

In memory of Professor Masanori Kaji (8 February 1956—18 July 2016)

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“Masanori Kaji was Professor of the History of Science at the Tokyo Institute of Technology. His research interests include history of chemistry in Russia and Japan and environmental history. He authored *Mendeleev’s Discovery of the Periodic Law of Chemical Elements* (in Japanese), Sapporo: Hokkaido University Press, 1997.” He was a co-editor and published his article in *Early Responses to the Periodic System*, Masanori Kaji, Helge Kragh, Gábor Palló, Oxford University Press 2015. This quotation is taken from that book.

I met Masanori Kaji 梶 雅範 in his office at Tokyo Institute of Technology (TIT) in 2007, following the recommendation of his former Professor Tatsumasa Dōke. This meeting led to a scholarship for me from the Japan Foundation with his guidance, and for a collaboration that lasted for the last 10 years, until the week of his untimely death.

During our first meeting I was mostly impressed by his large library, including many books in Russian, not typical in Japan. I thought he will be a good tutor for me to walk into the history of chemistry in Japan. And so it was. We met for discussions and Masanori will answer my questions and recommend reading materials. He also recommended that I participate in a seminar held by Professor Yasu Furukawa at Tokyo University, Komaba Campus that added a lot, meeting more scholars and a wider scope of the science history in Japan. Kaji was present in the course I taught to MSc students in TIT, helping me, together with Prof. Kazuhiko Shibuya of the chemistry department, in gathering the course materials. We held a short course in Hebrew Language, Masanori was a hard working student, preparing homework.

We met during several international conferences abroad: In the International Conference for the History and Technology, Budapest, summer 2009. I presented our study, Masanori presented his. A very interesting lecture Masanori presented at the International Society for the History of Chemistry Conference, held in Uppsala, Sweden, in summer

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Dr. Masanori Kaji (L), Dr. Yakup Bektas (R) and Dr. Yona Siderer, Hebrew Lesson at Tokyo Institute of Technology 2009

2013, telling about “The Cadmium Poisoning in Japan: The Case of Itai-itai Disease and Beyond”. Last year he accepted my invitation and took part in the Israeli Association for Japanese Studies Conference, held at Tel Aviv University, again presenting pollution inflicted disease in Japan, “Minamata Disease, its chemical, health, and juridical aspects”. During his visit in Israel he took trips to Haifa and Jerusalem. After the conference I joined him to the tour to Masada and the Dead Sea. I saw Masanori taking a newspaper in Hebrew. What for? In order to have his photo taken while floating on the Dead Sea, “reading” the newspaper.

The lecture he prepared on “The New Trends of University Archives in Japan: The implication of Riko Majima’s Diaries as Sources of the History of Modern Chemistry” to be delivered at the conference of the International Society for the History of Chemistry, held in Aveiro, Portugal, in September 2015, he could not come and it was delivered by another participant. He made a point on how he was sorry not to attend the conference and sent me his presentation.

On every occasion Masanori was carrying his camera and tripod stand for the camera, taking group photos and joining the photo before the camera shot. Indeed, he sent me a CD holding photos of my experience in his unit, including a small group tour to Kamakura. I was invited to his house for dinner with his wife, Michiko Akamatsu, a scholar herself. The last week of his life I was again invited to his house, but this could not be fulfilled.

Lately he organized The International Workshop on the History of Chemistry, “Transformation of Chemistry from the 1920s to the 1960s” held in TIT on 2–4 March 2015 with prominent guests from the USA and other countries.

After his visit to Israel in 2015 Masanori wrote me that he became ill but was partly cured in a Japanese hospital. In spite of his illness he arrived for the technical excursion on July 8th 2016 at Mitsubishi Chemicals and the Pollution Museum in Yokkaichi. He took

part in the conference of the Japanese Society for the History of Chemistry in Mie University, at Tsu, 9–10 July 2016, but he was already very ill.

We met in his office at TIT on 11th July. While walking leaning on a cane to the International Guest House Masanori's intellectual curiosity did not fail. We stopped near a group of students aiming boxes with prisms to watch the sun's spectrum and Masanori had to watch it himself. This characteristic of a devoted and boundless researcher, a good friend and teacher, I shall carry in my memory of Masanori Kaji. I share my grief with his wife, his friends, students and his many colleagues in Japan and abroad.

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