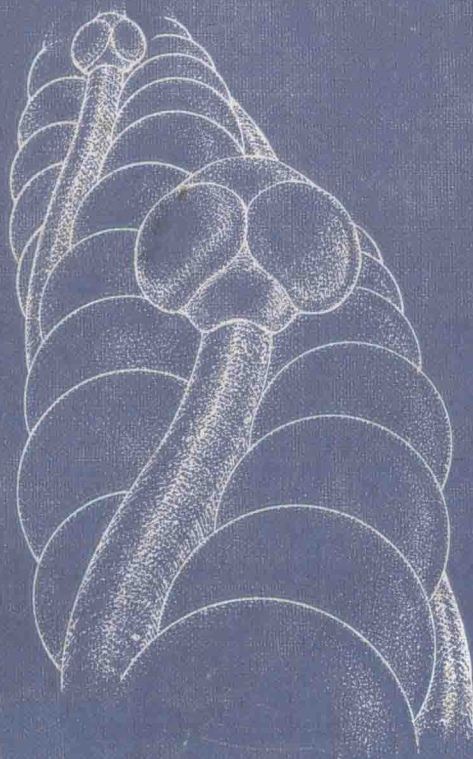

MUSCLE CONTRACTION

Its Regulatory Mechanisms

Edited by
S. EBASHI, K. MARUYAMA, and M. ENDO



JAPAN SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES PRESS, Tokyo
SPRINGER-VERLAG, Berlin Heidelberg New York

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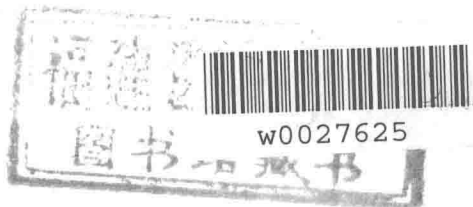
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SETSURO EBASHI, KOSCAK MARUYAMA, and MAKOTO ENDO

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JSSP No. 02392-1104

ISBN 3-540-10411-9 SPRINGER-VERLAG Berlin Heidelberg New York
ISBN 0-387-10411-9 SPRINGER-VERLAG New York Heidelberg Berlin

Sole distribution rights outside Japan granted to SPRINGER-VERLAG Berlin
Heidelberg New York

Published jointly by
JAPAN SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES PRESS Tokyo
and
SPRINGER-VERLAG Berlin Heidelberg New York

Printed in Japan

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Its Regulatory Mechanisms

Proceedings of the Oji Seminar, Symposium on Regulatory Mechanisms of Muscle Contraction (Kumagai-Natori Symposium), held on October 28-30, 1979, sponsored by Japan Society for Promotion of Science and Fujihara Foundation of Science.

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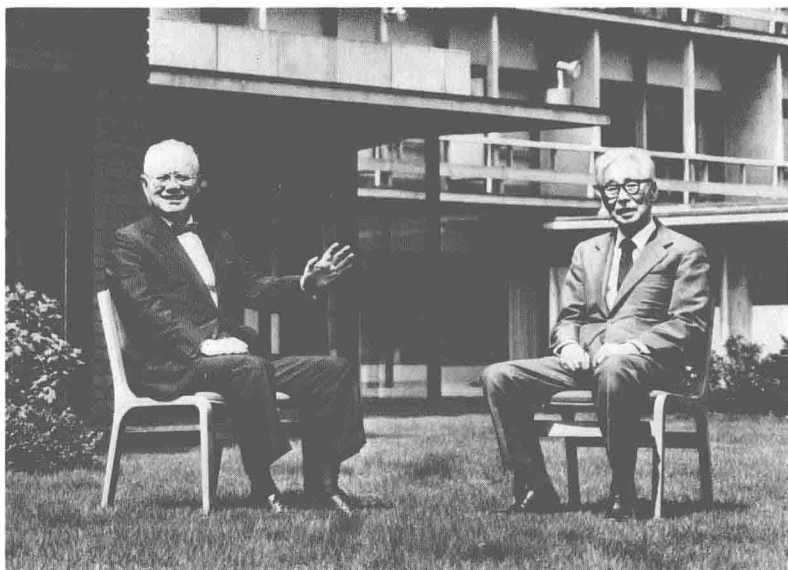
Preface

One of the aims of this Symposium was to celebrate the seventy-fifth birthday of Prof. Hiroshi Kumagai and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the discovery of 'skinned fibers' by Prof. Reiji Natori. This did not mean that the meeting would be only a ceremonial one, placing rather minor emphasis on scientific aspects. On the contrary, it was a result of the desire of Japanese muscle scientists to pursue the mechanism of muscle contraction, which has been inseparably linked with their admiration for the unparalleled contribution to muscle science of Profs. Kumagai and Natori.

