
Japanese Beloved Luminous Organisms

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Abstract

In the legend of the opening remark for the 1st Conference on Luminescence at Asilomar in 1952, Newton Harvey mentioned that "Japan is like a treasure box of luminous organisms" [1]. Harvey visited Japan in 1916, with his bride, and then again in 1917 to study on the ostracod *Vargula hilgendorfi* and the firefly-squid *Watasenia scintillans*. - Japan is rich in luminous organisms. Japanese people have felt familiar with luminous organisms, especially fireflies. The aquatic fireflies *Luciola cruciata* and *Luciola lateralis* have been frequently depicted as essential items in a number of Japanese traditional "Haiku" verses and drawn in "Ukiyo-e" woodblocks. Also, we must not forget two pioneers of Japanese bioluminescence study, Drs. Sakyo Kanda (1874-1939) and Yata Haneda (1907-1995), who explored Japanese luminous organisms exhaustively and published great books [1,2]. I have published several introductory books of luminous organisms in Japanese (e.g. [3,4]) to share their beauty, wonder and scientific interest with young people, in collaboration with professional photographers. In this talk, I would introduce our educational activities for luminous organisms in Japan, especially about the experiential learning at elementary schools and high schools using the luminous earthworm *Microscolex phosphoreus*, which recently comes to light to be very abundant everywhere in Japan.

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