

Obituary

Kawakatsu Yoshio (1922–1984)

Kawakatsu Yoshio, Professor of Chinese History at the Research Institute of Humanistic Sciences, Kyoto University, died on April 4, 1984, of pancreatic cancer. The year 1983 had brought him many joys. He celebrated his *kanreki*, or sixtieth birthday, and his long-awaited *A Study of the Aristocratic Social System in the Six Dynasties* [*Rikuchō kisokusei shakai no kenkyū*] was published by the prestigious firm of Iwanami Shoten.

Kawakatsu was no narrow-minded *shimaguni* scholar. Although he spent most of his life in Kyoto, the wider world was his home. He valued French sinological scholarship and this developed into a love for France and for all things French. He translated into Japanese the works of such distinguished French sinologists as Henri Maspero, Etienne Balazs, Paul Demiéville, and Jacques Gernet.

Kawakatsu's main area of scholarly interest was the medieval period, especially the Southern Dynasties, on which he published widely. In 1970, his Medieval Chinese History Study Group, organized with Tanigawa Michio, published *Studies on Medieval Chinese History* [*Chūgoku chūsei shi kenkyū*], which brought about a serious reorientation with respect to some of the fundamental problems of Chinese history. The work was the target of assaults, especially by Marxist historians. His attackers eventually came to admit that he and his associates had made an invaluable contribution to historical studies.

Kawakatsu will be fondly remembered not only by two generations of Japanese students but by the large number of foreign researchers who at one time or another made pilgrimage to the capital of sinology. He was a gentle, jovial, kind, and warm-hearted man. It is to be hoped that his colleagues and students will bring his current project on the medieval Chinese aristocracy to a fitting fruition. That would be a lasting tribute to Professor Kawakatsu.

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