

Chapter 1

The Funeral Service of the Late Prof. Kaoru Ishikawa

Reportage of the Funeral Ceremony

Professor Kaoru Ishikawa passed away at 7:56 a.m. on the 16th of April 1989 in Chofu Touzan Hospital. He was 73 years old.

In January 1988, he was admitted into St. Luke's International Hospital in Tsukiji, Tokyo, and had an operation to remove colorectal polyps. While he had been in and out of hospital for about a year, he showed up looking quite well at a party held in the Hotel Okura on the 23rd of January 1989 to celebrate his commendation of the Second Class Order of the Sacred Treasure. Everyone at the party was relieved and happy to see him. He seemed to be getting better, and he actually managed to attend some meetings and other gatherings after that day.

However, he suddenly fell down at home on the 13th of April and soon became unconscious and passed away on the 16th April without regaining consciousness despite his family's devoted care. This was a heartbreaking moment for all of us.

His wake was held on April 18th, and a private funeral on the 19th at his home in Tobitakyu, Chofu City. A formal funeral was held jointly by, Musashi Institute of Technology and the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers (JUSE) at the Main Hall of Zojo-ji Temple, Shiba, Minato ward, on April 24th. At 11:30 a.m. on that day his son Tadashi arrived there with his father's portrait (remains) and proceeded to the funeral hall along the lines of funeral attendees with the music of Ravel's *Pavane for a Dead Princess* performed by the brass band of Musashi Institute of Technology.

Around 400 people attended the funeral from a variety of fields, including industry, academia, and universities. Messages of condolences were delivered by the representative of the funeral organizing committee, Shoichi Furuhashi, the acting president of Musashi Institute of Technology; Kohei Suzue, the President of JUSE; Takashi Mukaibo, a friend and the former President of the University of Tokyo; Ryoichi Kawai, the Chairman of Komatsu; and Hiroto Harusawa, representing Prof. Ishikawa's students. There were also over 1,500 telegrams received from within Japan and abroad

and some were read solemnly. Despite the rain, approximately 3,000 people including students attended to the memorial service following the nominated incense. The lines of people wishing to offer incense lasted until around 3:00 in the afternoon.

Condolence Telegrams

A large number of telegrams were delivered both from within Japan and over twenty overseas countries expressing condolences, including from some renowned scholars to those who worked with Prof. Ishikawa. Here are some of them:

“I am deeply saddened by the passing of Dr. Ishikawa. He was my good friend, and his death is a most significant loss to the world.”

—**W.E. Deming**

“Professor Ishikawa made a great world-class contribution to the field of quality control, and we all grieve deeply his departure from this world.”

—**J.M. Juran**

“President Ishikawa was an excellent engineer with a far-reaching vision, and his ideals will live in Musashi Institute of Technology, and will also be a part of the Oregon Institute of Technology in the future.”

—**Larry Blake,**
President of the Oregon Institute of Technology

“Professor Ishikawa is an old friend of the Chinese people, and did a great deal of beneficial work toward dissemination of quality control in China. We will never forget him.”

—**Yang Zhenya,**
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of
the People’s Republic of China to Japan

“We extend our heartfelt condolences at the sad news of the passing of Professor Kaoru Ishikawa, who was one of the top global mentors in the field of Quality Control. We would like to express the greatest appreciation for his guidance to our regional chapter.”

—**QC Circle Regional Chapter**

“We have now restarted our business, and will try our best to pay back Professor Ishikawa’s support and friendship over the years. We will apply the lessons learned from him and continue our efforts for our employees and the world.”

—**A president of a small enterprise**

“I was deeply sorry to hear that we have lost such an indispensable person in the efforts toward quality improvement for Japanese corporations Japanese corporations. We believe that we must now make even stronger efforts to be at the top level in the world in order to show our gratitude to Professor Ishikawa. It is really sad. Really sad.”

—**A card to Professor Ishikawa’s son, Tadashi,
from an engineer of an electronics manufacturer**

Memorial Address

Shoichi Furuhashi, Acting President,
Musashi Institute of Technology

Representing our institute, I would like to express our deepest sadness to the passing of Professor Kaoru Ishikawa, the president of Musashi Institute of Technology.

In spite of all the well wishes of our staff and students of the Institute for his recovery, he sadly left us on the 16th of April. It was far too sudden, and we are all deeply shocked in grief and confused by the loss of our great mentor. Our thoughts are with his bereaved family in immeasurable grief.

