



IN MEMORIAM

James David REID
(1927–2017)

James David Reid, founder and original Editor of the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*, passed away peacefully surrounded by family on 5 June 2017. He was 89 years old.

David Reid, as he was known to his colleagues, was born on 21 November 1927. He graduated from Illinois Wesleyan University (Bloomington, IL) in 1949. After finishing a Master's in Theology from Wesley Theological Seminary in 1955, he entered the graduate program in Religious Studies at Harvard University and received his PhD in 1965. In the course of his career he completed the doctoral course in Religious Studies at the University of Tokyo (東京大学大学院文学研究科、宗教学・宗教史学専攻) in 1970, and then continued his graduate research at the Collège de France in Paris (1970–1971).

First coming to Japan in 1950, he eventually served for more than forty years as a missionary with the United Methodist Church. He taught at the Japan Biblical Theological Seminary (日本聖書神学校) from 1965 to 1976, and then as Professor of Sociology of Religion at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (東京神学大学) from 1980 to 1990. He later finished his academic career as dean of the Faculty of Humanities (人文学部) at Seigakuin University (聖学院大学). He also taught at Tsukuba University (筑波大学), Japan

Women's University (日本女子大学), and University of Tokyo (東京大学). He also served as Director of the International Institute for the Study of Religions in Tokyo where he revived the journal *Contemporary Religions in Japan* (1960–1970) as the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*. In his first editorial (Volume 1 [March 1974], pp. 3–4) he wrote concerning the new name and aims of the journal:

Those affiliated with this Institute would doubtless agree to a man that while *Contemporary Religions in Japan* should by no means be exempted from the critical evaluation that applies to scholarly journals, the fact that it drew together so much worthwhile material during the eleven years of its publication (1960–1970) is an achievement for which we can only be grateful. To say that we desire to carry forward the high ideals of our predecessors means first and foremost that we, like them, are concerned to raise the standards of this Institute's publications.

The new name *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* is intended to suggest the orientation in terms of which we hope to proceed. This choice of name implies two things. First, it means that we want to give greater emphasis than before to scholarly presentation of religious perspectives and to scholarly studies of religion, particularly Japanese religion. Second, it means that we want to make clearer than before the welcome this Institute extends to historical and methodological studies—a welcome obscured to some extent by the former name.

He closed his editorial with an expression of expectation for the future of the journal which we hope has been somewhat fulfilled over the past forty-some years, though never completely:

We earnestly solicit your scholarly contributions, your responses to the contributions of others, and your suggestions for improvement. Through such interaction and the changes in perspectives, methods, and research interests it entails, together we may find it possible to make a meaningful contribution to the pursuit of knowledge in this fascinating, if exasperating, field of religious studies.

David Reid was an editor *par excellence*, meticulous and careful with details, with a high academic standard for submissions. He did not publish much of his own scholarship, but focused on “a few good articles” that were concise and clear. He was the co-author (with Matsumoto Shigeru, Suzuki Norihisa, and Jan Swyngeouw) of 『菊と刀と十字架と』 (1976), and many of his essays in English were collected into *New Wine: The Cultural Shaping of Japanese Christianity* (Asian Humanities Press, 1991), including his essay

on ancestor worship among Japanese Christians which is still consulted as authoritative by Japanese and Western scholars. He was also the hidden translator from Japanese of many works that appeared in the *JJRS* and elsewhere, an often overlooked academic contribution.

Yet to those who knew him, David was much more than just his scholarly achievements. He was quick to smile, with a sparkle in his eye and a willingness to help (or a firm and honest “no” when appropriate). He assisted many young scholars starting out their research, with academic advice as well as connections to his vast network of colleagues in the world of religious studies in Japan and abroad. I remember clearly my visit to his Institute office in the mid-1970s as I was finishing up my MA at Sophia University and seeking advice on how to proceed next; he made it clear that there was no current employment possibilities at the new journal he was editing (*JJRS*), but encouraged further study and suggested some contacts. I left feeling buoyed by his friendly advice, though disappointed that I could not (at that time) contribute to the *JJRS*.

My connections with David were personal as well as academic. He was one of the key organizers of (and discussants in) an informal book club I attended that met about once a month in Tokyo in the mid- to late 1970s. He was an elder statesman at the Nojiri Lake Association (NLA), where we were both long term members with summer cabins (and his cabin served as a refuge for many of his Religious Studies colleagues such as Yanagawa Keiichi). As a stickler for details and propriety, he often was called on to clarify matters of order and tradition at the Annual Meeting and various committees, and served as President in 1987. He was a part of my membership interview in 1985, where I was asked if I was familiar with the NLA Constitution and Bylaws. When I unwisely suggested that probably no one has read all the details from cover to cover, David looked up, smiled, and said, “I have.”

Even after his retirement he stayed on our *JJRS* Board of Advisors and occasionally offered advice and friendly “corrections.” Without his initiative and careful editing so many years ago, the *JJRS* would not exist. When my own father passed away I felt that somehow the world was a different place. The passing of David Reid leaves the same sense of loss, and yet also a sense of challenge and humility. We will miss him and yet always be grateful for his presence. *Requiescat in pace.*

Paul L. Swanson
Editor, Japanese Journal of Religious Studies