We take the liberty of quoting a part of the 'Introduction' of a book dedicated to Prof. Kumagai (*Molecular Biology of Muscular Contraction*, Igaku Shoin, Tokyo, and Elsevier, Amsterdam, 1965):

"... , even this somewhat encouraging event did not change his deep feeling that the best days of his career as a research scientist were over and that the best he could do then would be to bring up the younger generation to be full-fledged scientists on an international level. Since then he has performed his chosen task faithfully and enthusiastically, often at the expense of his private life."

The latter half of the 1940's was a most difficult time for Japanese scientists. However, this could not depress Prof. Natori, but stimulated him to create a new thing, 'Natori's fibers' or skinned fibers. His ardor for muscle



*Professors H. Kumagai and R. Natori in front of the International House of Japan, Tokyo, where the 1957 Muscle Conference was held.
June 28, 1980*

science further compelled him to organize periodical muscle physiology meetings, 'Kin-seiri no Tsudoi', every two or three months, where young people could find a place to report their findings.

It was very timely that in 1955 Prof. Kumagai as the chairman of the research group on 'Chemistry of Muscular Contraction' invited Prof. Natori to join his group as a chief member. Thus links between muscle physiology and biochemistry began to bud in Japan, too.

We wish to quote again the above book:

"He (Prof. Kumagai) moved further in organizing the 'Conference on the chemistry of muscular contraction', Tokyo, in 1957. To this conference, he invited many scientists to come from abroad. At that time, Japan was still experiencing difficult economic situation, and no financial support to the conference could be obtained from official sources. Nevertheless, the meeting was held, largely through his personal efforts. There were some difficulties in communication, but the conference was a

great gain for the Japanese scientists, first because they could estimate their own level of achievement in the world, and second, because they made many friends from abroad.”

It was our great pleasure to have Profs. M. F. Morales and J. Gergely, who played main roles in that Conference, in attendance at this Symposium. We were particularly delighted to welcome Prof. T. C. Tsao from Shanghai, who tried hard to attend the 1957 Conference but without success owing to unavoidable circumstances.

Our original plan was to have this Symposium in the same place where the 1957 Conference was held (see the photograph above) to refresh the nice memories of twenty-two years ago. However, Tokyo has changed very much in a direction unfavorable for such a meeting. So the meeting was held in a hotel near Mt. Fuji, where participants could enjoy the beautiful scenery and the courtesy of the hotel.

Taking this opportunity, we wish to express our cordial thanks to all participants, especially those from abroad. We are particularly indebted to Sir Andrew Huxley for his historical survey of the studies on regulatory mechanisms of muscle contraction, which has exempted us from explaining the scientific reason why we planned this Symposium.

We are very grateful to the officials of The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science and the Fujiwara Foundation of Science for their extending us cordial assistance in organizing this Symposium, especially to Mr. Y. Ichikawa, the director of the Fujiwara Foundation, for his sincere encouragement. Our thanks are also due to our colleagues, especially Dr. Y. Nonomura, for their efforts behind the curtain in managing the Symposium.

July 1980

S. EBASHI
K. MARUYAMA
M. ENDO

October 18, 1979

My dear Dr. Ebashi:

You have made me very happy with your letter—a new expression of an old friendship. You have also deeply honored me by the generous invitation to the Kumagai-Natori Symposium on Regulatory Mechanisms of Muscle Contraction. It would have been a very great pleasure for me to attend the meeting and meet old friends. It would have given me a special pleasure to convey personally the expression of my admiration for Professor Kumagai, the father to Japanese muscle scientists, for the wonderful research he has conducted all his life, and the equally wonderful example and teaching which he has given to the younger Japanese generation devoted to science. During my long research I could never separate ethics, morals, goodwill and the search of new truth which formed one unit in Dr. Kumagai's life. I also would have loved to express personally my admiration for the wonderful scientific achievements of Professor R. Natori, inventor of the fiber carrying his name. To both of them I wanted to express also my best wishes for their further work, long life, health and happiness.

Very unfortunately my advanced age and many obligations prevent me from partaking in the Symposium in commemoration of Professor Kumagai's 75th anniversary, and the 25th anniversary of the publication of the skinned fiber which opened an entirely new road for research.

I could not have been a useful member, having left muscle research long ago, but I would have been proud of seeing the splendid research going on. If one had even a small part in planting a tree, one is always proud and glad to see that the tree grows and blossoms, even if one can do nothing for it any more.

With the warmest regards and the best wishes to all of you.

Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Albert Szent-Györgyi".

Albert Szent-Györgyi

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