Mathematics of Professor Oka
− a landscape in his mind −

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Preface

As a mathematician working in several complex variables, I would like to share with you the pleasure of being here to attend this marvelous symposium, held in honor of late Professor Kiyoshi Oka's 100th birthday. As one of his students, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all for its success.

He was born on 1901/04/19 in Osaka and passed away on 1978/03/01 in Nara. The day of his last breath was, to my memory, a calm day of early spring. I remember that a thin veil of mist was wandering on the hills of Saki that day. More than two decades have slipped by since then.

In his carrier Oka published only ten papers, except for three summaries. However, in contrast to this apparent scarceness, influence of his work is immense. His idea does not stay within the realm of several complex variables, but extends far beyond, contributing to the development of whole mathematics. Such a state of art will surely be credited by many of the talks that are going to be given here.

On my side, I was first allowed to call him as my teacher in 1956. Thanks to this opportunity, from the next year I could spend a few years with him in Nara Women's University. Actually we sat together desk to desk in a humble office and I could hear many things then from horse's mouth.

Further, by courtesy of his bereaved family, I could read his many unpublished papers and materials prepared for research. These are mainly gathered in the volume 'Posthumous Papers', which is exhibited in the homepage of the library of Nara Women's University (http://www. lib.nara-wu.ac.jp/oka/). So there are materials enough for drawing up a complete picture of Oka's research style, namely we can see how he approached each question and from where he viewed the whole landscape of the research field.