
PROFILE

Professor Yoneo Ishii was born in Tokyo. While he studied the Thai language as recommended by his teacher, Professor Ishii felt a growing need to go to Thailand. His wish was realized when he was enrolled at Chulalongkorn University in Thailand after joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Having studied the Thai language along with history, society and religion of Thailand, Professor Ishii entered the Buddhist priesthood so that he could come in touch with the spirit of Thai people. In 1958, Professor Ishii spent three months of priesthood at Wat Bowonniwet, a notable temple in Bangkok. He then participated in the Comprehensive Survey Team on Rice Growing Societies of Southeast Asia (the Japanese Society of Ethnology) and the Southeast-Asia Scientific Expedition Team (Osaka City University) and travelled by jeep to Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. Through these expeditions, he could experience widely the cultures of many different peoples of Southeast Asia, which was a very rare opportunity to have during that time. Such experiences were fully utilized later in his research work.

After completing his studies in Thailand, Professor Ishii worked at the Japanese Embassy in Bangkok for seven years until he returned to Japan in 1963. He then became an official in charge of Thai Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1965, when the Center for Southeast Asian Studies was established at Kyoto University, he was invited to join the center where he started his full-fledged academic career. He was later promoted to professor in 1967 and served as director of the center from 1985 until he retired in 1990. In that year, Professor Ishii moved to the Institute of Asian Cultures of Sophia University and devoted himself to teaching in addition to his academic pursuits. He was assigned to director of the same institute in 1993.

Professor Ishii has published numerous books on Thai religions mainly from a sociological perspective. Among those, a book titled *Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History* (1975) was translated into English and Malay and is still referred to as the standard book on Thai Buddhism throughout the world. His *The Computer Concordance to the Law of the Three Seals*, (5 volumes, 1990) also received high acclaim from Thai academic circles.

At present, Professor Ishii, while devoted to training young researchers, plays an active role in international academic circles. This year, he will chair the meeting as the president of the 13th Congress of the International Association of Historians of Asia. In this way, Professor Ishii continues to greatly contribute to the promotion of Southeast Asian area studies.

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

- 1929 Born in Tokyo
- 1955 Left Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Department VII, Class III (Thai Language course) before graduating, and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Asian Affairs Bureau, Minister's Secretariat)
- 1957-58 Enrolled at Department of Literature at Chulalongkorn University as a Foreign Affairs Ministry exchange student
- 1958-63 Served at the Japanese Embassy in Thailand
- 1963-65 Worked at Asian Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- 1965-67 Assistant Professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University
- 1967-90 Professor at the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University
- 1980 Received a Doctorate (Ph.D.) in Law from Kyoto University
- 1980 Unattached Court official at the Board of the Crown Prince's Affairs (attended His Imperial Highness Prince Naruhito on a journey to Thailand)
- 1985-90 Director of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University
- 1987 Conferred the Third Class of the Order of the White Elephant from the Kingdom of Thailand
- 1990- Professor of the Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University
- 1990 Became Professor Emeritus of Kyoto University
- 1991- Director of the East Asian Cultural Center for UNESCO at Toyo Bunko Library
- 1991- President of the 13th Congress of the International Association of Historians of Asia
- 1992- Counselor to the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (in charge of cultural sciences)
- 1993- Director of the Institute of Asian Cultures, Sophia University

MAJOR WORKS

- Salvation of Religious Precepts*, Kyoto, 1969
- Sangha, State, and Society: Thai Buddhism in History*, Tokyo, 1975
(translated into English and Malay)
- Thailand—A Rice Growing Society*, (ed.), Tokyo, 1975 (translated into English)
- The World of Indochina Civilization*, Tokyo, 1977
- Formation of Southeast Asian World*, (co-author), Tokyo, 1985
- The Six Hundred Years' History of Thai-Japan Relations*, (co-author), Tokyo, 1987 (translated in Thai)
- Introduction to Thai Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1991
- Reception of Buddhism and Its Transformation of Southeast Asia*, (ed.), Tokyo, 1992
- History of Southeast Asia*, (ed.), Tokyo, 1992
- Encyclopedia on Thailand*, (co-author & co-editor), Kyoto, 1993
- The Computer Concordance to the Law of the Three Seals*, 5 vols., (co-editor), Bangkok, 1990 (written in English)