

Obituary

Motoji Ikeya (1940–2006)

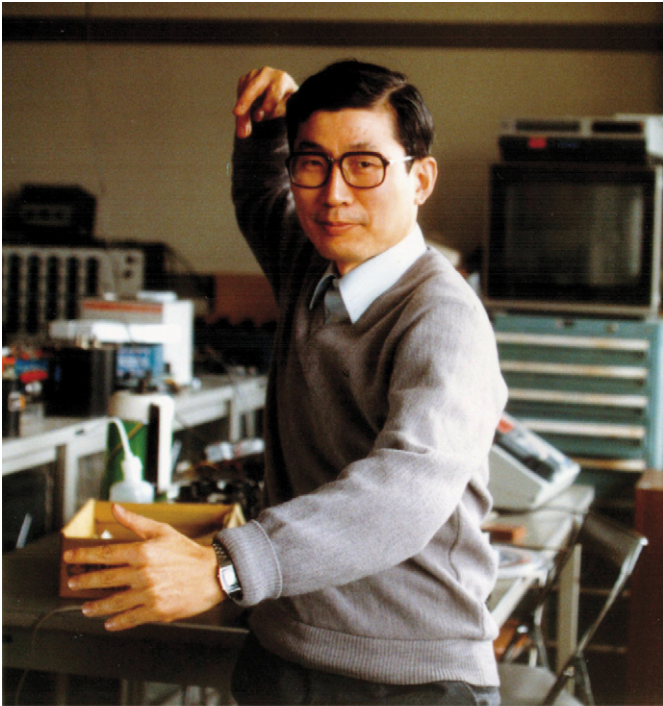


Photo kindly provided by Mrs. Yoshiko Ikeya

The ESR and Luminescence dating community lost one of its founding members when Motoji Ikeya died suddenly on the 14th March 2006, as a result of a cardiac arrest. We honour his contribution to our field of research by dedicating to his memory this volume of *Quaternary Geochronology*, containing the Proceedings of the most recent Conference on Luminescence and Electron Spin Resonance Dating.

Motoji Ikeya was born in Osaka on the 17th May 1940. He received his undergraduate degree in 1963 from the Department of Electronic Engineering, Osaka University and his PhD in 1967 from the Department of Nuclear Engineering at the same university. He spent most of his professional life at Yamaguchi University (1973–1987) and Osaka University (from 1987), from where he retired in 2004. In our scientific community, Motoji is most prominently known for his pioneering contributions to ESR dating. In 1975, he published in *Nature* his breakthrough paper on ESR dating of speleothems from Akiyoshi Cave. Less well known, even in the LED

community, is his 1980 paper on laser-induced luminescence of calcite and its application to archaeological dating, many years before optical dating of sediments was introduced by Huntley and colleagues.

Motoji Ikeya was a scholar with an endless stream of ideas. Virtually every application of ESR dating was explored first by Motoji. Some turned out to be promising, while others were perhaps less successful. He certainly never shied away from controversy. His life's work on ESR research is documented in more than 300 scientific papers and was summarised in his book “New Applications of Electron Spin Resonance”, which was published in 1993 and revised in 2002. He spent his last years of research on methods for earthquake prediction. The selected references listed below give a hint of the range of his endeavours in the Quaternary sciences.

Motoji was inspiring and generous. He attracted a large number of students and researchers into the field of ESR dating, many ending up as professors at well-established institutions. He was always a source of fresh ideas, advice, discussion, and, at times, the sparring partner for controversial, heated debate. He invited to Japan many researchers into the field of ESR dating and dosimetry, to attend the conferences that he organised and to work at his laboratory. Quite uncharacteristically for a Japanese professor, he had an excellent sense of humour, which is well documented in the cartoons drawn for his lectures, papers and books. Motoji Ikeya will be sorely missed by his family, students, colleagues and friends.

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