

## TO Dr SHIGERU OBANA ON HIS 70th BIRTHDAY

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A short biography and appreciation of the odonatological work of S. OBANA (born 1914; medical practitioner in Japan) are followed by his odonatological bibliography (1965-1984). Most of his work is devoted to faunistics and breeding of larvae of the Japanese Odonata. Of particular importance are also his studies on the genetics and evolution of the *Mnais pruinosa* complex.

*I am honoured to write this short appreciation of Dr S. Obana on the occasion of his 70th birthday. He is a medical practitioner and an amateur odonatologist, but his odonatological works are of outstanding standard and most of his Japanese colleagues have been much influenced by him.*

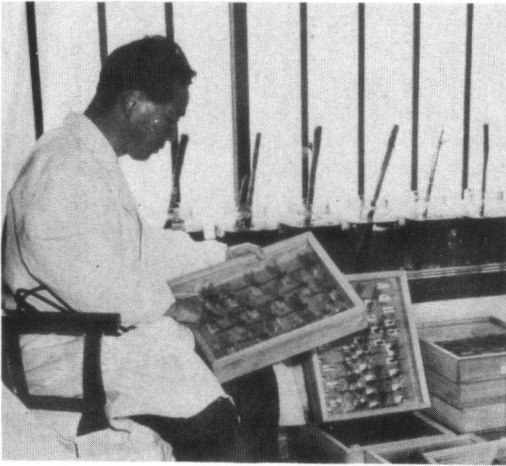
*SHIGERU OBANA was born June 28, 1914 in a mountain village, Amami-mura (now Kawachi-nagano City), Osaka prefecture. In his very early days, he used to amuse himself with "living toys"... beetles and cicadas which were seen abundantly in his garden. He graduated from Kyoto Prefectural Medical University in 1939. In 1940, he was drafted into the army as a medical officer in Manchuria, where he happened to meet Dr S. ASAHINA, who was engaged in the parasite survey as a member of the Civil Service, though both were not acquainted at that time and the fact was revealed not until some thirty years later. Shigeru was back to Japan for a short while in 1944, and married HISAKO MIMINO. But soon he had to return to the wounded and injured of the*



*battlefield, leaving his wife at home*

*The next year marked the end of World War II and Shigeru Obana became engaged in private practice at Amami, whereupon he settled down at his present home in Sakai City. He took up his medical study again, and proved experimentally that the lymphocyte plays the main role in immunity, which investigation was an epoch-making landmark at that time, and he received his PhD degree in 1956. He has served on many official chairs such as the President of the School Doctor Association of Osaka Prefecture, Director of the School Doctor Association of Japan, etc.*

*As an odontologist, he is a late beginner. When he had established his way of life as a medical practitioner, his curiosity came "home" to insects and he started collecting butterflies, bees, dragonflies, etc., reviving his old memories of*



**Fig. 2.** Dr S. Obana, with his collection and dragonfly breeding jars.

*boyhood. But soon he noticed that Japanese butterflies had been well studied already, while dragonflies left much to be investigated. Thus he started odontological work in 1960. He visited the late Mr I. HIURA at the Osaka Museum of Natural History, and got acquainted with K. INOUE, Mr T. KIMURA, Dr S. TSUDA and the late Mr K. HIROSE, all of whom together founded the Kansai Research Group of Odonatology in 1962. At first, he devoted himself mainly to faunistical surveys, and discovered new localities of *Oligoaeschna pryleri* (1965e),*

*Sympetrum striolatum imitoides* (1967a), *Davidius moiwanus taruii* (1967g), *Aeshna juncea* (1969e, 1969f), *Platycnemis echigoana* (1969g), *Mortonagrion hirosei* (1972d), etc. But after the death of Mr K. Hirose, who was the best researcher of odonate larvae in the Kinki district, Obana started to breed larvae by himself. At that time, to breed odonate larvae seemed to be one of the most difficult things, but he invented the "Riccia method" (1965b, 1967j, 1968c, 1968d, 1972a, 1979a) by which he succeeded to bring many larvae of 63 Japanese odonate species from oviposition to emergence (1966a, 1967c, 1967e, 1968a, 1972c, 1975e, 1976b, 1977, 1978, 1982a, etc.). The bay window of his consulting room is always occupied by aquaria containing many species of odonate larvae.