He graduated from the Applied Chemistry Department, School of Engineering, the University of Tokyo, in 1939, and served as a naval ordnance officer during World War II. After that, he worked for the University of Tokyo as a professor for about 30 years, contributing to great achievements in education and research, and thereafter became a professor emeritus. In 1978, our institute welcomed him as the president, and was led by him for 11 years.

During his presidency, he put a great deal of efforts into the organizational reform of the Institute, the vitalization of education and research, and internationalization, for the purpose of practicing our institute's philosophy that has supported its traditions for 60 years: fairness, freedom, and autonomy.

Due to his glorious record of both domestic and international achievements in education, research and the industrial world, he was awarded the Second Class Order of the Sacred Treasure in 1988, and has been posthumously granted *Shoshii* (Senior Fourth Rank).

The full extent of his enterprise, however, has not been completed due to his passing, and we have now lost our important leader. Actually, a few days prior to his passing, Professor Ishikawa made a sudden appearance without notice at a meeting in the Institute, and took a sip of beer. It was early in the morning on the following day that he collapsed, so this was the last opportunity to take a drink with us.

That day, as he actually changed his schedule and dropped by to see us in the Institute, I cannot help but think that he knew instinctively his end was near and came to say a last good-bye to the Institute that he had dedicated his life for 11 years, and to give us a message to continue his will. All of us at the Institute swear that we will cherish his ideal and make stronger efforts to ensure further development. So we ask him to please observe and protect us forever from Heaven.

Finally, I would just like to say: rest in peace, Professor Kaoru Ishikawa.

Memorial Address

Kohei Suzue, President, JUSE

First of all, please allow me to express my sincere condolences on the loss of Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa, Director of the Union of Japanese Scientists and Engineers.

When statistical quality control and its way of thinking were brought to Japan from the United States shortly after the end of the War, Dr. Ishikawa realized that quality control was crucial in order to develop domestic industry, and therefore devoted himself to its study.

Dr. Ishikawa became aware that the American-style quality control, which only involves specialists, would have only a little effect considering the Japanese industry culture. He suggested that what was needed was quality control participated by all the employees, from top executives to front line workers. As part of his effort to realize full participation, Dr. Ishikawa came up with QC Circle activity that is to be promoted mainly by front line workers. He not only invented the activity, he also gave guidance and worked hard for the realization and dissemination of QC Circle activity. These, Company-wide Quality Control (Japanese TQC) activities and QC Circle activities in Japan, later spread to industries widely. Japanese TQC is considered a role model internationally, and over 50 countries and regions practice QC Circle activity today.

Dr. Ishikawa's influence outside Japan was also immense. He visited 33 countries and regions in 30 years, to study quality control activity, to build networks and to provide counseling. His major achievements also include planning and taking a leading role in organizing the International Conference on Quality Control and the International Convention on QC Circle, to host an international conference for the first time.

Dr. Ishikawa had always been a key player in the field of quality control activity. It is with deepest sorrow to lose someone so important, suddenly. The passing of Dr. Ishikawa is a great loss to our nation as well.

In closing, I would like to offer my sympathy, on behalf of JUSE, with our determination to further develop activities inspired by Dr. Ishikawa.

Memorial Address

Takashi Mukaibo, University Classmate;
Former-President, the University of Tokyo

I would like to give a farewell address to my friend, Kaoru Ishikawa.

You and I were good friends since our school days for 53 years. I had heard that you, the most energetic of all our fellow alumni, had been unwell since last year, but I didn't have much chance to see you, so I was worried about you.

When I saw you on January 23rd, at the party to celebrate your receiving of the Second Class Order of the Sacred Treasure, you looked well and I was relieved then, but it actually turned out to be the last opportunity for me to see you.

Our class at the university was very comfortable to be in, and all of us were quite good friends. You and I were especially close as we did our final-year research under the same professor and spent a lot of time in the same room. Our generation may have been the last who were able to enjoy the real freedom to study and live before the war, and I remember we enjoyed traveling and skiing during the holidays as well as studying.

After the war, you went back to the university and achieved great things in the field of quality control, and this became widely recognized in the world.

It is often said that Japan hasn't developed much in the way of academic-industry partnerships, but your achievements were some of the rare and typical examples of outstanding and direct contributions from research at universities to industry.

