders of LES.

I first met with Dr. Mifune in the 1970s on the occasion of a task force joint study at the Japan Patent Association (now the Japan Intellectual Property Association) on the draft "Code of Conduct of International Technology Transfer" by UNCTAD. He joined the task force as a representative of the international policy-making committee and I joined them as acting chair of the licensing committee. I was particularly impressed by his broad outlook and his frank, flexible and friendly attitude.

When he served as the general manager of the Intellectual Property Department of Teijin Corporation, I negotiated with him as a counterpart in a patent infringement case, on a patent holder's side. Although I felt the position was delicate and I anticipated a difficult voyage, the negotiation resulted in a win-win compromise after a lively discussion. I think that he taught the younger generation the quintessence of applying LES principles to the job, whereby when two people who trusted each other worked together in harmony, work could proceed smoothly. When I joined LES Japan afterwards, he warmly welcomed me and introduced me to other members as though I were his pupil. Thanks to his mentoring, I quickly became comfortable at LES and easily established a valuable network of friends and colleagues. I will always be aware that my later nomination for the presidency of LES Japan could not

have come about without his support during the years when I was unfamiliar with LES.

Dr. Mifune always hoped that LES Japan and its members would become more internationally minded, and he took the lead in global activities. One of his remarkable achievements was the periodical publication in English, "Winds from Japan," of which he was the first chief editor; and he will always be remembered for this achievement. LESI 2002 Osaka Conference could not have been such a success without his dedicated activity, from the stage of extending invitations to that of preparation and execution. A simple wood hawk carving made with a single knife, which was given as a token of gratitude to every speaker at the conference and workshops, was Dr. Mifune's selection. I will always treasure the carving that I was given as a speaker of a workshop as a kind of memorial to him.

In autumn of 2010, I was surprised by Dr. Mifune's interview on NHK prime time TV news. He was interviewed by the press as an introducer of Dr. Eiichi Negishi, who was a Nobel Prize winner for chemistry, and stayed in the U.S. for the announcement. Dr. Mifune was a colleague and a close friend of Dr. Negishi in his days as researcher at Teijin Corporation. When I contacted him by phone shortly after the telecast and told him, "I watched you on TV with surprise", he reacted with pleasure and told me "Takayanagi-san, you are my first follower." When afterwards I watched on TV Dr. Negishi's interview with the Japanese press, and he commented "The Japanese young should go abroad and look at Japan from outside." which was in perfect harmony with the ideals of Dr. Mifune, I could see another reason that Dr. Mifune was able to substitute for him.

Dr. Mifune has worked hard throughout his life and was deserving of the title "Mr. LES." He left a lot to us; particularly, the knowledge that voluntarily activities at LES are precious. We should not and will not forget his wishes, and we will pass his

message to younger generations. I am honored to have been a part of the same generation as Mifune-san to have worked with him and to have enjoyed LES activities with him.

Mifune-san, thank you. May you rest in peace.

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*\* Past President of LES Japan*

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## The Passing of Dr. A Mifune

**By Yoichiro Iwasaki\***

With the passing of A. Mifune, Japan LES lost a great leader and all of its members a warm friend. His legacy will be remembered by us all, who were fortunate to have known him.

I met Mifune-san, when I joined LES Japan soon after my retirement from Mitsubishi Rayon Co. in 1993. Mifune-san and I hit it off quickly perhaps because we were the same age, and having had worked for a company in the same industry; namely the synthetic fiber field (In his case, Teijin). We both had lived through the era where our respective companies had been Licensees from abroad, then later had developed technologies that were licensed to parties abroad. We shared our experiences of having been an underdeveloped society which then attained the status of a fully developed one.

Mifune-san believed that our common experience should be shared by interested parties around the world. Thus the spark morphed into the periodical "Winds From Japan." I was invited to be a member of the editorial staff probably due to the fact that I was a Returnee, having spent life in New York from age 3 to 9, and as such was fluent in English. I was advised by Mifune-san to correct without reservation the English texts written by the Japanese members who contributed their thoughts and experiences to

Winds, so that the end version would be readable and polished.

