

MEMORIAL RESOLUTION

YAMATO ICHIHASHI (1878 – 1963)

Yamato Ichihashi was born at Magoya, on the island of Honshu, Japan, April 15, 1878. While still a young man he came to the United States to further his education, and spent some time in the public schools. After graduating from Stanford in 1907 with the A. B. degree, he remained to receive his A. M. in Economics in 1908. During the following two years he stayed on as an assistant in the Economics Department, while also serving as a special agent of the United States Immigration Commission. In 1910 he entered Harvard, won a fellowship in Sociology the next year, and in 1914 received his doctorate in Economics with a dissertation on Japanese immigration.

Meanwhile, in 1912, he was appointed instructor in Japanese History at Stanford, and took up his duties the following year. The expectation was that a group of public-spirited Japanese, seeking to promote understanding between the two people, would provide the money for an appropriately endowed chair. By 1920 sufficient funds were accumulated to make possible, on a matching basis, Dr. Ichihashi's appointment as assistant professor of Japanese History and Civilization. He is believed to be the first Japanese to occupy such a chair at an American university. His excellent command of English, his personal charm and friendly manner, his exacting standards of scholarship, his enthusiasm for Japanese history and culture, his stimulating and ever-popular classroom lectures, his dedication to the betterment of relations between peoples on both sides of the Pacific all caused him to live in the appreciative memory of generations of Stanford students. Together with Professor Payson J. Treat he pioneered in establishing at Stanford one of the richest offerings in the history of the Far East to be found in the United States.

Further recognition came in 1919, when he was called upon to act as adviser to Japan's official delegation at the First International Labor Conference in Washington, D. C. More memorable was his association with the Washington Conference on the Limitation of Armaments (1921-1922), in the capacity of interpreter and confidential secretary to Baron Kato, senior Japanese delegate. Dr. Ichihashi's resulting book, The Washington Conference and After, published in 1928 by the Stanford Press, is still a standard authority. It combines firsthand observations with sound scholarship, and is remarkably free of nationalistic bias.

In 1932, after more than twenty years of research and reflection, he published with the Stanford Press his book Japanese in the United States: A Critical Study of the Problems of the Japanese Immigrants and their Children. It was acclaimed as the "best scientific study" on the subject, and was especially praised for its dispassionate approach to a passion-charged topic.

In 1933, during one of a number of return trips to Japan, Dr. Ichihashi served for a term as a lecturer in the College of Law of the Tokyo Imperial University. As international tensions increased, he strove to avert Japanese-American misunderstanding by his efforts on the lecture platform and in the classroom. Pearl Harbor came as a shattering blow. Spurning opportunities to leave the Pacific Coast, he deliberately chose to share the lot of his own people, whose

problems had been his life-long concern. While confined to California relocation camps, he rendered invaluable service in ameliorating the plight of his fellow internees and in serving as a liaison between them and the American officials. In these distressing circumstances he reached Stanford's retirement age in 1943, and became a professor emeritus without the conventional manifestations of esteem that a host of former students and friends would have wished to render.

In 1945, after the war, he returned to his campus home. It is a remarkable tribute to his equanimity that his recent distressing experience had not embittered him unduly, and his face continued to light up with a ready smile. In 1953, during another return visit to Japan, he was quoted by the Nippon Times as saying that the Allied occupation would be "nothing to be regretted" if the Japanese retained the MacArthur reforms.

His years since retirement were spent mainly in scholarly seclusion, while he labored on a book dealing with the cultural history of Japan up to the Nara period (710-784 A.D.) He had made substantial progress when the end came at his home on the Stanford campus, April 5, 1963, after an illness of several weeks and only ten days short of his eighty-fifth birthday. To the very last he wore his years lightly.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Kei Ichihashi, and by a son, Woodrow Ichihashi.

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