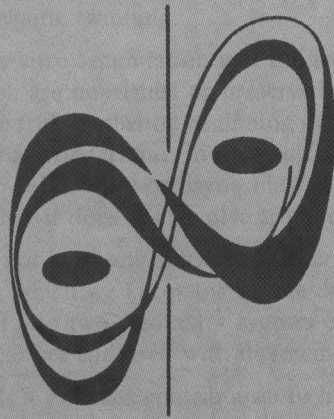


**SEVENTH
INTERNATIONAL
CONGRESS**

ON TWIN STUDIES



TOKYO
22-25
JUNE
1992

JAPAN SOCIETY
FOR TWIN STUDIES

JAPAN INTRACTABLE DISEASES
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

Illustrious Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As founder and committed friend of the International Society and its members, and as an admirer of Japan, its civilisation and its contribution to scientific progress, I regret that the current events in my country do not permit me to absent myself from Rome to participate in the VII Congress as I have done in the previous ones with, if I may say, the additional honour of having presided the First and Sixth.

The individuation of twins as a particular and essential objective of research has come a long way since the birth of our Society 18 years ago. What originated as a simple case control contribution has today become a true branch of modern genetics and one which the latter cannot do without for its on-going development and deeper understanding.

I believe the study of twins occupies a particularly useful role on today's scientific front due to the significance which the product of conception, that is, the zygote, assumes in the case of monozygotic twinning.

As you all well know, in vitro fecundation and the remarkable production of the products of conception which are nourished or preserved in liquid nitrogen, have lent credit to the opinion that the truly authentic beginning of human life takes place some days after conception, and that prior to this, in the undifferentiated interim period, the product of conception or so-called «pre-embryo» may be used for experimental purposes and destroyed given that it does not involve true human life.

This theory, which does not have any substantial reference, quite evidently clashes with our experience through which we know the zygote does not produce an anodyne pre-embryo but divides itself into two secondary zygotes capable of producing two individuals somatically identical yet endowed with differentiated psychic personalities.

It seems to me that this is a precious contribution to human biology and obstetrics today and, likewise, many different problems relating to the study of man can draw reference from the parallel study of monozygotic and dizygotic twins.

Thank you for your kind attention and best wishes for the work of the Congress.

Luigi Gedda