If I were to be asked what occasion did I most vividly feel close to Mifune-san, I would have to designate the time we worked closely to make the World Conference held at Osaka in year 2002 a success. Mifune-san was in charge of the whole event, and I had the pleasure to support him. It was the first time for LES Japan to host such a major event, and I proposed to Mifune-san that we incorporate some feature unique to Japan. Thus a table was created to show that certain traditional Japanese arts had become a basis for some cutting edge modern technology. Two arts were selected: One being ceramics which had transformed into industrial ceramics used in automotive exhaust pipes of automobiles etc, and the other was elaborate silk-printing which became the basis of EL printing. The response from delegates from abroad was enthusiastic.

For all his devotion and contribution, Mifune-san was awarded the LESI Gold Medal in 2003, an honor most well deserved. I would like to believe that the legacy of Akira Mifune will be remembered as long as LES exists.

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** Past Editor, WINDS from Japan
Consultant*

“Though we have lost Mifune-san, his legacy lives on in WINDS”

By Jinzo Fujino*

In early 1996, following an annual meeting of LES Japan in February, Dr. Akira Mifune, former president of LES Japan and LES International, approached me and asked for my contribution to an English language newsletter to be distributed worldwide to friends of LES. Mifune-san intended to publish a periodical in English and strongly emphasized the need of such a publication from LES Japan. As editorial staff, Mifune-san had in mind, among others, Mr. Toshihiko Kanayama and Mr.

Yoichiro Iwasaki. On hearing of his project, I recommended that he added Dr. Shoichi Okuyama as an editor, who subsequently became a driving force behind the WINDS team.

Mifune-san then had to decide on a name for the newsletter. Wishing to reflect the need to report quickly Japan-related IP news, he proposed the name, "WINDS." There were some proposals from other members but nothing came close to WINDS as a suitable title. Mifune-san took the initiative in designing and formatting two trial issues, which were published in 1996. They focused on introducing to

foreign friends the latest activities of LES Japan. The first trial issue, published in May 1996, provided a summary of the purpose of publication in its endnote:

In early 1996, LES Japan decided to publish a newsletter to introduce its latest activities to all international friends of LES. This newsletter, we are sure, will help us strengthen cooperative links between LES Japan and other member societies. We would be delighted if this medium could enhance your interests in Japan creating an understanding of Japanese people and their culture.

This endnote reflects what Mifune-san had envisaged in publishing WINDS. With his enthusiasm and support, WINDS has survived for 18 years. Sadly, however, this year we lost Mifune-san, who passed away after a period of illness. Given our loss, we are determined to continue to publish WINDS in the spirit intended by Mifune-san, both to continue provide valuable information to our friends worldwide, and to honor his memory.

Mifune-san, rest in peace.

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\* Editor to the WINDS

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## My Mentor, Dr. Akira Mifune

**By Shoichi Okuyama\***

Dr. Mifune was a great man, and he was a great mentor to me. Through both serious and casual conversations, Dr. Mifune taught me basic principles for life and a professional career.

In 1996, I met Dr. Mifune through Prof. Jinzo Fujino, who is now a professor in the MIP program at the Tokyo University of Science. I had at that time worked as a patent attorney for only five years. Dr. Mifune was president of LES International in 1992-93, and he was thinking about starting an English newsletter for LES Japan. I was not a member of LES then, but I thought it a true privilege to work on a new, interesting project. It was a small team of five that started the new periodical. I remember several meetings and long discussions before we finally decided on the title "WINDS from Japan." During 1996, we printed two preliminary issues in May and September for distribution among LES Japan board members. The first public issue came out in January 1997.

We had many meetings to polish the content of the newsletter. I was in charge of intellectual property news from Japan from the beginning. My drafts were subject to close scrutiny by other members. Most notably, Dr. Mifune's comments were always to the point. Also, Mr. Yoichiro Iwasaki checked the English in my drafts. Dr. Mifune and Mr. Iwasaki trained me, and if I can now do some meaningful reporting on Japanese IP developments, it is because of them.

The next major event I had the privilege of working on with Dr. Mifune was the LES International Conference in Osaka in 2002. Dr. Mifune was responsible for this meeting. LES Japan did not have a website and had a very tight budget, and organizing a large meeting was considered to involve financial risk. It was not possible to spend substantial amounts to create a website, although the board of LES Japan recognized that a website was necessary for attracting participants from abroad.

