

In memoriam

Gisaburo N. KIYOSE, 1931–2017

Gisaburo N. Kiyose (清瀬義三郎則府, Kiyose Gisaburō Norikura, born in Tokyo on Jan. 25, 1931, died on July 30, 2017)

Gisaburo N. Kiyose started his studies at Kyoto University, graduating in 1954. He was a lecturer at Daitō Bunka University and Kokushikan University, before he went to the U.S.A., joining Indiana University, Bloomington, in 1964. In May 1973, he received his Ph.D. in Uralic and Altaic Studies, with the dissertation “A Study of the Jurchen Language and Script in the Hua-I I-Yu, with Special Reference to the Problem of its Decipherment.”

Even before receiving his Ph.D., he was active in giving lectures at summer schools of several universities, e.g. Minnesota University and Michigan University. In 1974, he became an assistant professor at California State University before he settled in Hawaii in 1979 while promoting his academic career at University of Hawaii. In 1994, he retired as a Professor Emeritus of that university. From Hawaii, he returned to his alma mater, Kyoto University, during the years 1989 to 1991. Later, he also held academic assignments at Himeji Dokkyō University and Osaka University of Foreign Studies.

Gisaburo N. Kiyose was an outstanding scholar with a passion for the fundamental questions of the fields he chose to study. In his dissertation (later published as *A study of the Jurchen language and script: reconstruction and decipherment* (Kyoto: Hōritsubunka-sha, 1977), he undertook the effort of a comprehensive reconstruction of the Jurchen language as recorded in the Jurchen version of the *Hua-Yi Yiyu* (華夷譯語), a collection of Foreign-Chinese glossaries (also known as *Barbarian Glossaries*) compiled by the Imperial Translation Bureau of the Ming Dynasty. Only a few monuments of this early Manchu language have survived; a dozen stone inscriptions are known, a few traces can be found in Chinese historical records, but certainly the most comprehensive monument is the *Hua-Yi Yiyu*. It contains several hundred entries in an arrangement classified by meanings (this type of arrangement can be traced back to the *Erya*), representing each lemma in three versions: Jurchen (in Jurchen script), Chinese, and Jurchen (in an approximated rendering using Chinese characters; e.g., the first entry renders “heaven” as 阿卜哈以, or *abukayi*, which corresponds with Manju *abka*.).

Besides this lasting contribution to the field of Manchu-Tungus studies, he was also a prolific scholar of the Japanese language. As early as 1969, he was confident enough to challenge a few well-established traditions of Japanese grammar, notably in the field of verb analysis. In December 1969, he contributed a seminal communication to the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association of America with the bold title “Meaningless Conjugational Forms in Japanese Grammar”. His main point was that the traditional analysis of Japanese verb classes claimed the existence of a conjugation (jp. 活用形, *katsuyōkei*) where, as a matter of fact, a derivational analysis following the example of Altaic languages would be much more appropriate. Two years later, he published an extended version of this contribution in Japanese: 連結子音と連結母音と——日本語動詞無活用論 *Renketsu shi'in to renketsu bo'in to: Nihongo dōshi mu katsuyō ron*. [Juncture Consonants and Juncture Vowels in Japanese] *SJL*, Vol 86, 1971, pp. 42-56. This paper spawned a new school in Japanese grammar, the “derivational grammar” (派生文法, *hasei bunpō*); he later continued to publish on this question. Two publications should be mentioned: 日本語文法新論・派生文法序説 *Nihongo bunpō shinron: hasei bunpō josetsu* [A new approach to Japanese grammar: introduction to a derivational grammar] (Ōfū 1989, 2nd ed. 1993), and 日本語文法体系新論・派生文法の原理と動詞体系の歴史 *Nihongo bunpō taikai shinron: hasei bunpō no genri to dōshi taikai no rekishi* [A new approach to the Japanese grammatical system: principles of derivational analysis and a history of the verbal system] (Hitsuji Shobō 2013). He also wrote a complete Japanese grammar (*Japanese Grammar: A New Approach*, Kyoto: Kyoto University Press, 1995).

The early years at Indiana University shaped his life-long occupation with Altaic studies as the sources he used in his article of 1971 vividly show. His broad and profound understanding of language allowed him to question the fundamentals of established theories and to challenge traditional assumptions of grammatical analysis. Besides Japanese, he continued to write about Altaic questions: 日本語学とアルタイ語学 *Nihon gogaku to Arutai gogaku* [Japanese linguistics and Altaic linguistics] (Tokyo: Meiji Shoin, 1991), and he wrote an Introduction to Literary Manchu: 満洲語文語入門 *Manshūgo bungo nyūmon*, with Kawachi Yoshihiro (Kyoto University Press, 2002, 2nd edition 2005, 3rd edition 2014).

He participated several times in PIAC meetings (1995, 1996 and 1998), speaking about Jurchen and Manchu palatal/velar consonants and vowel harmony.

Prof. Kiyose leaves his wife Yoshie and two sons. He is remembered by his friends as a unique person, brilliant, humorous, and kind.

Oliver Corff, August 12, 2017