

THE HISTORY
OF
OPHTHALMOLOGY
IN
JAPAN

BY

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With the collaboration of

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This is the group photo of the co-authors at the final meeting on 14th September.
Front row from the left: Yamanouchi Uichi, Mishima Saiichi, Majima Akio, Nonaka Kyoichiro,
Back row from the left: Nakaizumi Yukifumi, Okuzawa Yasumasa, Chiba Yakoh

Preface

The Japanese Ophthalmological Society celebrated its Centennial in 1996 and published a seven-volume book, *Nihon ganka no rekishi* (A History of Ophthalmology in Japan), to commemorate the festivity. Although it is the most comprehensive history of Japanese ophthalmology ever written, the language barrier has prevented access of the world to this book. J-P Wayenborgh felt it to be a great regret and encouraged me to translate the book into English. However, the history published by the Society covers only the modern era since the late eighteenth century, and it is too voluminous to translate. Therefore, we decided to write an entirely new book on the history of ophthalmology in Japan that covers from the ancient to the present times. Several fortunate circumstances supported us in realizing this decision; otherwise, the present work would not have been possible.

Firstly, we have very rich inheritance from the pioneers of the history of Japanese medicine: Fujikawa Yu (1865-1940) explored ancient documents and wrote the first systematic book of *Nihon igakushi* (The History of Medicine in Japan) in 1904. He also wrote *Nihon ganka ryakushi* (Concise History of Ophthalmology in Japan) as early as in 1899. His formidable collections are now at the Kyoto University Library, with a complete catalog, and we can have easy access to this historical treasure. Ogawa Kenzaburo (1871-1933) compiled an enormous amount of historical documents, legends and materials of ophthalmology, and wrote *Kohon nihon gankashi* (History of Ophthalmology in Japan) in 1907. His collections were published in his *Jikken ganka zasshi* (Journal of Experimental Ophthalmology) and were thus easily accessible to us. In Japanese ophthalmology, we are very fortunate to have several historians such as Komoto Jujiro (1859-1938), Ohnishi Yoshiakira (1865-1932), Oguchi Chuta (1875-1945), and Shoji Yoshiharu (1889-1981), who left us many historical articles. We should be grateful to Komoto Jujiro, who brought the famous Hirschberg Collections to the University of Tokyo. After World War II, Uyama Yasuo (1895-1981) published a monumental book *Waga ginkai no paionia* (Pioneers of Our Silver Sea) (silver sea = ophthalmology), which contained the biographies of 561 ophthalmologists and the genealogies of nineteen ophthalmology families. Fukushima Giichi (1910-1997) devoted himself to the history of ophthalmology in Japan: he wrote many articles on ancient history and a systematic book *Nihon gankashi* (History of Ophthalmology in Japan) in 1954. Yamaga Isamu (1905-1987) compiled records of many ophthalmologists and schools in the modern era. Nakaizumi Yukimasa (1897-1978) made extensive collections of ancient and medieval books of medicine from China, India and Japan, and founded Kenikai Library Inc. where many precious classical books, documents, and *hidensho* (confidential teaching texts) are maintained in order. Chiba Yataro (1891-1947), a sixth-generation ophthalmologist, donated the great collections of his family inheritance to Chiba University, where Ito Yaeji (1891-1958) and Suzuki Yoshitami (1909-1987) were very enthusiastic historians and completed the present Chiba University Collections. After many years of endeavor, Ito translated *Susruta Samhita* into Japanese.

Secondly, we are greatly indebted to two professors of the history of medicine, Sakai Shizu of Juntendo University and Wolfgang Michel of Kyushu University, and to James C. Baxter of the International Research Center for Japanese Studies in Kyoto. They gave us sincere guidance and offered generous support. Sugitatsu Yoshikazu uncovered the process of inheritance of *Ishinpo*, the first book of medicine in Japan, after many years of hard work. He kindly made all the results of his work available to us. Johan Cederlund of Uppsala University kindly sent the portrait of C.P. Thunberg from the art collections there. Por. T. Hung of National Taiwan University helped us read Chinese medical classics and translated the text of Nagarjuna's cataract surgery. Komatsu Katsuko of Toyama Medical and Pharmaceutical University helped us identify drugs that appeared in medieval *hidensho*. Sekiguchi Yukihiro of Japan Behringer-Ingelheim provided us with many portrait pictures of medical practitioners of the Kamakura and

Edo eras. Shirayama Sekiya kindly allowed us to use his precious historical collections. Many suggestions of Nakajima Akira, the Life President of the International Council of Ophthalmology, have been valuable.