I volunteered to create a new website because I had experience. I designed the site and wrote html scripts myself without using any of sophisticated software currently available. Much of the content included in the website was data and brochures that Dr. Mifune had gathered and created up until that time. It was a simple website, but I believe it helped attract participants from outside Japan. The Osaka conference was very successful. More than 700 participants, of which about one-third were Japanese, attended.

After meetings, Dr. Mifune took us out for dinner or lunch, or he planned to have dinner meetings. He knew and enjoyed good restaurants. I liked hearing about his school years, his career at Teijin, and LES activities. He also candidly discussed his health problems.

I was very fortunate to have known him, and will always remember what he has given me.

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* Patent Attorney at Okuyama & Sasajima

36th LES Japan Summer Symposium in Shimane

By Kazuaki Okimoto*

The LES Japan held their 36th Summer Symposium on July 12 and 13, 2013, at the Hotel Ichibata in Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture. This was the first time the symposium has been held in San-in region. 211 members attended the meeting, the highest number of attendees at a summer symposium so far. The program of the symposium was as follows:

July 12, 2013

15:45 - 16:00 Opening Ceremony	
Opening remarks;	Mr. Takao Yagi, Chair of Organizing Committee
Opening Declaration;	Mr. Katsumi Harashima; President of LES Japan
Guest Speech;	Mr. Kevin Nachtrab, President of LESI
16:00 - 17:00 Keynote Speech; Mr. Yosinari Nisikiori, a Movie Director	
17:10 - 18:10 Panel Discussion on Important matters on IP licensing in developing countries in Asia	
Panelists;	Ms. Tomoko Miyashita, Hewlett-Packard Japan Ltd. Mr. Kiyohide Okamoto, a professor at Osaka Institute of Technology Mr. Masashi Kurose, a patent attorney Mr. Kazuyuki Katayama, Fujitsu Ltd. Mr. Hiroshi Kanno, Nikki Corporation
Moderator;	Mr. Sei-ichi Tanaka, Kobelco Construction Machinery Co., Ltd.
18:30 - 18:50 Welcoming Drink	
18:50 - 21:00 Dinner Party	
Speakers;	Mr. Jun-ichi Kobayashi, a Vice-Governor of Shimane Prefecture Mr. Kevin Nachtrab, President of LESI

July 13, 2013

8:30 - 9:30	
Workshop I;	“Focus on certain topics by comparison of respective legal systems relating to technology transfer to emerging nations” by Technology Transfer & Value of Intellectual Property Working Group
Workshop II;	“Encouragement of Industry-led collaboration with Academia – Analysis of success stories –” by Active Academia-Industry collaboration Working Group
9:50 - 10:50	
Workshop III;	by Healthcare Working Group
Workshop IV;	by Asian Issues Studies Working Group
Enlarged Workshop;	“Korea Fair Trade Commission’s recent regulation on licensing and introduction of antitrust issues which are mainly discussed in license agreements between Korean companies and foreign companies” by Mr. Hoo-Dong Lee and Mr. Won H. Cho of Bae, Kim Lee, Korea, and Mr. Kazuhiro Kobayashi of Ohebashi Law office.

The 37th LES Japan Summer Symposium will take place in July 2014, in Okinawa Prefecture. Please mark it in your schedule book.

We look forward to receiving you next July, at the 37th Summer Symposium in Okinawa.

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\* Editor, WINDS from Japan  
Patent Attorney at YUASA and HARA





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## Editors' Note

This issue includes messages from Mr. Masau Takayanagi, the former President of LES Japan, Mr. Yoichiro Iwasaki, the former Editor, Dr. Shoichi Okuyama, the former Editor in Chief, and Mr. Jinzo Fujino, the former Editor in Chief, relating to the passing of Dr. Mifune who commenced publication of Winds from Japan; and an article on 36<sup>th</sup> LES Japan Summer Symposium in Shimane. If you would like to refer to any back issues of our newsletters, you can access them via the following URL:

<http://www.lesj.org>

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### **WINDS from Japan Editorial Board Members, 2013**

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**Kazuaki Okimoto**

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Robert Hollingshead; Naoki Yoshida;  
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