

COMMEMORATING PROFESSOR NAKAMURA KYŌKO

PROFESSOR NAKAMURA KYŌKO was one of the directors of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies and is famous for her translation of Mircea Eliade's work. She also began grappling with the difficult theme of "Gender and Religion" very early as a pioneer in the subject. She passed away while working in Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University on 25 June 2001. She died of liver cancer at the age of sixty-nine.

Assembly in Memory of Professor Nakamura

As her death was so unexpected, I and everyone close to her were quite at a loss at what to do. But after about the forty-ninth day of her death, we began to prepare for a ceremony which would recall her personal character and academic achievements. A number of people volunteered to do the job from among three different groups that had an affiliation with Professor Nakamura: her classmates from Tokyo University for Foreign Language Studies (Sasaki Miyoko, Hayashi Shigeo), the University of Tokyo Department of Religious Studies (Hori Misako, Yamasaki Mie, Watanabe Kazuko, Nomura Fumiko), and Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University (Kawabata Kaori, Kurasawa Masaaki, Nomura Fumiko). About seventy people gathered at the Gakushikaikan in Hongo on 31 October 2001.

Inherit the Wind

There is a phrase from the Proverbs in the Holy Bible, "He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind." It is also the title of a movie about the "Monkey Trial" in relation to Darwinism. I like this passage from the Proverbs. This proverb must have an important theological meaning in itself, but I like to interpret it like this: "a person begins a certain work and others follow and succeed to their will." I believe that Kyōko-sensei was the pioneer in this context. The next question is, who in the world will inherit her will? There are many possible individuals and groups, but a certain organization was established recently.

Center for Gender Studies, Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University

This organization was established and the first issue of the Annual Review was published on 31 May 2003. The Vice President of Kawamura Gakuen Woman's University, Kawabata Kaori (who is not a woman), wrote a "Congratulatory Address" on the opening page of the first issue as follows:

I feel great joy to hear about the publication of the Annual Review of Gender Studies, commemorating the legacy of Professor Nakamura Kyōko. My heart is filled with deep emotion, for my efforts to support Gender Studies and my will to inherit Professor Nakamura's unfinished work were rewarded successfully—to place Gender Studies as a Minor Course, to establish a Graduate School Master's and Doctor's Course placing Gender Studies as one of the three pillars of the university, and to organize the Center for Gender Studies. I am sure that Professor Nakamura would have taken the lead in doing these things if she were still alive.

Final Words with Professor Nakamura

I have a clear recollection of the last four hours I spent talking with Kyōko-sensei in Takamatsu Hospital. With the doctor's permission, I went to see her on a Sunday afternoon in May. Kyōko-sensei was in good condition that day and we had a long talk as usual; four hours had passed before I even realized it. She said, "You can find a box there. Inside are copies of my latest book. Please take a copy." The book is the translation of Jeanine Young-Mason's "The Patient's Voice: Experiences of Illness," (Chikuma Gakugeibunko, 2001). She said, "Take care of yourself and go to a hospital for a thorough medical checkup at least once a year." This was her last advice to me. She walked to the door of the hospital room to see me off. "Can I come again?" I asked in spite of myself and she answered with a smile, as if she were a girl. "OK, but in secret!"

Kyōko-sensei!

Thank you very much for your generous heart. You always let me have my own way. I will also go 'there' pretty soon. When I do, let's continue our conversation forever.

NOMURA Fumiko

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