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Professor Katsuyoshi Fukui, who died suddenly last year at the age of 64, was a leading figure in the anthropological study of southern Ethiopia and the main architect of a remarkable growth in Ethiopian studies in Japan since the 1980s. Through his own writing and research, through the contributions of the many younger scholars whom he inspired and encouraged and through his tireless energy in organising international meetings and forging links with scholars from Ethiopia, Europe and America, he put the study of southern Ethiopia and of Northeast Africa firmly on the map of Japanese anthropology.

Like many anthropologists, his initial training was not in anthropology. His undergraduate degree and Ph.D, both from Kyoto University, were in agriculture. He first went to Ethiopia, briefly, in the late 1960s, for ethnobotanical research, and his first major field research was a study of shifting cultivation in western Japan. This led to his first book, Yakihata no mura, ‘The village of shifting cultivation’ (1974). But, even before going to Ethiopia he had spent nearly a year amongst the agro-pastoral Iraqw of Tanzania. Aged only twenty at the time, this was clearly a formative experience. Ten years later, in 1973, he began his study of the agro-pastoral people who were to become the main focus of his subsequent research and writing, the Bodi of the Lower Omo Valley, south-western Ethiopia.

His first academic appointment was to the Research Institute for the Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. On returning from his first visit to the Bodi, he moved to the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku) in Osaka, then recently established under its first Director, Tadao Umasao. In 1993 he became Professor at Kyoto University and remained there until his retirement in 2007.

I first met Katsuyoshi (as I always knew him) when he and his wife, Masako, were beginning their fieldwork amongst the Bodi and my wife and I were living forty kilometres to the south, amongst the culturally and economically very similar Mursi. There was an immediate rapport between us, despite the differences in our cultural and professional backgrounds. This was partly no doubt because we were at roughly the same stages in our lives and careers and partly because we were living in the same ‘remote’ environment, amongst people who had just emerged from a terrible famine. We probably only met Katsuyoshi and Masako two or three times during that
year, at their base in Bodiland, but when we did, so much could be left unsaid that it seemed as though we had known each other for years.

In 1977 Katsuyoshi organized, at Minpaku, the First Taniguchi Foundation International Symposium, which led to the book Warfare amongst East African Herders (ed. Fukui and Turton, 1979). The conference came to be seen as a landmark in a process of growing communication and academic collaboration between Japanese and non-Japanese scholars of Ethiopia and East Africa. Katsuyoshi was the driving force of this process. With a determination and effectiveness that had already earned him the nickname ‘Bulldozer’, he went on to organize other international conferences, resulting in such books as Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa (ed. Fukui and Markakis, 1994), Redefining Nature (ed. Fukui and Ellen, 1996) and the three volume Proceedings of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopia Studies, held in Kyoto in 1997 and published under the title Ethiopia in Broader Perspective (ed. Fukui, Kurimoto and Shigeta, 1997).

But his impact on Japanese anthropology did not come only from his drive and determination in fostering international collaboration. It was also based on his many publications, mainly in Japanese, for non-specialist as well as specialist audiences, both on the Bodi and on the comparative study of East African pastoralism. Had he done no more than this his impact would have been considerable. But he did more. Through a series of research projects which he led from the mid-1980s until his retirement, he provided encouragement, guidance and financial support for some of the leading figures working today in Japanese universities on the anthropology of Northeast Africa.

These projects reflected the core interests which had guided his own research from the beginning. They were on agro-pastoralism (1987), on folk models and subsistence systems (1988–90), on ethnic conflict (1992–93), on traditional knowledge and modernization (1995–97), on relations between ethnic minorities and the state (1998–2000), on environmental change and subsistence (2002–04) and on state formation (2005–06). Scholars working today in Japanese universities who were supported by these projects in their early careers include Eisei Kurimoto (Osaka University), Masayoshi Shigeta (Kyoto University), Yukio Miyawaki (Osaka Prefectural University), Hiroshi Matsuda (Kyoto Bunkyo University), Minako Ishihara (Nanzan University), Ren’ya Sato (Kyushu University), Takeshi Fujimoto (University of Human Environments), Gen Tagawa (Hiroshima City University), Ken Masuda (Nagasaki University) and Keiichiro Matsumura (Kyoto University). How many academics would not be proud of such a legacy?

Recognizing no doubt the importance of creating institutional structures to support this growing community of scholars, Katsuyoshi founded, in 1992,
the Japan Association for Nilo-Ethiopian Studies (JANES) which, among other things, publishes the English language *Journal of Nilo-Ethiopian Studies*. My wife and I were present at the 2008 annual meeting of the Association. It was held at Hirosaki, just as the magnificent cherry blossom was on the point of falling. As we talked to the participants, especially the younger generation of teachers and students, it was clear that we were witnessing a huge tribute to the life’s work of Katsuyoshi. I was reminded of an Amhara proverb which I had recently learnt from an Ethiopian friend of mine: ‘However fast the river flows, always remember the source’. Japan, it seemed, had now become a leading international centre for the anthropological study of Northeast Africa and for African studies in general. No river has only one source, but Katsuyoshi is surely one of the main sources of this one, a river which now seemed to be flowing so fast and strong.

He died in April 2008 and is survived by his wife, Masako, their children Michiko and Takahiro and two grandchildren.

**List of Selected Publications**


1993 “Classification of the Names of Root Crops in Ethiopia and Their Historical Implications”, in: SASAKI, K. (ed.), *Nokono Gijutsuto*
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With JOHN MARKAKIS (eds.), *Ethnicity & Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, London: James Currey.


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with PEI-YUN YU (eds.), New Perspective to Human Oriented Ecosystem, Kyoto University: Center for Ecological Research (in Japanese).

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