

Masanori

Professor Masanori Kaji was a friend of mine. The first time we met was in Tokyo, in the early eighties but I have forgotten this short episode of an exceptionally exciting trip. More than ten years passed away (what a bad expression in this context!) before I met him again, and since then we have met many times, on many occasions and in many places (including my hometown Budapest), and wherever we met, we spent lots of times together.

It was a shy masculine friendship. Not much word, long walks, lots of beer, and the joy of seeing each other. During session, or after papers, in coffee break or impromptu discussions, he made short remarks, and I made long remarks. Almost nothing about personal life, families, colleagues, emotions. But we were together.

Our only scientific collaboration was related to the production of the edited volume, *Early responses to the Periodic System*. It was his initiative, he made all the organization work, I was only part of his plan. He asked me to comment the evolving papers in the workshops and influence the authors to produce articles that show as much coherence with each other, as it was possible.

Masanori convened the first workshop in the framework of a the International Conference on the History of Chemistry organized by the Working Party (WP) on History of Chemistry of the European Association for Chemical and Molecular Sciences held in Sopron (Hungary) in 2009. It is remarkable in itself, that he was a regular participant of the WP meetings, and a natural component/element (pun intended) of the European history of chemistry community. In Sopron, he suggested, and the audience discussed, a questionnaire that was supposed to serve as a kind of framework for the collective work on dissemination of the Periodic system. This was the real launch of the project, which was preceded by an extensive networking organization done by Masanori to gain over the possible authors.

Later in various conferences, Masanori organized workshops for the participants to deepen the discussion and intensify the coherence of this collective enterprise. As always, he was mostly silent and reserved during the workshops but we all felt that he was the mover of the whole project. After the last workshop (Barcelona 2010), Masanori and the contributors asked Helge Kragh and me to be coeditors of the planned volume. Gradually, we could collect the participants' texts, several times with requests of minor or major corrections. Looking for a prestigious publisher was a difficult job, and it was Masanori, who got in touch with the Oxford University Press that undertook the publication and carried out the technical tasks smoothly at a high professional level.

The book appeared in early 2015 and we intended to launch it in the 10th Working Party conference held in Aveiro, Portugal, in September. Short time before the meeting, Masanori sent me an email with the shocking information that his doctors did not advise him to travel because of some sickness. This sickness soon proved to be pancreatic cancer..

In February this year I took a trip to Tokyo on the invitation of Professor Hideto Nakajima, head of Department of History, philosophy and Social Studies of Science and Technology, Graduate School of Decision Science and Technology of the Tokyo Institute of Technology. He was Masanori's boss. In a seminar I was able to speak about our collective volume and launch the book together with Masanori at last, in the attentive and understanding atmosphere of the department.

We could manage to spend a whole day together. This was the time when we could break our silence and talk really openly about the approaching end of his route, despite our faraway cultures. We were not terribly emotional, rather meditative. I felt that he could talk more openly to me about his worries and possible strategies to me, who belongs to such a faraway culture. We took a long walk in Masanori's hometown, Yokohama. Visited churches, temples, the China town, and had tea. It was so peaceful and friendly. In the evening, he

invited me to have dinner with his wife, Michiko, in their most remarkable house he had explicitly designed to both hold his books and host his friends. It was so full of books, more than I could ever imagine. Friendly chat, photo, saying good bye.

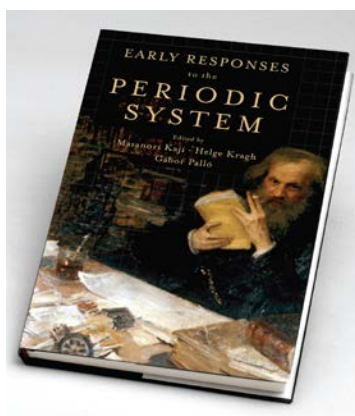
Then one or two emails, and eventually Michiko's message. He did not complain, but rather lived a full conscious intellectual life until the end.

Gabor Pallo

October, 2016



February 2016: Masanori, Gabor and Masanori's wife Michiko when Gabor visited their house



Seminar at Tokyo Institute of Technology, where Masanori worked.

Gabor gave a seminar in February, 2016. Here Masanori and Gabor in front with the book they edited together.