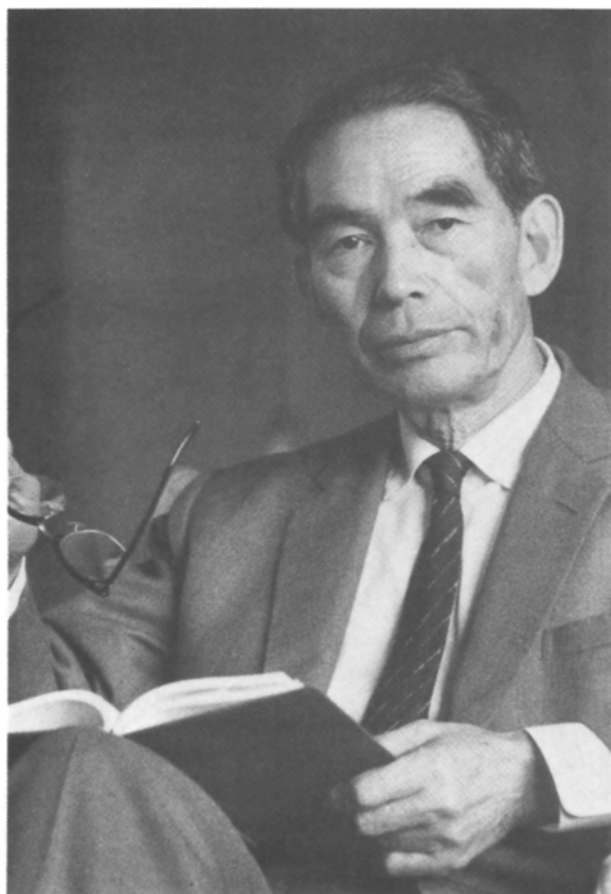


## In memoriam



*Hitoshi Kihara*

Professor Emeritus, Dr. Hitoshi Kihara passed away on 27th July, 1986. An extraordinary scientific career, both in its quality and length, has ended. Throughout the world he was recognized as a nestor in genetics and his honorable titles were manifold. It is difficult to guess how many scientists in botany have met him and feel a personal loss with the death of this gifted scientist.

There are, indeed, few who have both the opportunity and the capability of devoting seventy years of their life to science. The young Hitoshi Kihara graduated from Hokkaido Uni-

versity in 1918. At about the same time, his life interest became fixed: Tetsu Sakamura, who simultaneously with, but independently of Karl Sax discovered the ploidy evolution of wheat, offered Kihara the position of his successor. As teacher in genetics at the Botany Department of the Faculty of Science at Kyoto University since 1920, Kihara was able to develop his wheat research programme. After two years of studies abroad, predominantly at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institut für Biologie in Berlin-Darlem under Professor Carl Correns, he returned to a chair in genetics at the Agricultural Department at Kyoto University. After twenty-eight active years (1927–1955) in Kyoto, he was asked to take the post as director of the National Institute of Genetics in Mishima. In 1969 he retired, stayed on the staff for another year but devoted most of his time to his more personal institute, the Kihara Institute for Biological Research. It was founded in his honour in 1943 at Mozume outside Kyoto. When he left Kyoto, he moved the institute to Mutsukawa not far from Yokohama. It was from there the mournful tidings of his death were sent.

Step by step, but always in the front line, Kihara revealed more and more of the secrets in wheat evolution from genome to plasmon interrelationships. His findings and conclusions have proved to be as important to theory as to practice. He inspired numerous wheat researchers at home and abroad. He took the initiative in founding the International Wheat Genetics Symposia which have been starting points for a worldwide cooperation in wheat research.

Although wheat remained his favoured research object all his life, his energy and scientific creativity extended to other crop plants as well. As a true Japanese he could not disregard rice, especially since it shows obvious genetic parallels to wheat. He acted as a member of the board of trustees of the International Rice Research Institute during its first dramatic progress. Already in 1939 he had started his successful work on triploid, seedless watermelons, just to mention another contribution.

For scientists it is perhaps less known that Hitoshi Kihara served twice as leader of the Japanese team at the Olympic Winter Games, at Squaw Valley in 1960 and at Innsbruck in 1964. As a student at Hokkaido University at Sapporo he became an avid skier and winter mountaineer. With this background it is easier to appreciate him as the leader of a most challenging expedition in 1955 through Karakoram and Hindukush into Afghanistan and Iran. It allowed him to combine physical hardship with in situ studies and collection of wheat and *Aegilops*. As one of the discoverers of *Ae. squarrosa* as the donor to the third wheat genome, he could now with his own eyes see it growing as a weed in the wheat fields.

A great man, in his humbleness and devotion to science an example for several generations of young researchers, has left us. But the memories of his personality and his achievements will never die.

James MacKey, Uppsala