

Life and Times: Hakaru Hashimoto

by Dr. Kazuo Hashimoto

Dr. Kazuo Hashimoto is the third son of the renowned Dr. Hakura Hashimoto. Although he did not follow his famous father's pathway of endocrinology, he is, in his own right, a distinguished health sciences practitioner. He is Professor Emeritus of the Kanazawa University School of Medicine. Now retired, he and his wife live in the beautiful city of Nara. Like his father, he is a contemplative man, "a quiet and warm-hearted person" as we all discovered on our walking tour with him.

My father, Hakaru Hashimoto was born in the village of Iga, about 50 km east of Nara, the first permanent capital of Japan, in Mie Prefecture on May 5, 1881. He was the third son of Dr. Ken-nosuke Hashimoto and his wife Ryu. Hakaru's two elder brothers died young, but he later had one brother and five sisters. After finishing at the local primary school, he entered the first middle school of the Prefecture in Tsu City, the capital town. In 1900 Hakaru entered the Third National High School in Kyoto, one of the leading pre-university schools before 1945 when the education system was converted into the present one.

In 1903 he entered Fukuoka Medical College, which was newly established in Fukuoka City, the largest capital town in Kyushu. The college later became Kyushu University Faculty of Medicine. Professor H. Ohmori, the first president of the college, scouted ambitious students from high schools all over Japan, who were willing to become the foundation of the new college. Hakaru was chosen as one of them. After four years he graduated from the college as one of its first graduates. He then entered the First Department of Surgery to study under Professor Hayari Miyake who was also invited by Ohmori as one of the most young and promising scholars from Tokyo University. Miyake was not only an excellent surgeon but also a good teacher, well respected by his students. During the four-year training period, Miyake asked Hakaru to examine the pathological features of four unusual goiter cases.

While Hakaru was doing his research, his mother sometimes asked him to return home to succeed his father who had died when Hakaru was twenty years old. He was so keen, however, to continue his studies that he did not return home.

Unfortunately his mother became ill and died suddenly in 1911. Under the guidance of Miyake, Hakaru reported his new findings which he named "struma lymphomatosa" in *Archiv für Klinische Chirurgie* in 1912. His paper was accepted by the journal in the same year, and he left Japan for Göttingen in Germany to study with Professor Kaufman, Chairman of the Department of Pathology, Göttingen University. He worked on tuberculosis of the urinary tract there. After the outbreak of World War I in 1914 he left for London, studied there another year and then returned home.

In 1916, one year after coming back to Japan, he set up a surgical clinic in his own home. His clinic prospered and he worked very hard as a general practitioner as well as a surgeon. In 1920 Hakaru married Yoshiko Miyake, a teacher at the teacher training college in Mie Prefecture. They had one daughter and three sons; I am their third son. Sadly Hakaru became infected with typhoid fever in December 1933 when he was working hard against an epidemic in the district and died on 9 January, 1934 at the age of 52.

My father was a religious man and once was a leader of the students' Buddhist Association in college. He was a quiet and warm-hearted person, beloved by people around him. His pleasures were reading and going to see Kabuki plays. I am sure he would be thankful for all the people who have developed his findings and for the recent advances which we have witnessed in medical science, especially in thyroid research. ☛



Like father ...



...like son.