

Ken Kuré (1883-1940)

A Pioneer of modern cardiology in Japan

- On his works of neurogenic arrhythmias -

Ken Kuré was probably the first physician in Japan who showed a deep interest in cardiology and vigorously performed experimental research. After graduating from Faculty of Medicine, University of Tokyo, he joined Department of Medicine directed by Tanemichi Aoyama, who succeeded Edwin Baelz, a hired German physician to teach medicine at the University. The first report of heart block in Japan was made by Kuré in 1911.

In 1912 he went to Prague to work with H.E. Hering, a well known physiologist. At Prague his studies were concerned about pathogenesis of heterotopic extrasystole. With concomitant stimulation of left accelerating nerve and right vagus, he succeeded in introducing atrioventricular nodal tachycardia and showed that shift of the origin of impulse occurred from sinus node to Tawara's node and conversely from Tawara's node to sinus node abruptly. Moreover, he demonstrated that there was a shift of the origin of impulse inside Tawara's node itself.

After returning home in 1913, he continued the research work on the role of autonomic nerves on arrhythmias. In 1915, he published a book titled "Diagnosis and Treatment of Heart Diseases", the first real textbook of cardiology in Japan.

He was made professor of medicine of Kyushu University in 1920 and five years later was appointed professor of medicine of University of Tokyo.

In 1935, with the proposal of T. Mashimo, professor of Kyoto University, R. Kaneko, professor of medicine, Kyushu University, and K. Kuré, Japanese Circulation Society was founded.

Kozo Suma