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**Disjunctive distribution of some subtropical plants in Australia and the Ryukyus**

The Ryukyu Archipelago, Japan, is an arc of continental islands that lies between Kyushu Island of Japan and Taiwan, and during the Neogene there was more than one period when the islands were connected to surrounding land masses: Kyushu to the north, and south-eastern China via Taiwan to the south. The Ryukyus are characterized by their rich flora of subtropical rainforests, which is most closely related to those of Taiwan and southern Kyushu. However, some species are lacking in Taiwan and Kyushu, and disjunctly distributed in Australia. This disjunction was already pointed out by Hatusima (1971) with examples of *Solenogyne mikadoi* and its Australian congener (Asteraceae), *Oxalis exilis* (Oxalidaceae), *Cassytha glabella* and *C. pubescens* (Lauraceae), *Eriachne armitti* (Poaceae), and others. We have just started to conduct morphological and molecular phylogenetic studies to answer questions on whether this disjunctive distribution can be explained sufficiently by long-distance dispersal or by the extinction of wide-spread species in intermediate regions, or whether it is better to consider polyphyletic evolution in Australia and the Ryukyus.

**Brief personal record**

I was born in Otsu City, Shiga Prefecture in 1955, and learned and studied plant cytogenetics at Hiroshima University. In 1983 I became an assistant professor at the University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa Prefecture, and in 1988 acquired a degree of doctor of science by karyomorphological study on *Habenaria* (Orchidaceae) and allied genera of Japan and neighboring areas. Now a professor of botany, I give lectures on plant

morphology, cytogenetics and the evolution of vascular plants. The Ryukyu Archipelago contains over a hundred islands belonging to both Kagoshima and Okinawa Prefectures, and their floras are characterized by diversity and high endemism. Currently I am devoted to clarifying the origin and evolution of vascular plants in the Ryukyus and also the conservation of threatened floras and ecosystems of the Ryukyus.