Obituary — Professor Kei-ichiro Maeda

Dr. Kei-ichiro Maeda
(20th November, 1955—3rd February, 2018)

It is with great sadness to report that Professor Kei-ichiro Maeda (Kei), a long-time collaborator and partner, passed away at age of 62 on February 3rd, 2018. After visiting his mother in Kanazawa city, Professor Maeda suffered a sudden ruptured aortic aneurysm. He was immediately hospitalized and underwent surgery. Sadly though, he died the next morning from a failure of recovery of blood pressure. His untimely death was so sudden, it is hard for everyone who knows him to accept it.

Professor Maeda was an exceptional scientist and educator who made enormous important contributions during his time as faculty in both Nagoya University and the University of Tokyo. His most renowned contributions to the Japan Endocrine Society were as the Chair of the 35th JES Summer Seminar on Endocrinology & Metabolism in 2017 and as a member of editorial board of the Endocrine Journal from 2009–2018. Additionally, he organized several International/Domestic Scientific Meetings, including the 2nd World Conference on Kisspeptin in Tokyo in 2012, the 22nd Annual Meeting of the Japan Society of Reproductive Endocrinology in 2017. He contributed to reproductive science as head director of the Society for Reproduction and Development, the editor-in-chief of the Journal of Reproduction and Development, and as an administrative board member of Japan Neuroendocrine Society and Japan Society of Reproductive Endocrinology and others.

Professor Maeda was born on November 20th, 1955 in Kanazawa city, staying until his graduation from high school. He entered the University of Tokyo in 1975, and started his research career as a graduate student in a laboratory of the university farm of the University of Tokyo under the supervision of Professor Yasuhiko Kano. He engaged in research on the mechanism regulating seasonal breeding in goats and completed his Ph.D. in 1985. He then began to work as an Assistant Professor at the School of Agricultural Sciences of Nagoya University under Professor Akira Yokoyama in the laboratory of animal reproduction in 1985. Subsequently he was promoted to Lecturer, Associate Professor and Professor at the School of Bioagricultural Sciences of Nagoya University and then became a Professor in the International Center for Research and Education in Agriculture, Nagoya University. He then returned to the University of Tokyo as Professor in the Laboratory of Theriogenology, Department of Veterinary Medical Sciences (from where he graduated), in July 2012.

Professor Maeda made important contributions to our understanding of reproductive neuroendocrine functions in mammals. One of his most significant research highlights was the identification of the GnRH pulse generator in the hypothalamus and elucidation of the mechanism mediating energetic regulation of mammalian reproduction. After the discovery of kisspeptin (originally identified as metastin) in 2001, as an endogenous ligand for GPR54, he contributed enormously to clarifying the role of kisspeptin-GPR54 signaling, the key regulator of the hypothalamus-pituitary-gonadal axis in mammals, and he led the global scientific community in studies on kisspeptin and reproductive

neuroendocrinology. Besides his research activities, he also launched an overseas exchange program for undergraduate students at Nagoya University in 2007 to give students an opportunity to learn global viewpoints *via* mutual activities with students and faculties in other universities in Asian countries such as Cambodia and Thailand. After returning to the University of Tokyo, he continued collaborative research with Nagoya University, other research teams in the University of Tokyo and other countries. He then became the Dean of the department of Veterinary Medical Sciences in 2014, and fought to improve the education system and promoted research activities in the veterinary and agricultural sciences with his strong mind, vision and restless efforts. He believed that these efforts would give faculties and students important global viewpoints and ultimately help Japan and the world to combat future food problems. He also made great contributions to the education of many students from all over the world. His dream as a scientist in the field of animal reproduction was to make a peaceful world by providing sufficient food for everyone through knowledge. Sadly, his passing in the middle of his career leaves his great vision unfulfilled, so we should all make a concerted effort to continue carrying out his will and dreams.

Kei-ichiro Maeda was a person of true vision and strong will. He was always the opinion leader of our research team, and he had a strong sense of mission as a scientist as well as an educator in the field of agriculture and veterinary sciences. He collaborated with many world-renowned scientists and mentored numerous students and young researchers throughout his distinguished career. He was respected and loved by family, friends, colleagues and trainees at all levels and we miss him every moment of everyday. He will be remembered by all for his generous and respectful nature, his sense of humor and role as a leader and mentor in both science and in education.

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