OBITUARY NOTICE.

Baron Dairoku Kikuchi.

Born March 17th, 1855, 
died, August 19th, 1917.

Japan lost one of her greatest scholars and educationists in the death of Dr. Baron Dairoku Kikuchi, Privy Councillor, the President of the Imperial Academy, and the Honorary Professor of the Imperial University of Tokio and also of the Imperial University of Kiyoto.

His death which was sudden and quite unexpected occurred early on the morning of August nineteenth, nineteen hundred seventeen, at his sea-side villa at Chigasaki, and was due to a fatal stroke of apoplexy. He was in his sixty-third year.

His Majesty the Emperor was pleased to promote him to the Junior Second Court Rank and confer on him the Grand Cordon of the Rising Sun.

Baron’s body was brought to his Tokio residence, and the funeral service took place in accordance with Shinto rites on August 23rd at Aoyama Ritual Hall. His remains, after having been cremated, were interred on the next day at the family burial ground in the Yanaka Cemetery.

Baron Dairoku Kikuchi was born on March 17th 1855 in the residence compound of the Tsuyama clan at Kajibashi, Yedo (now Tokio). He is the second son of Shuhei Mitsukuri and a grandson of Gempo Mitsukuri. Both of them were noted scholars of the, at that time, so-called Western learning. Shuhei whose family name was originally Kikuchi, was adopted by Gempo as his heir. Dairoku succeeded to the house of Kikuchi made vacant by his father’s adoption into Mitsukuri family. He is an elder brother of late Dr. Kakichi Mitsukuri, an eminent zoologist and a great thinker of world-wide reputation.

As a boy, he gave signs of extreme precocity. When he was but nine years old, we find him already serving as a sort of assistant tutor at Kaiseijo, a school where bare rudiments of Western knowledge was taught and which is the protoplasmic nucleus of the present Tokio Imperial Univer-
sity. Where and how he received his early education, is told by himself in an extremely interesting posthumous article, which is to appear in the forthcoming number of the Tōyō-Gakugei-Zasshi, a monthly magazine devoted to the promotion of scientific knowledge, of which he is one of the originators and to which he was such a frequent contributor.

He was the youngest member of a batch of the most promising students sent to England by the old Shogunate Government in 1866. Among them are to be found Keigo Mitsukuri, his elder brother who died early from accident, Momosaburo Hayashi, later Count Tadasu Hayashi of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance fame, and Shoichi Toyama, later his colleague at the Tokio Imperial University, with whom he remained such an intimate and staunch friend till Toyama's premature death in 1900.

He returned home in 1868 and remained in Japan till 1870. During this interval he seems to have been engaged both in teaching and in being taught in the same school where he was previous to his going to England, and the name of which has now changed from Kaiseijo to Kaisei-Gakko. The sound knowledge of the French language which has done him such a valuable service in his after-life, seems to have had its origin in these days. Late in 1870, he was again ordered to go abroad to continue his studies in England.

In the University College, London, Calender, we find the following entry: "Kikuchi Dairoku Yasuyuki* matr. Jan. 1873: Univ. Col. scholar and Pr. T.; 3rd. in Honours, 3rd exhib. Inter. Art. 1874; St. John's Camb. 1st in 3rd class in Math.; B.A. 1875 St. John's Cambridge." He is one of the wranglers of the year 1877, among whom we find such illustrious names as McAlister, J. P. Smith, and C. A. Parson. In May of the same year he returned home and was appointed professor of mathematics in the same institution with which he has been associated since the days of his boyhood, and which has now developed itself into Tokio University. In 1881, he received the degree of M. A. from the University of Cambridge. In 1885, he was elected a corresponding member of the British Association for the Advancement of Science and in the following year a member of the London Mathematical Society. In 1888, the degree of Rūgakuhakushi (D. Sc.) was conferred on him in accordance with the University Degree Ordinance Art. III. Later on he received the honorary degree of LL. D. from the University of Glasgow, the University of Manchester and Rutgers College, New Brunswick, New Jersey, U. S. A.

