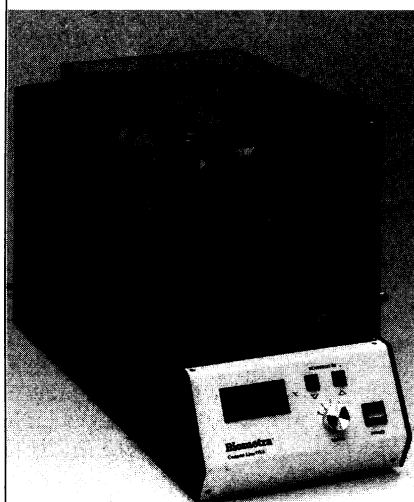


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human subject committees support this interpretation of research ethical standards applied to our study (4).

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4. Committee of Ethics of the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand (1995); Harvard University Human Subject Committee (1994).

Faculty Dismissals in Japan

With respect to the Japanese Ministry of Education (Monbusho) and its campaign to dismiss foreign faculty at national universities (D. Normile, "Universities yank welcome mat for longtime foreign faculty," 7 July, p. 26), several points should be added.

1) In September an advisory committee to Monbusho recommended the elimination of tenure for all faculty at national universities. The fate of this proposal is not yet certain, but it would seem to give the lie to Monbusho's statement that they are not trying to save money by dismissing higher-paid, older instructors. (There are, though, other possible motives, as suggested in an internal memo circulated at one national university—to keep foreigners from exerting influence on policy and to avoid odious comparisons with the often higher productivity of foreign faculty.)

2) These are neither layoffs nor dismissals with cause; instructors whose qualifications are not in question, and who when hired were given no reason to expect non-renewal of their contracts (indeed, were often explicitly assured this would never happen), are being replaced by younger instructors. This is firing without cause, despite the fact that Japanese labor law imposes a burden of proof on the employer to show why a contract that has been renewed should not be renewed again.

3) However strong the legal position of the victims of Monbusho's policy, legal action, especially against the state, is highly unlikely to prove of much use in a country

where lawsuits routinely take 10 or more years, only to be resolved in favor of the state. However, Monbusho and the universities are sensitive to criticism from overseas peers and vulnerable to the glare of publicity. (One instructor who has been active in fighting her university's plans to dismiss her has already been offered her job back, on condition that she keep quiet.) Thus I urge readers to write in protest to the Minister of Education, Yoshinobu Shimamura, Ministry of Education, 3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100, Japan.

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Biopolymer Sequence Availability

In his article "On-line archives let biologists interrogate the genome" (*Computers '95: News*, 8 Sept., p. 1356), M. Mitchell Waldrop lists the major sequence archives—GenBank, the Genome Sequence Database, the DNA Data Bank of Japan (DDBJ), and the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL) database.

Readers should be aware that there are many biopolymer sequences that have never been registered with GenBank, EMBL, or DDBJ. These include sequences from patent records and shorter novel peptide and nucleotide sequences, such as primers, probes, binding sites, and promoter regulatory elements. The CAS Registry file on the Scientific and Technical Information Network (STN), offered by Chemical Abstracts Service (CAS), includes these sequences in addition to the data found in GenBank.

The value of the sequence data available on STN is further enhanced because the Registry file provides complete annotation and useful links to the 190 other STN files and services, such as CAS's CAPLUS; MARPAT, a Markush structure database; and CASREACT, a reaction search service.

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Russian Mathematics

The Random Samples item about the current reorganization of the Euler International Mathematical Institute (EIMI) in St.