Always very active and positive, you worked extremely hard and aggressively for the advancement of both academia and industry. Perhaps it was these vigorous efforts over the years, which exhausted you, and took you from us too early. It is really a massive loss for us as we could have expected further achievements from you in the coming years, but I am sure you had no regrets because you had done everything you could.

You often called your friends "*Kisama*"[†]. I'm sure you learned this when you were a naval engineer officer during World War II, and I think maybe you used the same expression with your children at home.

I imagine that you may well have said to your children, "*Kisama*, please look after your mother." just before you faded away and left us. Please remember that your wife

[†] *Kisama* (“貴様” in Japanese Kanji, the pronoun “kisama”) means “you” in English. *Kisama* is a formal expression used by officers of the Imperial Japanese Navy addressing each other. Outside the Navy it was considered a very rough but friendly expression, therefore seldom used. Prof. Ishikawa favored the use of this word among friends even outside the Navy.

and children will be fine, and do not worry about them. Please now rest well in peace, as you have worked so hard, and have led such a busy life. Good-bye.

Memorial Address

Ryoichi Kawai, Friend; Chairman, Komatsu Ltd.

I would like to deliver my farewell words respectfully as a friend of late Dr. Ishikawa.

Last January, when I attended the celebration party for his receiving the award of the Order of the Sacred Treasure and delivered a congratulatory speech to him, I noticed he had lost weight but was full of energy. I hoped that he would get well soon. I am feeling emotionally painful that I have to deliver my farewell today. I could only imagine how deeply his family, relatives and his students would miss him. Looking back, I recalled that I had known him since we were in the tennis club at university, where I had been a literature major and he had been a science major.

I did not just get the normal acquaintance, but received special advice and instruction from him. It was almost thirty years ago, when our company was exposed to foreign competition for the first time and faced a life-or-death threat, I rushed to Dr. Ishikawa and asked for his support to overcome this crisis. Thanks to his counseling, our company managed to get over the crisis by putting our company effort into the improvement of quality of our product and the reform of our corporate management style. This built the foundation for our subsequent growth. Without his support or quality control then, our company would not have existed now. I wish to express my sincere gratitude for his generous support and instruction.

Since the way he talked was always calm and objective, whoever listened to him was convinced to make a sincere effort to improve. When he strongly pointed out that we still had a lot to do for globalization in our corporate system, I was shocked not one time but several times. On the other hand, when he spoke about our company, not to us but to others, he said that Komatsu stood a good chance of overcoming the crisis if we worked hard. It made us happy and encouraged us. I was impressed by his personality so many times and learned so much from him. This is what I most fondly remember about him.

I don't think that I need to tell about his tremendous accomplishment. As one working in an industry, I would like to stress that, thanks to his instructions on company-wide quality control and QC Circle activity, our company succeeded in building a strong foundation in the Japanese industrial sector. Dr. Ishikawa, who was devoted to the industrial world and showed us his strong leadership, has now passed away. I feel extremely regretful about it.

Lastly, I sincerely express my gratitude and appreciation to my friend, Dr. Ishikawa.
May his soul rest in peace.

Memorial Address

Hiroto Harusawa, Chairman,
Student Association of Musashi Institute of Technology

I would like to give a farewell address for our beloved President, Professor Kaoru Ishikawa, as the representative of all students of Musashi Institute of Technology.

Professor Ishikawa did manage to recover once from the illness that he had been suffering from since last year, which was a great relief to all the students of the Institute. However, he actually then passed away suddenly on the 16th of April 1989, and the loss of our mentor whom we greatly respected came as a great shock to us all.

He assumed the post of the President of Musashi Institute of Technology in 1978, and from that time onwards practiced “fairness, freedom, and autonomy,” which is our Institute’s philosophy based on a long and noble tradition.

He also directed us to follow three guideposts in life: “Try hard to cultivate your sense as an internationally minded person,” “Aim to become an individual who values cooperation and responsibility,” and “Aim to become an individual who plays an important role in developing scientific technology both in Japan and in the world.”

Professor Ishikawa will always be remembered as a person who led us and watched over us with a kind, warm heart.

He was not only the leader of our Institute, but also an internationally-respected authority on company-wide quality control, whose passion was to disseminate its principles and apply its technology all over the world. We are, and always will be, very proud of ourselves for being guided by this great person.

It is really sad to say good-bye to Professor Ishikawa here, but we will follow his ideals and the strength of spirit he showed us and try our best to realize his will.

Finally, in closing this address, I would like to say my heartfelt prayers for Professor Ishikawa to rest forever in peace.

