Obituary

Farewell to Kirikae Hideo

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It is with heavy heart that I convey the sad news to you that Prof. Kirikae Hideo 切替英雄 (25 March 1954–2 January 2021)¹ passed away in his private lodge in

1 I would like to express my gratitude to Alexander Vovin who invited me to write this obituary for JEAL, José Andrés Alonso de la Fuente who edited my rough draft, Nathan Badenoch of Viranova University who read my first draft and corrected my English, and Takahashi Yasushige who provided me with valuable information on Prof. Kirikae Hideo.

Engaru, Hokkaidō, from the carbon monoxide poisoning caused by an imperfect combustion in the underground firewood stove. I was not able to attend his funeral ceremony because of COVID-19 travel restrictions, but in *lieu* of paying my respects in person I would like to offer this written obituary in his memory.

Kirikae was born into well-off family in Sapporo and grew up in Engaru. He moved to Chiba at the age of ten, which means that he received his primary education both in his maternal hometown in Engaru and his paternal home town in Chiba. He passed the entrance examination for Keiō Junior High School, one of the most prestigious schools in Tokyo, and graduated from Keiō High School in 1972. His father was a medical doctor and his parents wanted him to go to a medical school to continue the family occupational tradition. However, he decided to enter a course in the Arts in Hokkaidō University in 1973. The educational system in Hokkaidō University was slightly different during those times; students declared their major after one and half year of study. When that time came in 1974, he decided to major in linguistics.

Prof. Ikegami Jirō (1920–2011), one of Japan's best known Altaists, was one of the main intellectual forces at the Department of Linguistics in Hokkaidō University at that time. Dr. Asai Tōru (1930–2006) was also an assistant there. He had simultaneously graduated from the Department of Linguistics in Tokyo University and the School of Medicine at Nippon Medical School. A rare linguist-cum-medical doctor, Dr. Asai had in fact started studying the Ainu language during his B.A. program. His B.A. thesis, entitled "A note on the Ainu language narrated by Sugimura Kina", was written in 1953. Since then he continued studying Ainu but produced only a few publications on this topic, but he was able to influence the field of study more indirectly. Kirikae studied the Ainu language under the guidance of Dr. Asai, whose main field site was in Asahikawa. Kirikae thus began learning Asahikawa dialect of Ainu, and obtained his B.A. degree in 1978. After that, inspired by the unique work of his mentor, Kirikae planned to enter a medical course to complement his linguistic knowledge. However, he did not end up going to medical school, opting instead to continuing M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in linguistics. He completed his M.A. in 1983 and completed his Ph.D. coursework in 1987 and left the university without a dissertation (to take up a position, as may happen in the Japanese system). Directly after this, he took up a position as a research assistant at the Department of Linguistics at Hokkaidō University. In 1989 he got a post at Tottori University teaching Japanese to foreign students, and since 1992 he was an Associate Professor at Hokkai-Gakuen University teaching linguistics and Ainu languages. He decided to take early retirement in 2018. His main Ainu language study consultants were Sunazawa Kura (1897–1990) for the Asahikawa dialect and Sawai Tomeno (1906–2006) for the Tokachi dialect.

Kirikae's most celebrated publication is his *Dictionary of the "Ainu Shin'yōshū"*. The main text (thirteen *kamuy yukar* or epic songs) was written by Chiri Yukie (1903–1922), one of the most remarkable Ainu people and a valuable contributor to our understanding of the Ainu linguistic culture, sometime between 1921 and 1922 and it was posthumously published in 1923. The most well known translation into English is due to Sarah Strong (*Ainu Spirits Singing: The Living World of Chiri Yukie's Ainu Shin'yōshū*, 2011). Kirikae's dictionary was published by the Department of Linguistics, Hokkaidō University, in 1989, and he received the Kindaichi Prize for this and other works on *Ainu Shin'yōshū* in 1990.² A revised edition of this book appeared in 2003.

His published book is divided into four parts: (1) a linguistic description of the *Ainu Shin'yōshū*, including the grammatical analysis of the Ainu text, (2) the original text in Ainu and the Japanese translation, (3) an analytical dictionary and (4) an extensive bibliography with publications related to the *Ainu Shin'yōshū*. This voluminous work spans more than 500 pages, and is a monumental achievement in the history of Ainu studies. To my knowledge, there has still never been a review of his invaluable book. This is sad because his book is in fact valued within the field much more than he had ever expected, yet little formal recognition of his brilliant contribution has been made.

