

Editorial

To the memory of Professor
David Pingree (1933 – 2005)

When I asked Prof. David Pingree whether he was interested in coming to Japan in order to participate in the 23rd General Assembly of the International Astronomical Union which was to be held in Kyoto in the summer of 1997, he answered that he was only interested in manuscripts and that if he could investigate some Sanskrit manuscripts in Japan he would accept our invitation. Eventually we were successful in hooking him with some catalogues of Sanskrit manuscripts in Japan. During his one week stay he visited three university libraries in Kyoto and one in Tokyo. He was not interested in sightseeing at all.

In the University of Tokyo Pingree found a Sanskrit manuscript which no one had studied. It was an astronomical text, *Amṛtalaharī* of Nityānanda. Pingree was very quick in working on it and he contributed the result of his work to the first volume of SCIAMVS which was published in the spring of 2000.

We regarded him as the ideal reader of SCIAMVS because the aim of this periodical was to offer source materials in the history of exact sciences in antiquity and middle ages, the subject to which Pingree devoted his life. When I visited him on his 72nd birthday, i.e., 2 January, 2005, I brought the fifth volume of SCIAMVS as a birthday present. He was very glad to have it and he said he was willing to give us more materials to publish.

On 11 November, 2005 Pingree passed away after a long struggle with diabetes. I knew that he was sick, but I never dreamed of such an early demise. It happened that Brown University decided to close the department of history of mathematics this year and Pingree was about to retire as the last full professor of the department. The department, started by Otto Neugebauer, has been the world center of the history of exact sciences for about sixty years. It is very regrettable that such an important institute can not survive any longer.

Pingree left us a huge collection of source materials in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit and Arabic besides his own invaluable writings. His library is one of the richest in the world, and is irreplaceable as a resource for scholarship, which, therefore, is indispensable for the future scholarship not only in the history of science but also in humanity in general. I hope his valuable collections will be kept together in one place for those who are eager to get access to the original sources. I am reminded of the Needham Research Institute in Cambridge University which keeps all the

collections of Joseph Needham and which is now the major center outside China itself for the study of the history of Chinese science.

I am glad that in the present issue we could contain two articles by young Japanese scholars. We owe much to the referees who could check the Latin text and the Manchu texts so that the articles be more reliable. We also thank those referees who read the cuneiform text and the Greek text very carefully. In a sense this periodical is the result of co-working of authors, referees, and editors. I hope such a partnership of scholars of a high academic quality will continue in future issues.

Kyoto
December 11, 2005
Michio Yano