

Koichi Hiwatashi (1921-2009)



It is with great sadness that we inform our readers that Prof. K. Hiwatashi, one of the World's most prominent protozoologists, passed away on 7th March, 2009. Having been ill for a number of years, all those in contact with our Japanese colleagues will have already known that this day was approaching. However, despite his health problems and being aged 88, Koichi Hiwatashi's passing still struck me as sudden and unexpected. For me, it seemed that Professor Ko would always be with us.

Hiwatashi was born in Sendai, Japan on 11th February 1921, a time when Japan remained still quite separate from the rest of the World. However, whilst Hiwatashi's life was that of a true Japanese person, it was also at the same time a good example of the life of a worldly man.

He received his Bachelor (1944) as well as Doctor of Science (1956) degrees at Tohoku University and then spent 8 years in the same university as an Assistant Professor. He then developed his knowledge of fundamental protozoology at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, USA whilst there

as a visiting scholar in 1961-62. From the USA, he returned to Japan as a professor of the School of Education, Tohoku University, Sendai (1962-64) before becoming a professor at the Research Institute for Science Education at Miyagi College of Education from 1965 to 1968. Up until 1984 K. Hiwatashi was a professor of the Biological Institute of Tohoku University, Sendai where he became Professor Emeritus of Tohoku University. He then spent one year in Europe as a Visiting Professor at the University of Münster, Münster, Germany (1985). Prof. Hiwatashi also had connections with East China Normal University, Shanghai, China; Harbin Normal University, Harbin, China (Honorary Professor) and was a professor at Senshu University of Ishinomaki, Ishinomaki, Japan (1989-1995). In 1998 Prof. Hiwatashi was elected to the Japan Academy.

Academic awards: The Zoological Society Prize awarded by The Zoological Society of Japan (1971) and the Eduard-Reichenow Medal awarded by The Germany Society of Protozoology (1993). In addition to these awards, the numerous International conferences and congresses to which Prof. Hiwatashi was invited indicate that his protozoological investigations were well accepted by the scientific community.

What is, however, probably more important for the future is that Prof. Hiwatashi was always well liked by his students to whom he transmitted his passion for research. Consequently, the majority of his former students are now professors in leading Japanese universities.

In 1996 and 1998 I was fortunate enough to spend a couple of weeks together with Professor Ko in the pleasant surroundings, native to me, of the Marine Biological Station of St. Petersburg State University. It was a remarkable time in the White Sea Keret'-archipelago when we had the opportunity to communicate with each other during our long excursions into nature and the informal, simple parties we made at the station. It was here that I got the impression of Hiwatashi as a very interesting person and intelligent man. He had a poetic soul;

everything he did, he did with spirit and it is this that remains in my memory.

It is my belief that our memories of Prof. Hiwatashi will remain with us for many years to come

Sergei Fokin, St. Petersburg, Russia

since the large and active Japanese Society of Protozoology he created is a community of people who love him, just as many other colleagues around the World also do.