*Through such efforts he was the first to have seen the final instar larvae of Somatochlora japonica and Leucorrhinia intermedia ijimai (1975e), Anaciaeschna jaspidea, Lyriothemis elegantissima, L. tricolor, Agrionoptera i. insignis and Tramea transmarina yayeyamana (1977) and Somatochlora g. graeseri (unpublished). He prepared series of larvae and exuviae of every instar for certain species, but he gave them generously to some researchers who needed them.*

*His main interest in later years, however, seems to have been concerned with the polymorphism of the Japanese Mnais. The Japanese Islands are inhabited by a single endemic species, M. pruinosa, subdivided into three subspecies. Each subspecies has several "forms" with distinct wing colours and/or metathoracic poststernum coloration. Obana has repeated field observations of every combination of these forms from Hokkaido to Kyushu, and has constructed working hypotheses on the evolution and the formation of each local fauna of today (1979d, 1980b, 1982b, 1983a, 1984b, 1984d). For their wealth of field evidence, and for their thorough biogeographic and genetic considerations, these papers are greatly appreciated among the dragonfly students.*



Fig. 3. A smile during a field trip in the Hachigamine Hills, Osaka Prefecture, August 2, 1980. (Photo M. Kiauta).

*Dr Obana is one of the most senior members of the Kansai Research Group of Odonatology and has guided many younger colleagues in the phases of human life. He devoted great efforts and attention to field surveys and discussions with colleagues. Thus the character of the Group has been established to be a "Co-working enthusiastic group". In 1973 he donated his collection (of more than 10,000 specimens) to the Osaka Museum of Natural History. He is a member of the Society of Odonatology, Tokyo as well as of Societas Internationalis*

*Odonatologica* (S.I.O.). His activity extended to the mass media, resulting in a broadcast on NHK TV under the title of "Emergence of dragonflies" (1970), six newspaper accounts in Yomiuri (May 22, 1979; June 24, 1979; July 8, 1979; April 23, 1980; Feb. 5, 1981) and in Asahi (April 23, 1980). His hospitality is proverbial among the overseas odonatologists visiting Japan, not the least for his most rewarding field trips, and for his most interesting demonstrations of dragonfly breeding methods.



Fig. 4. At a Jizo sculpture, Mt Makio, Osaka Prefecture, August 2, 1980. From left to right: Dr G. Jurzitza, Mrs M. Kiauta, Dr S. Obana, Dr B. Kiauta, K. Inoue, T. Yamamoto and T. Miyazaki. (Photo K. Inoue).

*Shigeru Obana cultivated roses in his garden, some of which won the grand prize. He is good at the game of go, and is a fourth-grade go player. He was an excellent mountain climber in his student years, bringing many first ascend records in the Japan Alps on his name; even today he is a good walker. He suffered from duodenum ulcer and later from gastric ulcer, but he was not defeated and has recovered from them all, and is in perfectly good health now. Members of the Societas Internationalis Odonatologica and dragonfly workers world-wide offer Shigeru Obana their congratulations on the occasion of his 70th birthday, and all good wishes for many more years of good health and odonatological research.*

*Last but not least, he has a genial talent for the Japanese poem, tanka. I wish to close this short appreciation with the tanka I like best among his poems, which number more than a thousand:*

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|--|--|
| Tamakiharuru<br>inochi no hate ni<br>ware arite,<br>chiisaki mushi ni<br>nani o tazuneshi. | I am a human being<br>of the furthest descendant,<br>what am I seeking<br>from this tiny insect<br>of the furthest ancestor? |
|--|--|

[Free translation by K. Inoue]

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Portrait on p. 81 dated September 20, 1981