

PREFACE

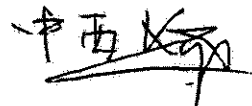
Before joining Columbia University in 1969, I spent six fruitful years at Tohoku University, Sendai, and shared many activities, including frequent drinks at bars with friends, one of the closest being Tetsuji Kametani (1917-1988). His activities were legendary, and it was not unusual to see two secretaries both typing papers after 5 pm on Saturday afternoons in those pre-computer years, culminating in his 1201 papers.

On this wonderful occasion of the publication of HETEROCYCLES 50, I am strongly impressed with the insight of TK who launched this new journal in the early 1970's. I remember the dinner with his family in a Japanese restaurant in New York where he showed me and my wife the prototype of the journal's current black and white cover designed by his architect son Koichi. Despite the ever-increasing number of new journals, HETEROCYCLES has now developed into a major journal which is fulfilling a seminal role in synthetic organic and natural products chemistry, especially in heterocycles. Besides the reviews and research articles published in the Journal, its unique aspects are the special memorial / birthday volumes and the compiled tables listing the structures and bioactivities of all natural products published in various journal.

Being a natural products and bioorganic chemist, I sometimes wonder what heterocyclic chemistry means. Heterocycles comprise lactones, lactams, alkaloids, carbohydrates, nucleic acids, porphyrins, essential amino acids, antibiotics, etc.; furthermore, the active site of many receptors contain heteroaromatic amino acids as their key moieties. There is no doubt that heterocycles play a central role in most bioactive molecules and in their manifestation of bioactivity. The introduction of combinatorial synthetic and biosynthetic protocols, particularly in the pharmaceutical and agrochemical industry, is bound to give rise to a further explosive increase in the number of biologically and theoretically exciting heterocyclic molecules.

It is about time that the organization of organic textbooks be changed so that chapters dealing with heterocyclic chemistry are not placed at the end, almost as an addendum. The omnipresent and extremely heterogenous heterocycles are bound to increase their significance in all branches of chemistry and biochemistry as well as in our lives.

We extend our gratitude to Professor Keiichiro Fukumoto, the successor of TK, and the editorial staff who continue to spread the influence of the journal as well as heterocyclic chemistry, so that we now celebrate HETEROCYCLES 50, the brain-child of Tetsuji Kametani's inspiration.



Koji Nakanishi
Centennial Professor of Chemistry
Columbia University, U. S. A.