Kirikae was very active carrying out fieldwork and writing papers as a member of several projects funded by the Japanese government in the 1990s. For example, he was an integral part of the projects entitled Ethnological Study of Ainu Materials in American Museums (1990–1992), Comparative Study of Euro-American Ainu Collections (1994–1996), Reconstructing Ainu Culture Based on Overseas Ainu Collections (1998–2000), all led by Professor Kotani Yoshinobu of Nagoya University. However, Kirikae eventually became disillusioned with his position in academia in the 21st century. He was particularly burdened by administrative duties, and as depression began to set in, he took a one-year leave from University teaching. Unfortunately, he would never return to his previous level of productivity. In my reading, his papers from 1980s and 1990s were detailed, vivid and analytically sharp, but in the 2000s his outputs became shorter and were losing intellectual focus.

For instance, once he chose a topic he continued writing on it, as with his research on “a numeral denoting ‘one’ in Ainu”. He wrote two papers on this topic (Kirikae 2005, 2006), but I am aware of many similar papers that were submitted and rejected. His argument here was that “in general a numeral denoting ‘one’ can be derived from the concept of ‘half of two’, and Ainu

2 The Kindaichi Prize is named after Kindaichi Kyōsuke (1882–1971), who was a Professor at Tokyo University and one of the most well-known scholars of the Ainu language.

provides a typical case illustrating this process.” Sadly, there was no response to his proposals about the numeral ‘one’ in Ainu and other languages. His ideas were unique and stimulating, but they were not taken up by others and this contributed to his growing discouragement. His efforts to continue with Ainu study went into decline as a result of these difficulties.

I first met Kirikae at Shikaoi, near Obihiro, during summer vacation of 1977. I attended an intensive Ainu language training camp led by Dr. Asai, held at a public hall that was previously a primary school. Ainu speakers such as Sunazawa Kura and Shitaku Yae, as well as researchers engaged in Ainu studies were in attendance. Fujimura Hisakazu, who became later a Professor at Hokkai Gakuen University, was among them. Kirikae and other students from the Department of Linguistics at Hokkaidō University were there too. We ate bear meat and other Ainu foods prepared by Fujimura. I recall that Kirikae translated the old Japanese song “Momotaro” into Ainu. He rendered the Japanese *hitotsu watashi-ni kudasai na* (“please give me one piece of *kibidango* sweets”) into Ainu as *shinep en-kore e-kore-an*. The personal pronominal clitics *en-*, *e-*, and *-an* are very important in Ainu. His use of these clitics in his informal translation at the camp show both his deep understanding of and appreciation for the details of Ainu language and culture. The serious, yet exciting atmosphere of this camp left a huge impression on me. Fond memories of this camp and my time with Kirikae are strong even after more than 40 years.

As a result of the enjoyable and stimulating time I spent in Shikaoi I began learning the Ainu language. I attended an Ainu study meeting organized by Kirikae once a week, but I had to give up my Ainu studies when I began my Ph.D. course in India in 1984. I spent more than six difficult years in India without electricity, gas, running water and other basic utilities. During my stay in India Kirikae received an academic position, but he was always supportive of my pursuits and generously encouraged me with many letters. This continued even after coming back to Japan with my wife and daughter in 1990. I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt thanks to him.

His dream during his young days was to publish *Die Ainu Grammatik*. I do not know why he chose a German title over English. Sadly, this dream never came true. But his broad interests and investigations are an inspiration beyond his main concentration on the Ainu language. Kirikae’s love of the Esperanto language and a wider range of literary works by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Takeda Taijun were part of the passionate curiosity that drove his work and motivated me and others. Alas! My best friend is no more. I will miss him forever, and pray that his soul may rest in peace.

List of Selected Publications by Kirikae Hideo

Monographs

1. 『アイヌ神謡集』辞典 テキスト・文法解説付き [*Dictionary of Yukie Chiri's "Ainu Shin'yōshū" with Text and Grammatical Notes*]. Sapporo: Department of Linguistics, Hokkaidō University 北海道大学文学部言語学研究室, 1989. (later published in: Tōkyō: Daigaku shorin 大学書林, 2003).
2. 沢井トメノ共(編), アイヌ語北海道東部方言教本 [*Handbook of Eastern Hokkaidō Ainu*, co-edited with Sawai Tomeno]. Tokyo: ILCAA 東京外国語大学アジア・アフリカ言語文化研究所, 1998.

