Hideo Ozawa sensei was the Founder and Chairman of the Board of NIDEK Company Ltd (Gamagori, Japan). He is well known in business and ophthalmic circles for establishing one of the preeminent ophthalmic instrument companies in the world, which today operates in approximately 100 countries. Ozawa sensei received the prestigious “Order of the Rising Sun” award from the Emperor of Japan in 2004.

Less well known are his efforts in biology, exemplified by his establishment of a separate company in Gamagori—Japan Tissue Engineering Co Ltd (J-TEC)—where research is aimed at novel pharmaceuticals and molecular genetics.

Optics, electronics, molecular biology, genetics—his vision and perspective seemed limitless. I got a glimpse of that perspective one night when he and I were dining together. “George, I want to show you something.” “Thank you; what is it?” He pulled out of his briefcase a hefty scroll, which I thought was likely to be a piece of Japanese art. As it unrolled, I saw a timeline festooned with myriad items, year after year. “This is my 100-year plan for NIDEK.” I mused to myself: “In the United States, I would see the projections for the next quarter; with Mr Ozawa, the projections for the next century.”

His broad and long vision was, however, trumped by his character. He was a man of his word. I am aware of at least two major multi-year business agreements that he made with other companies on a handshake—no written contract! My dealings with him reflected this sense of trustworthiness, making him an even more exciting and pleasant person to work with.

And his respect for our profession was considerable. Maybe this is best expressed by the fact that NIDEK is the only excimer laser manufacturer that does not charge a per use “click fee” to the surgeon. Ozawa sensei believed that it was indeed an honor for surgeons to use the NIDEK EC-5000 excimer laser, that the patients benefited directly from that, and charging a commercial fee was inappropriate; no fee was charged when practitioners used a NIDEK autorefractor or photocoagulator! Despite urgings from consultants and business colleagues, he remained steadfast on this principle.

An educator at heart, Ozawa sensei created a tradition of annual international symposia and seminars, held at spectacular venues around the world such as Rio de Janeiro; Monte Carlo; Barcelona; Phuket, Thailand; and Shanghai. NIDEK not only offered these symposia at no charge to attendees, which reached hundreds from dozens of countries at some of the events, but also published the proceedings of these meetings as a sponsored supplement to the *Journal of Refractive Surgery*, a tradition that has remained alive after his death.

All of this sounds terribly serious, but Ozawa sensei had a wonderfully light side to him. This was most publicly manifested during the wonderful entertainment that accompanied the annual NIDEK symposia. There was music, yes, but almost always dancing, in which he participated vigorously: samba with carnival-clad Brazilian women, heel-stomping Spanish flamenco, and exotic Thai hand dances. His smile was bigger than anyone’s.

During the decade and a half that I have been a consultant for NIDEK, I learned a great deal from Hideo Ozawa sensei, both scientifically and personally. I miss him. But how wonderful that NIDEK Co Ltd is now headed up by his oldest son, Motoki Ozawa, and the Japan Tissue Engineering Co Ltd (J-TEC) by his youngest son, Yosuke Ozawa.

doi:10.3928/1081597X-20090915-02