

Obituary: Minoru Imajima (1930–2016)

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Dr Minoru Imajima was born in Sapporo, Japan, in 1930. After he graduated from the Faculty of Science, Hokkaido University of Education in 1953, he initially taught at the marine station of the University as an assistant and associate professor. He became a researcher at the Department of Zoology, National Science Museum, Tokyo, in 1963 and continued research on polychaete systematics until his retirement in 1994.

His first published paper (in Japanese) in 1958 concerned a species of the spionid genus *Nerinides*. The following year he formally described this (in English) as a new species, *Nerinides yamaguchii*. Dr Imajima continued to publish in Japanese and English throughout his life. In 1962, he worked with Dr Olga Hartman at the University of Southern California and together they published the important two-part *Polychaetous annelids of Japan*. This publication includes 50 families, 227 genera and 467 species of Polychaeta. Certainly, a noticeable feature of his work was his thoroughness as he researched the Japanese polychaete fauna. He produced several series of publications on different families; e.g., among others, a six part series on Syllidae (1966–1967) and a nine part series on Spionidae (1989–1992). He continued working and collaborating with other polychaete researchers after his retirement and his last systematics paper was published in 2015. In total, he authored or co-authored over 200 publications (Yamada, 2017), describing 930 species, including 233 holotypes from Japanese waters, and his work became the base of Japanese polychaete research.

He not only collected specimens from Japan, but also from South-east Asia, the Indo-Pacific, Micronesia and other waters through many expeditions. As a result, these established the National Science Museum, Tokyo as housing one of the most famous polychaete collections in Asia. Dr Imajima was a highly skilled illustrator and the total number of figures drawn by him exceeds 9200.

We sincerely respect Dr Imajima for his modesty, and never-ending enthusiasm and efforts toward annelid systematics. We all are most grateful to him for his great contributions, not only to annelid research, but also to various systematics societies, and for his warm and kind education and research collaborations.

He passed away peacefully in the early morning of 13 March 2016, the day before his 86th birthday, in Sayama City, Japan.



Fig. 1. Dr Minoru Imajima in his laboratory.

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