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In 1883, he went to America as the Delegate to the International Prime Meridian and Universal Time Congress, held at Washington, and on his way home through Europe, he remained sometime in Germany and made a thorough study of the educational system and institutions in that country. In 1907, he and late Dr. Yasutsugu Shigeno represented the Imperial Academy at the Third General Meeting of the International Association of Academies, held at Vienna. In the same year, he gave courses of lectures on Japanese Education during the lent and summer terms at the University of London. The substance of these lectures was published in English by John Murray, Albermarle Street, London, W., in 1909. Of this work, it will be difficult to speak too highly. It is the first systematic and lucid, yet succinct, exposition of education in Japan, ever offered to the World at large and is unsurpassed by any thing which has hitherto appeared in print. The English translation of the Imperial Rescript on Education, with which these lectures open, will serve as a fit monument to his complete mastery of the language, into which it is rendered. In this connection it may be added that there is an article entitled “Education in Japan” in the Japan number of the London Times (July, 19, 1910) contributed by Baron Kikuchi. In the autumn of 1909, he went to America and gave an able address at the Civic Forum of New York.

Baron Kikuchi's career is a splendid list of a galaxy of presidencies and chairs of honourable posts. In this short notice, it will only be possible to give categorically a rough summary of the more important functions which follows: Professor of Mathematics at the University, later Imperial University, of Tokio, 1877–98; Dean of Science College in the same, 1881–93; President of the same, 1898–1901; President of Peers' School, 1904–5; President of the Imperial University of Kiyoto, 1908–12; Director of the Bureau of Special Education in the Department of Education, 1897; Vice-minister of Education under Minister (now Baron) Hamao, 1897–8; Minister of Education in the first Katsura Cabinet, 1901–3; member of the Imperial Academy since 1889; Secretary of the same, 1900–01 and 1905–6; President of the Second Section of the same, 1906–9; the President of the same since 1909 till his death, having been elected three times in succession. In March 1917, that is, only a few months prior to his death, he was made the Director of the newly established National Physico-Chemical Institute.

He served on numerous committees on scientific and educational matters, very often as an influential member and not seldom as chairman.
He was also in the Imperial Diet as a crown member in the House of Peers since 1890 till 1912, which function he resigned on the morrow of his having been made a Privy Councillor in accordance with the unwritten usage. The foundation of the Earthquake Investigation Committee, on which he served, though intermittently, as chairman, is due to his strenuous efforts while he was in the House of Peers. The movement known by the name of the Revision of the Educational System was started short time prior to the Baron’s acceptance of the portfolio of the Minister of Education, and has been raging ever since. Its avowed aim is the shortening of the number of years required in going through the trunk system of our educational organization. It is a question of such magnitude and complexity that it taxed the best efforts of our educationists and yet found no satisfactory solution. In one capacity or other, Baron Kikuchi played an important rôle in this controversy. Indeed he was one of the most important and influential figures in this movement and his sudden death at this juncture when the movement is going to take a new turn, is ever so much more to be regretted. He also served as juror of several national exhibitions.

In 1902, he was created a Baron in recognition of his invaluable services to the cause of education and in connection with the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance which took place while he was in the Cabinet.

Baron Kikuchi is one of the originators of the Tokio Mathematical Society which was founded in 1877. It is the pioneer of the very many learned societies which have since been called into existence in Japan. At his suggestion this was changed in 1884 into the present name, Tokio Mathematico-Physical Society. Several minor articles on mathematical subject written by him, are to be found scattered in the early volumes of the publication of this society.

His chief work as an investigator is exclusively confined to the critical examination of the mathematics of the Old Japanese School. Through all his busy life, he was ever ready to devote whatever time he could have been able to squeeze out to this fond subject of his. And it is much to be regretted that what most likely still remain stored in his mind has not hitherto appeared in print and thus lost for ever by his untimely death. His contributions in this direction which have already been published are as follows:

VII. pp. 24–26, 1895.
Various series for \( \pi \) obtained by the Old Japanese mathematicians.

A series for \( \pi^2 \) obtained by the Old Japanese mathematicians.

Ajima’s Method of finding the length of an arc of a circle.

Seki’s Method of finding the length of an arc of a circle. The same journal Vol. VIII. pp. 179–198, 1899.


His translation from Latin into English of Gauss’ classical paper on hypergeometric series, which appeared in Volume IV of the Proceedings of the Tokio Mathematico-Physical Society, together with his notes on the same to be found in the succeeding volume of the same journal, though not an original contribution, shows the traces of his painstaking labour and untiring efforts to do justice to the famous original, and will forever rank very high among publications of its kind. This fact is well known beyond the narrow limits of his native land, as is evinced by appeal for permission to reproduce it in foreign publications.

