

I am Tomoyuki Higuchi, Director-General of The Institute of Statistical Mathematics. Before the award ceremony, I would like to briefly talk about the Akaike Memorial Lecture Award, as well as about its namesake, the late Dr. Hirotugu Akaike.

Dr. Akaike graduated from the Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science of The University of Tokyo in 1952. That same year, he became a researcher at The Institute of Statistical Mathematics. In 1962, he became Section Head of the Second Research Section, First Research Division, and then Divisional Head of the Fifth Division in 1973. He served Director of Control & System Analysis in 1985, and was selected to be Director-General in 1986. Dr. Akaike served as Director-General for eight years.

He was Council Member of the Science Council of Japan beginning 1988. In that same year, he also served Chair of the Department of Statistical Science at the Graduate University for Advanced Studies, which is the first graduate course focusing on Statistics in Japan. Through these activities, Dr. Akaike contributed to the development of statistical science in Japan and the education of younger researchers and graduate students.

Following his retirement from The Institute of Statistical Mathematics and subsequent appointment as Professor Emeritus, and until the time of his passing, Dr. Akaike continued to energetically devote himself to research. In recognition of his achievements and influence on a broad range of international and cutting-edge research fields, Dr. Akaike was bestowed with numerous prominent honors, including a Purple Ribbon Medal in 1989, Second Class Order of the Sacred Treasure, and Kyoto Prize in 2006.

Last November 5th was the 90th-Birthday of Dr. Hirotugu Akaike. To celebrate it, Google posted this portrait on a top page of Google Search in 13 countries. Here is an explanation given by Google for choosing Dr. Akaike. In a short sentence, I love this phrase: For Dr. Akaike, experience was core to creativity. It is short, but represents very well what drove Dr. Akaike in Science.

The Institute of Statistical Mathematics operates the *Hirotugu Akaike Memorial Website*, which includes an outline of his career and a listing of his papers. Please visit the site when you have the chance.

As those of you here today are deeply understanding, Dr. Akaike was a seminal figure in the field of statistical science in Japan. The Institute of Statistical Mathematics and Japanese Statistical community jointly established the Akaike Memorial Lecture Award to commemorate his enormous achievements to award a researcher who has registered remarkable achievements in the field of statistical science. By presenting the Akaike Memorial Lecture, we hope to encourage the development of our younger international colleagues and contribute to the development of statistical science, which were Dr. Akaike's wishes while he was alive.

This award and the presentation of the Akaike Memorial Lecture are made possible through a donation by Dr. Akaike to The Institute of Statistical Mathematics in order to support exploratory research into statistical science. I am extremely pleased to present the 2nd Akaike Memorial Lecture Award to Professor Mike West of Duke University in US. We sincerely hope that this award will serve as a stimulus to many researchers and contribute to the further development of statistical science.