

KONNICHIWA (Hello !)

Hiroshi Shimizu,
President. the Japan Iris Society.

Hello, Iris lovers !

My name is Hiroshi Shimizu. I was selected to be President of the Japan Iris Society by our members on January 23rd, 2016. I would like to send my greeting to Western Iris lovers.

I also would like to thank members of the A.I.S. for helping me three ways.

First, as you know, Dr. George M. Reed of the American Iris Society came to Japan in 1930 to investigate native sites and public gardens of various Japanese irises, especially Hanashobu, and his visit at that time spurred the movement for Japanese Hanashobu growers to get together and organize the Japan Iris Society.

Second, I gained a lot of knowledge from the A.I.S. publication, *The World of Irises*. It was very useful for me when I started iris hybridizing forty years ago,

Third, I must say “Thank you for your friendship” to the late Mr. Clarence Mahan and the late Dr. Currier McEwen. They were very kind to me and other Japanese Irisarians.

I would like to dedicate my new seedling ‘Hakuto-Washi’ to them with a thankful heart in this article. The name means ‘The Bald Eagle’ of North America.



‘Hakuto-Washi’



‘Hakuto-Washi’

The reversed bicolor pattern will surely lead to new color patterns in the world of Japanese Irises. I found a poor bicolor mutant at a habitat in northern Japan about ten years ago.

I got ‘Hakuto-Washi’ from the back cross of ((*ensata* cultivar x poor bicolor wild mutant) X poor bicolor wild mutant). If your society hope, I will donate the plant or seeds to your society in the future.

By the way, I also found the very excellent pod parent ‘Gubijin’ for inter-specific hybridization, and I am known as a hybridizer of Pseudata (SPEC-X, Gubijin X *I. ensata*).

However, another hybridizing program ‘Early bloomer’ is not known yet overseas.

There is Tango no Sekku (May 5th) in Japan: the boys’ Festival for expressing the hope that each boy in a family will grow up healthy and strong.

Warrior figures are set up in the house during this festival, and leaves of *Acorus calamus* are placed under the eaves and in the bathtub to fend off evil. Then, Japanese people enjoyed Japanese iris flowers in the garden.

However, there was the change of calendar (from lunar calendar to solar calendar) in Japan as part of Japan's Rapid Modernization in the 19th century.

At that time, December 3rd, 1871, became January 1st, 1872, and the bloom season of J.I. moved from May to June.

As a result, Japanese irises don't bloom on May 5th in the modern calendar, so we couldn't enjoy flowers of J.I. in the garden on May 5th.

Therefore I wanted a Japanese iris which blooms on May 5th in the modern calendar. At the same time, I want to hybridize between May bloomers of *I. ensata* and *I. pseudacorus*.

Today, my early bloomers bloom in mid-May, and the pollen from them is very useful for hybridization with 'Gubijin.'

I retired from my job last year and I want to use this extra time for my hybridizing and to help Irisarians all over the world, the same as Clarence, Currier and the late Dr. Shuichi Hirao.



May bloomer 'Hanazakari'