Articles in Books and Journals

3. 「いく, くる, くだる, さがる, のぼる」を表わすアイヌ語の動詞の語彙構造: 地理的条件, 主として河川を軸として規定される構造について [The lexical structure of Ainu verbs meaning 'go', 'come', 'descend', 'go backwards' and 'ascend': Geographical features, mainly for structures defined around rivers]. *Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan* 言語研究 81. 123–126, 1982.
4. アイヌ語の名詞句の構造と合成名詞 [The noun phrase and noun compounds in Ainu]. *Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan* 言語研究 86. 105–121, 1984.
5. アイヌ語とはどんな言語か [What kind of language is Ainu?]. *Gekkan Gengo* 月刊言語 14 (2). 60–66 and 90, 1984.
6. Sound-Reproduction from Bronisław Piłsudski's Recordings and Their Contents: Old Notes on Wax Cylinder Cases Written by Bronisław Piłsudski. *Bulletin of the National Museum of Ethnology Special Issue* 5. 165–206, 1987.
7. アイヌ語の人称接語の不定人称形と一人称複数形 [The indefinite and first person plural affixes in Ainu]. *Journal of the Linguistic Society of Japan* 言語研究 95. 286–287, 1988.
8. American Philosophical Society Library の Lyman Papers [Lyman's Papers at the American Philosophical Society Library]. *Journal of Development Policy Studies* 開発論集 50. 109–118, 1992.
9. Some geographical concepts of the Ainu. In: 岡田宏明 (編), 環極北文化の比較研究 [*Comparative studies on circumpolar cultures*, edited by Okada Hiroaki]. Sapporo: Hokkaidō Daigaku Bungakubu 北海道大学文学部, 1993. 103–120.
10. アイヌ語十勝方言による昔話「島を引いて泳ぐオタスの少年の物語」の辞典と文法 (1) [Grammatical analysis and dictionary of "The Tale of the Lad from Otsu Who Swims Pulling the Island", a legend in

- the Tokachi dialect of the Ainu language (1)]. *Journal of Hokkai-Gakuen University* 北海学園大学学園論集 88. 123–286, 1996.
11. アイヌによるアイヌ語表記 [“The Ainu language according to the Ainu”]. *Japanese Literature: interpretation and reception* 国文学：解釈と鑑賞 62 (1). 99–107, 1997.
 12. Social Aspects of the Ainu Linguistic Decline. *Senri Ethnological Studies* 44. 161–174, 1997.
 13. アイヌ語十勝方言話者による仮名書きアイヌ語テキストの分析 [Analysis of Ainu Texts in Kana by Speakers of the Ainu dialect of Tokachi]. *Journal of Hokkai-Gakuen University* 北海学園大学学園論集 96/97. 149–169, 1998.
 14. アイヌ語十勝方言による昔話「島を引いて泳ぐオタスの少年の物語」の辞典と文法 (2) [Grammatical analysis and dictionary of “The Tale of the Lad from Otasu Who Swims Pulling the Island”, a legend in the Tokachi dialect of the Ainu language (2)]. *Journal of Hokkai-Gakuen University* 北海学園大学学園論集 88. 315–349, 1998.
 15. 頻出アイヌ語地名の形態論的構造 [The morphological structure of some commonly found Ainu toponyms]. *Studies on Ainu Toponymy* アイヌ語地名研究 3. 105–142, 2000.
 16. アイヌ語のもう一つの1 [Another numeral denoting 1 in Ainu]. *Journal of Hokkaido Ethnological Society* 北海道民族学会 1. 3–11, 2005.
 17. 山田秀三のアイヌ語地名研究 [Yamada Hidezō's Studies on Ainu toponymy]. *Bulletin of the Hokkaido Ainu Culture Research Center* 北海道立アイヌ民族文化研究センター研究紀要 11. 200–208, 2005.
 18. アイヌ語の1を示す数詞 [The Numeral ‘one’ in Ainu]. *Journal of Linguistic Society of Japan* 言語研究 129. 227–242, 2006.
 19. 日常アイヌ語と口承文芸のアイヌ語 [Colloquial Ainu and the Ainu language of oral literature]. *Japanese Literature: interpretation and reception* 国文学：解釈と鑑賞 75 (1). 61–65, 2010.
 20. 地名真駒内の由来 アイヌ語 mak の意味 [Meaning of the Ainu toponym Makomanai]. *Journal of Hokkai-Gakuen University* 北海学園大学学園論集 153. 243–248, 2012.
 21. アイヌ口承文芸における一人称 [The Narrative First Person in the Oral Literature of the Ainu]. *Journal of Hokkai-Gakuen University* 北海学園大学学園論集 153. 249–258, 2012.
 22. アイヌ語の作意の見えない言語形式 [Meaningless linguistic form of Ainu]. *Journal of the Center for Northern Humanities* 北方人文研究 10. 105–117, 2017.

Apart from these works, he also translated Ainu texts, especially those written by Kannari Matsu (1875–1961), into Japanese, contributing at least 10 books together with Takahashi Yasushige.