
LETTER

A Paper of Historical Significance

In this issue of *Chemical Senses*, we are publishing a translation of Prof. Kikunae Ikeda's original paper describing his discovery of the taste of glutamate, first published in Japanese in the *Journal of the Chemical Society of Tokyo* in 1909. This translation, by Yoko Ogiwara and Yuzo Ninomiya, is accompanied by two letters. The first is an introduction to the translation by Bernd Lindemann, Yoko Ogiwara and Yuzo Ninomiya, describing their view of the importance of this early work and why it should be shared with the chemosensory community. Following that introduction is another letter by Bruce Halpern, invited by the Editors, which raises important distinctions that need to be made between gustatory stimuli and the sensations evoked by them. Both of these letters make important and interesting points, and serve to place this historical work in the proper context. As the Executive Editors of *Chemical*

Senses, we are taking what we consider to be a rather unusual step in publishing this work and these letters, and do so because we believe that they serve the community. There are clearly differences of opinion about the use of the term 'umami' in describing the taste of glutamate and related compounds, and these differences should be understood and discussed rather than simply ignored. We hope that this material will provide you with a further understanding of these issues.

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