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*However fast the river flows, always
remember the source*

(Amhara proverb)

IN MEMORY OF KATSUYOSHI FUKUI

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Photographs: Ben Dome

We last met Professor Fukui (Katsuyoshi, as we always knew him) in January 2004, in Jinka, a town in southwestern Ethiopia where, as it happens, I am writing this. He had stopped at our house one morning, unexpectedly and unannounced, on his way back to Addis, after a short visit to the Bodi. We sat on our terrace and spoke about the times we had spent together over the years (in the Omo Valley, London, Manchester, Osaka and Kyoto), about the doings of our now adult children and about current events in the Lower Omo. We took a photograph and, as we waved goodbye, we wished him luck, sent our good wishes to Masako, Michiko and Takahiro, and looked forward to our next meeting, wherever that might be. If we had known that this was to be our last meeting, how much more we would have had to say – and yet, how difficult it would have been to say it!

The death of old friends, especially when we have shared intense and formative experiences with them, is like the

death of family members – difficult to imagine and uncomfortable to contemplate. This is no doubt because, in losing them, we are losing part of ourselves.

We first met Katsuyoshi and Masako in 1974 when they were beginning their fieldwork amongst the Bodi and my wife, Pat, and I were living amongst the Mursi. I think our first meeting may have been at the Ethiopia Hotel in Addis Ababa, but we remember them best, during those early days, from our visits to their fieldwork base, at Hana, in Bodiland. There was an immediate rapport between us which made the differences in our personal, cultural and professional backgrounds seem unimportant. This must have been because, living in the isolated environment of the Lower Omo, amongst neighbouring peoples who had just emerged from a terrible famine, we understood so well the excitements, frustrations and hardships they were experiencing. We probably met only two or three times during that year but, when we did, so much could be left unsaid that it seemed as though we had known each other for ages.

In the summer of 1978 Katsuyoshi and I worked together, at Minpaku, on the proceedings of the First International Symposium which he had organized the year before and which were later published as *Warfare amongst East African Herders*. I was accompanied by Pat and our three year-old son Danny and Katsuyoshi and Masako (who now had their first child, Michiko) were fantastic hosts. They organized every aspect of our stay with such care and thoughtfulness (including finding us a house in the grounds of Shimogamo Shrine in Kyoto) that we have no more vivid and happy family memories than from those two months in Japan. We are often reminded of them by a seaside photograph of us all, taken at Ise, which now stands on a bookshelf at home. When we look at it now we feel a great sadness but, as often happens with the loss of friends and relatives, it is a sadness which makes us treasure even more the memories they gave us.

It was not just on a personal level that the visit was memorable. As we worked on the proceedings, Katsuyoshi and I often spoke about the different anthropological traditions in which we had been brought up. I learnt from him about the intellectual sources of Japanese anthropology in East Africa and about his own interests in the ecology of pastoralism and the ecological and cultural determinants of conflict. I came to realize how provincial had been my own anthropological upbringing, confined as it had been within the narrow confines of British structural functionalism. What I did not realize then was that Katsuyoshi would be going on to play such an important part in building up and strengthening Japanese scholarship in East African studies and developing a growing dialogue between Japanese anthropologists and ecologists working in East Africa, and their European and American counterparts. As an outside, non-participant, observer I am not qualified to judge just how important his role has been, but two events I have recently witnessed make me bold enough to suggest that it has no equals.

First, Pat and I were present, in April last year, at the annual meeting of the Japan Association of Nilo-Ethiopian Studies, which Katsuyoshi himself founded eighteen years ago. A vibrant and well attended meeting, it was held at Hirosaki, just as the magnificent cherry blossom was on the point of falling. Katsuyoshi, of course, was not there, but as we talked to the participants, especially the very impressive younger generation of teachers and students, we knew that we were witnessing a huge and unspoken tribute to his life's work. Japan, it seemed, had now become a leading international centre for the anthropological study of East Africa and for African studies in general. No river has only one source, but Katsuyoshi must surely be one of the most important sources of this one, which now seemed to be flowing so fast and strong.

Second, and just a few days ago (9 January 2009), we attended a much smaller meeting, on a much smaller stage, which also made us remember Katsuyoshi. This was at the ethnographic museum in Jinka, also known as the South Omo Research Centre (SORC). The founding Director, Professor Ivo Strecker, was standing down, following his retirement from the University of Mainz. The purpose of the meeting was to install, publicly and ceremoniously, the new Director, Shinichiro Hisada, of the University of Kyoto. Just as the meeting began, I discovered that I was on a list of people who were going to be called upon to speak. Fortunately, however, I knew immediately what I was

going to say. When my turn came, I pointed out that Hisada San's succession to the SORC directorship was a fitting recognition of the contribution Japanese scholars had made, and are still making, to the study of the societies and cultures of this part of Ethiopia. In congratulating him therefore, and in wishing him success, we should remember the man who had been the source and inspiration of that contribution. I was delighted that, when Hisada himself spoke, he told us that his main feeling was that he would not have been standing there, receiving (literally) the SORC staff of office, if it had not been for Katsuyoshi.

Let us, then, always remember the source.

(David Turton / African Studies Centre, University of Oxford)



Photographs: Ben Dome