



Antonino Forte in his office at the Italian School of East Asian Studies (ISEAS), Kyoto, Japan.

## Antonino Forte, a Biographical Note

Antonino Forte (1940–2006) was born in Cefalù in Italy and graduated from the University of Naples “L’Orientale”. As a specialist in Buddhist history, Dunhuang Studies, and Oriental Studies, Forte made significant contributions in the study of the politics-religion relationship in medieval China, and many other related fields.

His main publications include *Political Propaganda and Ideology in China at the End of the Seventh Century*, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock*, and *The Hostage An Shigao and His Offspring*. Forte also edited a number of important essay collections, in addition to publishing a great number of articles, dictionary entries and book reviews. His works made pioneering contributions to many fields in Religious Studies and Oriental Studies.

Forte was deeply knowledgeable about Chinese language and Asian religions. He also inherited the long European scholarly tradition of Dunhuang Studies and Oriental Studies and was moreover influenced by some of the most prominent Japanese Buddhist scholars in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In his research, Forte was meticulous with details, closely reading literary and historical sources, but was, at the same time, guided by a holistic vision, able to select the most cutting-edge and promising topics. Despite his untimely death, Forte defined many new research directions for later scholars.

During the middle and later phase of his academic career, Forte dedicated himself to developing a public platform that transcended nations, cultures, disciplines and specializations. In 1984, he created the Italian School of East Asian Studies in Kyoto, Japan and acted as its director. Under his direction, the school became an important bridge between Eastern and Western scholarship, and an academic centre that continues fostering new scholars in Religious Studies and Oriental Studies.