

OBITUARY

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## Obituary: Dr. Kiyowo Aoshima (1924–2004)

Although we were aware of Dr. Aoshima's serious illness for several years, we were all shocked and saddened to learn of his death. Dr. Kiyowo Aoshima, a former president of the Mycological Society of Japan (1981–1985), died on September 27, 2004, at the age of 80, in spite of intensive care by his wife at home as well as by doctors in several hospitals.

Dr. Aoshima was born on September 4, 1924, in Shizuoka. He studied in the First High School, followed by the Department of Agriculture, Tokyo Imperial University. After graduation, and an additional 2 years as a research fellow in the University, he accepted a position in the Forest Pathology Section, Forest Protection Division, Government Forest Experiment Station, a position he retained until his retirement. His major interests as a scientist were in the physiology, ecology, and taxonomy of wood decay fungi. His research had always played a central role in his life, but he also gave lectures on mycology as a part-time member of the Department of Agriculture, University of Tokyo, for 18 years. We all know that Dr. Aoshima's attitude toward science was strict and exact. He was a good teacher, as well, and gave valuable suggestions and all possible help to those who responded to his criticism or tried to understand his opinions.

The last official position held by Dr. Aoshima was as Chief of the Forest Pathology and Mycology Division, Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. Up to that time, he had been nominated or elected a member of various committees, and served as a lecturer, an examiner, or a judge in many departments of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries. He had also been a research advisor at the Tottori Mycological Institute.

Dr. Aoshima retired in 1985. His mycological research, however, did not cease. Dr. Aoshima continued his work in the former institute, as before, but on a part-time basis. He also extended his studies to the National Science Museum as a guest research fellow. In 1986, he traveled to New Zealand and Tasmania to study their mycobiotas. In 1990, he traveled to Thailand to instruct in forest protection as a part of the afforestation project. Three years later, he traveled to New Caledonia to study fungi there. Before becom-



ing ill, he traveled every year, as before, all over Japan, from Hokkaido to Okinawa.

In September 1961, Dr. Aoshima began a 1-year fellowship at the U.S. National Fungal Collections, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Beltsville, MD, devoting this time to studies of wood decay fungi. It was an epoch marked by the successful purification of phytochrome in the nearby Institute of Botany, and Dr. Aoshima told me that the staff were very excited at the Institute. He next traveled to Canada and spent 4 months in the Biosystematics Research Institute in Ottawa. During his time in the United States and Canada, Dr. Aoshima carefully studied many type specimens of higher fungi; he concluded that numerous species were identified incorrectly in Japan. He was so badly disappointed by this that he lost nearly all motivation to study mycology further. However, considering the future progress of mycology in Japan, his strong sense of responsibility did not permit taking such an easy way out. He continued his studies in Japan and, in 1979, he was sent by the Japanese government to the Philippines and Malaysia to teach mycology and study the mycota as a part of a large silviculture project on tropical forests.

The Mycological Society of Japan is still young, but this year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Society and a joint meeting is planned with the Mycological Society of America. Our society was founded by a small private group interested in studying and discussing mycological topics.

From the very first, Dr. Aoshima was one of the most active members of the group who devoted their energies to founding the Society. Now the Mycological Society of Japan has 1500 members and three district branches. Mycological research and studies of every aspect of mycology, including pure science and the influence of fungi on our daily lives, are carried out everywhere in Japan. Many of these mycological activities of the Society members were greatly influenced by Dr. Aoshima, officially as well as privately.

In addition to the annual meeting of the Society, an official annual foray has been held once yearly by the Mycological Society of Japan. The participants include many professional mycologists with distinct specialties, but also many students and also some amateurs participate. After collecting the mushrooms and other specimens, there is time for identifying the collections, an activity in which Dr. Aoshima always played a leading role. He was a very kind and helpful teacher to all participants equally, thus giving us all an opportunity to learn the fungal species and mycota. As well, I believe that younger mycologists learned important lessons from his teaching methods, and that this would assist them in giving instruction and guidance to coming generations of mycology students.

As already stated, Dr. Aoshima was an active member of the Society to the last. From 1962 to 1978, he was one of the editors of *Mycoscience* (formerly *Transactions of the Mycological Society of Japan*); from 1974 to 1988, he was one of the trustees and councilors, and he was elected President of the Society in 1981. Dr. Aoshima was made an honorary member of the Society in 1996. We should also remember his contributions to the International Mycological Congress held in Tokyo in 1983. Dr. Aoshima chaired the Program Committee, and his wide knowledge of mycology and mycologists contributed heavily to the success of the Congress.

As noted above, Dr. Aoshima was one of the most active members of the Mycological Society of Japan. He was also a member of related societies, including the Phytopatho-

logical Society of Japan, the Japanese Forestry Society, and the Japan Wood Research Society, and he certainly exerted a great influence in these societies. I have never known another research worker who retained all his scientific activities even after retirement.

Finally, I want to take this opportunity to describe my own personal experience with Dr. Aoshima and to express my sincere gratitude. This happened at a very early phase of my study of mycology, that is, when Dr. Shiroya, then assistant of the Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, University of Tokyo, who had been in Beltsville at the same time as Dr. Aoshima, took me to Dr. Aoshima's laboratory and introduced me because I had just started working with fungi. Some months later, I visited Dr. Aoshima and showed him the draft of a paper in which I recorded an as yet undiscovered amino acid in nature (from three species of *Morchella*). After a glance, Dr. Aoshima asked me who had identified the fungal materials. I answered honestly. He then told me that those were not experts for this group of fungi. You must always consult with top experts for the corresponding fungal taxa, he said. His tone was gentle, but the message was clear and strong. I had to wait until the next spring and collect the three kinds of fungal specimens from the same locality. At Dr. Aoshima's suggestion, I visited Dr. Yosio Kobayasi in the National Science Museum and showed him the newly collected specimens. He studied the specimens carefully, so it took some time, but the conclusions were the same. However, his verification of the identifications, which we had made based on limited knowledge and a small number of illustrations in Japanese books, was very important to us. Thanks to Dr. Aoshima, I could then send my manuscript to the Editor-in-Chief of *Phytochemistry*. From Dr. Aoshima, I learned much from his criticism followed by kindness. After that time, he recommended me for financial research support, which helped my research for 20 years.

May Dr. Aoshima rest in peace.