This notice, even though professedly short and meagre, would be very incomplete, if we let pass unnoticed a work of extreme importance, though of elementary nature. It is Kikuchi’s Text-book on Elementary Geometry which he compiled at the ardent request of the Department of Education, and of which the first installment appeared in 1888. Concerning this work, may it be allowed to let follow a short extract from the writer’s own publication “Summary Report on the Teaching of Mathematics in Japan” compiled at the instance of the International Commission on the Teaching of Mathematics and published by the Mombusho in 1912. “His (Kikuchi’s) book is a very great improvement upon the Association Geometry, at least in the sense that it adapts itself so admirably to our national character and to the environments of our educational organizations. For foreigners or even for our own countrymen not in touch with the actual state of affairs in these days, it would be hard to realise the difficulties with which such a task of compilation was beset. Besides the intrinsic difficulties of producing a really improved text-book of geometry, not only most of the technical terms were to be coined anew in such a manner as to meet with general approval, but also the language itself to be used in such a book, which, as is hardly necessary to add,
must ensure clearness and conciseness of definitions, brevity and perspicuity in stating axioms and enunciating theorems, and accuracy and non-redundant completeness in general. How successfully the author mastered the difficulties, is indeed a marvel in view of the peculiar and inimical nature of the Japanese language. There still remains another characteristic feature of the book which it may be worth while to notice. Hitherto our ordinary way of writing vertically downwards in successive upright columns following one another from right to left, was used in mathematical publications. As this was found to be obviously inconvenient, there was proposed for mathematical writings a new mode of writing horizontally from left to right after the fashion of occidental writing and was actually tried in some out-of-the-way mathematical publications. For the first time, however, this mode of writing was definitively adopted in Kikuchi’s Geometry, and this had the effect of establishing the usage which has been followed ever since.”

“I have very many reasons for believing and I do believe that this book is unsurpassed by any other Japanese text-books of elementary geometry which have appeared up to this day. The position occupied by Kikuchi’s Geometry here in Japan during the last two decades, may fairly and not inappropriately be compared to that held by Legendre’s *Élément de géométrie* in France during the several decades in the early part of the last century following its publication which took place towards the close of the eighteenth century.”

This notice is the tender tribute of one who was privileged to have been one of his early pupils in days old and who was ever since honoured to walk with him in closest companionship along many and varied pathways. To a superficial observer, he might have appeared to lack zeal and devotion on some occasions, but his character is an instance which justifies the truth of an old proverb which says “when the strong wind blows the tree may break, but the wavering grass will bend and recover.” Taken all round and in the long run, as viewed from this day when he is no more, he was as zealous and devoted as a man can possibly be, to the causes which appealed to his matured and firm conviction. He was a man of broadest interests, a rare and delightful personality, with a flavour of humor, which added fascination to whatever he said and did. No one could come in contact with him without feeling the charm of his kindly, lovable nature and falling under the spell of enthusiasm and
untiring energy clothed in all round polished and highly cultivated common
sense and mingled with deliberate moderation for minor irregularities, with
which he devoted himself to the causes of advancement of education and
promotion of knowledge and learning. He was not only an educationist,
but also a thinker of insight and wisdom, a strong public character, and
withal a man so modest and yet so outspoken that only those who
penetrated beneath the surface knew what an unique character his was.
Indeed, as a man, he was the embodiment of all that is noble in human
nature—the very personification of all the virtues spoken of in the Imperial
Rescript on Education, of which he was such an ardent expounder.

Baroness Kikuchi's maiden name was Tatsu Fukuda. They were
married in May, 1879. They have three sons and five daughters. His
heir Taiji Kikuchi has just completed his university course of study in
experimental physics, and is a "silver watch" which is the appellation
given to a select and talented few among hundreds and thousands of the
graduates of the Imperial University, to whom are awarded as His
Majesty the Emperor's gift silver watches in recognition of their high
scholastic attainments on the occasion of the graduation exercises. Dr.
Tatsukichi Minobé, Dr. Hideo Hatoyama, professors of law, and Mr.
Idsutarō Suyehiro, assistant professor of law, all three in the same Imperial
University of Tokio, are his sons-in-law.

It has fallen to the lot of very few men of learning to preside over
the progress of education and the advancement of knowledge for over
forty years with unfailing sagacity and unbroken success. If luck can
be said to have aided him at all, it was to be found in the happy
coincidence that his talent and disposition so well harmonized with time
and surroundings in which he lived. Kikuchi's name will go down in
the pages of the Japanese history, and it will be remembered of him that
although he attained to the highest honours his country could bestow on
one who emerged from the too often neglected circle of scientific men, he
remained from first to last the same genial, modest and courteous man,
the same warmhearted and unchanging friend, the same loyal and devoted
servant of his Sovereign and his country.

Tokio, Sept. 1917.

Rikitarō Fujisawa.