The permanent presence of noninfectious but rescuable Rous sarcoma virus (RSV) genome in all in vivo or in vitro passed Xc cell lines or clones, in the absence of any signs of infectious virus formation, led to the conclusion that Xc cells are virogenic and harbor RSV provirus. It was proposed and later proven that the virus rescue from Xc cells was based on fusion of these nonpermissive virogenic mammalian cells with permissive chicken cells. [The SC] Indicates that this paper has been cited in more than 35 publications.

Oncogenic ProviRNA Integration and Rescue

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As a research fellow of the Institute of Experimental Biology and Genetics directed by Milan Halák I proceeded with my studies of the rat Xc tumor, harboring the chicken Rous sarcoma virus (RSV) genome. From the standpoint of outside observers, this model gave an impression of an experimental artifact and, not surprisingly, aroused little interest at the institute. I remember the director’s repeated comments: What else can you do with that and when are you going to stop? If I argued that the viral genome in Xc cells should be responsible for the genetic change that transformed a fibroblast into a tumor cell, and therefore elucidation of the nature of the viral genome in Xc cells might provide information about the mechanism of this change. This argument worked because of broadmindedness and a sense for new approaches to experimental genetics, characteristic features of Halák’s creative mind.

At this oncology conference in Bratislava, I attracted the attention of Dušan Simkovic and Viliam Thurzo, director, Cancer Research Institute. We set up a real collaboration that included, on my side, overnight trips to Prague to Bratislava and transportation of even a director, repeated comments: What else can you do with that and when are you going to stop? If I argued that the viral genome in Xc cells should be responsible for the genetic change that transformed a fibroblast into a tumor cell, and therefore elucidation of the nature of the viral genome in Xc cells might provide information about the mechanism of this change. This argument worked because of broadmindedness and a sense for new approaches to experimental genetics, characteristic features of Halák’s creative mind.

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