

## COMMEMORATING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF KATSUHIKO KONDO WITH THE 2024 ICPS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

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We are pleased to commemorate the life and work of Katsuhiko Kondo (Ja.: 近藤勝彦; b. 1944), professor of botany at Hiroshima University in Japan, as the recipient of the 2024 ICPS Lifetime Achievement Award. The ICPS Lifetime Achievement Award is presented in recognition of an individual's outstanding leadership and contribution to the world of carnivorous plants through research, cultivation, conservation, or in other ways deemed to be above and beyond the everyday with a significant impact on the field. Kondo has been monumental and formative in each of these ways at a global level, and his work has influenced research, cultivation, and popular knowledge. Kondo has helped to connect the global carnivorous plant community of scholars and enthusiasts alike since before this journal's inception in 1972.

Kondo has spent his entire life engrossed in the study of carnivorous plants. He made important scientific findings early-on studying the karyotypes of various carnivorous plant genera. From the 1980s into the early 2000s Kondo would continue to research the phylogenetics and systematic morphology of *Drosera*, *Pinguicula*, *Utricularia*, and *Aldrovanda*, a legacy of study continued by his students. Kondo pursued many other original research projects on carnivorous plants. He introduced to science and published several noteworthy new species, including taxa in the *Drosera petiolaris* complex and in *Nepenthes*.

In Japan, Kondo is also revered for his formative role in popularizing the carnivorous plant interest there by means of the books he authored with his father, Masahiro, in 1972 and 1983. These were nearly the first books in the world to address all known carnivorous plant genera for a general audience. They are popular outside Japan and are highly sought by enthusiasts even today.

Kondo would publish 12 technical papers in the CPN. His first article, Kondo 1972, was a brief English-language history of the Insectivorous Plant Society of Japan (IPSJ), the first modern organization devoted to carnivorous plants. Most of Kondo's CPN publications later would concern the phylogeny, physiology, and tissue-culture of *Drosera*, *Dionaea*, *Utricularia*, and *Aldrovanda*. This work has been continued and expanded upon by his students, including Yoshikazu Hoshi and Mitsuyasu Hasebe. They continue to pursue the same areas of study Kondo did in the 1970s.

Some of Kondo's career highlights include the following research and publications:

- His discovery of diffused-centromeric chromosomes in *Drosera*, which he researched while at Hiroshima University.



Figure 1: Katsuhiko Kondo – photographer unknown, reproduced from Allen Lowrie's Magnum Opus.

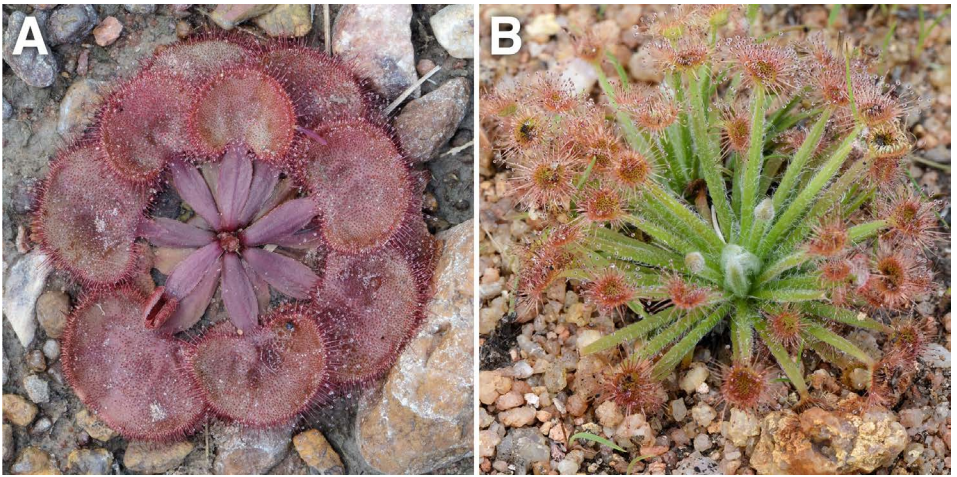


Figure 2: (A) *Drosera falconeri* K.Kondo 1984 near Darwin, NT, Australia. (B) *Drosera lanata* K.Kondo 1984 at Undarra, QLD, Australia. Photos by Richard Nunn.

