

## OBITUARY

### ICHIRO MATSUI

A short biography of I. Matsui (born Apr. 1, 1921, Nagoya, Japan; deceased Dec. 17, 1987, same place; amateur odonatologist, staff member of a construction company) and a brief evaluation of his odonatological work are followed by his odonatological bibliography (1951-1988). A portrait is also provided.



On December 17, 1987, Ichiro Matsui passed away suddenly at the age of 66, at a hospital near his home in Nagoya City. He had been one of the leading odonatologists in Japan, and his death is much deplored.

ICHIRO MATSUI was born in Higashi-ku, Nagoya, Aichi Prefecture, on April 1, 1921. Since his boyhood he was much interested in dragonflies. After graduation from the Aichi Prefectural Meirin Middle School in 1938, he worked with the Section of Commerce & Industry of the Aichi Prefectural Government. After World War II he became a member of the Communist Party of Japan, and served on a committee of the Eastern Region of the Party. On the occasion of the "Red Purge" he was purged in 1950, dismissed from government service, and experienced many difficulties in adjusting to a new way of life. The circumstances forced him to abandon his odonatological library, and it was only after a stretch of time that he succeeded in getting a position with a construction company.

His first dragonfly work appeared early in 1951 and dealt with the odonate fauna of the Nagoya area, with special reference to the ancient iconography, "*Seirei-fu*", by Jakusouan Yoshida. On December 19, 1956 he issued a "*Japanese*

*odonatological bibliography*", published by his "Tombo Dokokai" (= Dragonfly Lovers' Association), where the first part of his "Odonata" has also appeared on April 1, 1957.

The activities of "Tombo Dokokai" preceded those of the well known "Society of Odonatology, Tokyo", established by Dr S. Asahina in October, 1957. This was the first formal odonatological organisation in Japan and, most likely, in the world. Ichiro Matsui was an accomodating person and many fellow odonatologists gathered together around him, and the work of many of these was often much influenced by him. The Association changed its name to "Naka-nihon Tombo Danwakai" (= Central Japan Research Group of Odonatology). The "Kansai Tombo Danwakai" (= Kansai Research Group of Odonatology) was established in 1962, inspired by Matsui's group.

He joined the Society of Odonatology, Tokyo, became a member of the International Odonatological Society (S.I.O.) in 1972, and of the Kansai Research Group of Odonatology as well as of the Nagoya Society of Entomology. In all these organisations he worked devotedly for the societies and for the members.

Matsui conducted many survey trips and was a keen observer. The results of his work were published in numerous papers. Most of his time, though, he devoted to the accumulation of collection data of Japanese species, which are scattered in many, often not readily available local periodicals. His bibliographic works were published four times (1953c, 1956c & 1958a, 1970a & 1971a, 1974a, b & 1975a, with a supplement: 1977), and were followed by his 1976 distribution atlas characterised by Dr. S. ASAHINA (1988, *Napi News* 218: 1) as a pioneer work in this field.

In his early days, Ichiro caught a macromiid at Moriyama-cho, Aichi Prefecture (now Moriyama-ku in Nagoya City), which turned out to be a new species and was described in 1949 by TEIICHI OKUMURA (*Matsumushi* 3: 120-121) as *Macromia daimoji*. He also found a new gomphid, that was handed over to SYOZIRO ASAHINA, who described and named it in 1951 (*Kontyu* 19: 17) as *Gomphus* (now *Stylurus*) *nagoyanus*. With YUKIO YAMAMOTO he discovered the larva of *Trigomphus ogumai*, and it was his specimens that were used by Dr S. ASAHINA (1957, *Shin-Konchū* 10[4]: 56-62) in his study of the Japanese gomphid larvae.

Next to odonatology, Matsui was much interested in astronomy. In 1985 he visited the Okinawa Islands to see Halley's comet.

As from September, 1987 he seems to have been aware of his bad health. At the Annual Meeting of the Nagoya Society of Entomology, held on November 14 of that year, he looked haggard and some participants noticed that his face had turned yellowish owing to jaundice. On the 23rd of that month, he attended a conference relative to the publication of the book, "*Insects of Aichi Prefecture*", and mentioned casually to YASUO TAKASAKI that he was scheduled for surgery. The operation took place in the afternoon of December 16. It lasted

several hours — but Ichiro's weakened body could not endure it. He passed away at 3 AM in the morning of the next day. As it became known later, it was "common bile duct cancer" that was responsible for Ichiro's much too early departure from us.

Somebody called him "Tombo-sennin", which may be translated as "Dragonfly hermit" or "anchorite". Many fellow odonatologists have been attracted by his character, therefore Nagoya became an important centre of odonatology in Japan. Tombo-sennin is gone, but his spirit will remain in the hearts of all odonatologists who had the privilege to know him and to work with him.

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*Portrait on p. 215 taken by Masahito AIDA  
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