Thirdly, we have benefited from competent and keen collaborators. Chiba Yakoh is an eighth-generation ophthalmologist and grandson of Yataro; he maintains the historical museum of the family inheritance. Through him we were able to reach all the classical ophthalmology books and *hidensho* of Chiba University. Nakaizumi Yukifumi, the son of Yukimasa, is the head of Kenikai Library. The great collections of rare historical books and materials of Kenikai Library were at hand whenever we needed them. Nonaka Kyoichiro is of the sixth generation of an ophthalmology family, and he maintains a beautiful museum of ophthalmology books and instruments of medieval times. Majima Akio is of the thirty-seventh generation of the Majima family, and we have thus had access to Majima documents and instruments. Okuzawa Yasumasa is an expert historian who has accessed all of the medical libraries and museums in Japan. With his personal collections of old instruments, documents, and *hidensho*, he provided ample materials for historical description. Yamanouchi Uichi is a graduate of Nagasaki University and is an expert in the history of Nagasaki. With these six collaborators, we felt confident we could assemble the necessary collections of historical materials in Japan and conduct a good survey. Saito Toshio of Kenikai Library provided great help in our undertaking. Obara Kenji of Tokyo Kosei-Nenkin Hospital and Komuro Yuichi of Tokyo University offered their expertise in preparing photographs. The Japanese Ophthalmological Society permitted us to use all the materials in the Commemorative Publication of the Centennial.

Finally, Elaine Baxter took painstaking effort in linguistic editing and correcting of this book. We are very much obliged to her who made the book more easily readable for everybody. We are also very grateful to many other people who extended their assistance during the course of writing this book. For romanization of the Japanese language, *Monumenta Nipponica* recommends the modified Hepburn style, in which macrons are used to express elongated vowels, mostly o and u. However, we found much trouble in printing the macrons and decided to eliminate this symbol. Otherwise, the text follows the rules set by the *Monumenta*.

We hope that this book opens the door to the Japanese history, not only of ophthalmology, but also of medicine, for the people of the world.

August 13, 2003

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Foreword

Professor Mishima has worked long and hard to produce a book that is packed tight with details; but it is also a fascinating narrative. He starts with a quick summary of Japanese history across the centuries so that English speaking readers will have a feel for what was happening during those same years on the other side of the world.

Western ophthalmologists with an interest in the history of their specialty have a definite inclination towards Europe. If asked about the state of ophthalmic knowledge in the 16th century we tend to think of Bartisch. This is natural enough because the story of Asian ophthalmology has not been readily available to us in a European language.

This volume in English is not only a history of Japanese ophthalmology; it also paints, in broad strokes, the progress of Japanese medicine. In addition, it offers us a bird's eye view of the history of Japan; both in the introduction and in the further glimpses of the evolving social setting that are presented at the beginning of each chapter. The arrival of this careful and astonishingly detailed piece of work in an English translation is an important landmark. It will, I think, be of more value – on both sides of the ocean – than any of us might at first guess. It is a bridge from East to West that I hope will be well traveled in both directions.

A history of Japanese ophthalmology has been available in Japanese for some time, and Prof. Mishima also had a hand in that multi-authored work, but because I lack the language skills, I cannot gain from these volumes any sense of the sweep of Japanese history or any feel for how the growth of Japanese ophthalmic knowledge and skills fit into the worldwide advance of ophthalmic knowledge.

This new book will not only provide the reader with a good place to look for names and dates, but reading the story will also generate a growing respect for Japanese culture and for the enterprise and expertise that led to the many Japanese contributions to modern ophthalmology.

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