- The interior of *Utricularia* seeds consists of an undifferentiated embryo, freely differentiating organs in response to their aquatic environment.
- As carnivorous plants prefer closed ecosystems with nutrient-poor soil, by purely adjusting nitrogen components their life history can be fully controlled.
- Kondo described the chromosome count for *Triphyophyllum* for the first time in 1973 (Phyton 31: 1-2) and continued to study *Utricularia*.

Kondo's short CV reads as follows:

Professor, Graduate School of Science. PhD. Born 1944. Graduated from the Tokyo University of Agriculture in 1968, and in 1975 completed a doctoral program in Botany at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the United States, attaining a PhD.

In March 1976, accepted a position as lecturer in the Biology Department at the University of Maryland, College Park, USA; in October of the same year, became a research associate in the Faculty of Integrated Arts and Science at Hiroshima University. In November of 1979, became a lecturer in the same faculty, and in April of 1980, was made an advisor for the Graduate School of Environmental Studies, also at Hiroshima University. Appointed associate professor within the same school in April of 1982, and, in April of 1988, appointed advisor for the Graduate School of Biosphere Science at Hiroshima University. In April of 1989, attained the role of professor within the Faculty of Science at Hiroshima, as well as those of advisor for the Graduate School of Science and director of the Laboratory of Plant Chromosome and Gene Stock within that faculty.

In 1993, served as a faculty advisor for the Department of Gene Science in the Graduate School of Science at Hiroshima University; and in 2000, served as advisor for the Department of Biological Science in the Graduate School of Science, also attaining the role of director at the Laboratory of Plant Chromosome and Gene Stock within the same school.

Developed a cryopreservation protocol for wild orchidaceous plants integrating abscisic acid and a desiccation process and modified it into a generalized technique, winning an

academic award from the Nagoya International Orchid Congress in 1997 and an honorable mention from the 7th Asia Pacific Orchid Conference in 2001.

In his own Hiroshima University autobiography, Kondo provides an account of his lifetime fascination with plants and in particular, carnivorous plants. It is an account that should be shared and that will no doubt resonate with those reading this award announcement.

Counting back to the time I put out my first paper, my research career has already spanned 35 years. Looking back on my experiences within that time, I am struck by the belief that all across the world, all those who pursue botany possess a certain universal character: “Many people enjoy playing golf, baseball, soccer and so on with their friends as time carries them along, but these plant-loving people spend that time being fascinated with plants. Since they're plant-lovers, plants are all they think about.”

There are two things which have made me so devoted to plants—or perhaps I should say, two encounters with plants that enthralled me so. The first was when I was a second-grader on summer break, and my father let me come along with him to collect plants on Mount Ibuki, which lies on the border of Gifu and Shiga prefectures. The fields of flowers we walked through at its peak were so incredibly striking and beautiful, I can still picture them to this day.

The second was when I was a fourth-grader; my father ordered from Yokohama some carnivorous plants called Venus flytraps, still a rarity among rarities at the time, and we began cultivating them. The flytrap is a plant with pairs of leaves like the halves of a clam shell that quickly spring shut to trap insects—practically every day, I'd have visitors coming over to observe these bizarrely un-plant-like moving plants. Of these, a couple became regular guests, and they even started bringing their parents along, who pestered my father to sell them some specimens—He found this quite annoying, but personally I was totally thrilled to have something people couldn't find anywhere else. For me, these two experiences were so remarkable that there was never any chance of me forgetting about them, or of even considering a different field.

By the time I was in sixth grade, I was already convinced that the only life for me was one of working with plants. I also chose to study botany in graduate school, choosing a location which included natural habitats for Venus flytraps. Though my specific area of research in graduate school was different, I was always going off to see these flytrap habitats. Working with my beloved plants, my studies never seemed all that demanding. I cannot say that as the years have gone by, my feelings toward plants have remained unchanged; rather, I've become more and more devoted to them as a topic of study.

The ICPS and carnivorous plant community congratulates Katsuhiko Kondo on his lifetime's work, which this award recognizes and commemorates. Botanical artist Francois Mey, commissioned by the ICPS to mark this occasion, has painted *Drosera falconeri*, an iconic species described by Kondo in 1984.

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Figure 3: Painting of *Drosera falconeri* K.Kondo 1984, watercolour on paper, Francois Mey.