

INTER-RELIGIO

A NETWORK OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS FOR INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTER IN EAST ASIA

NEWSLETTER

No. 27

Summer 1995

HONG KONG

Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre

INDONESIA

Driyarkara Institute of Philosophy

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*Institute for Oriental Religions
NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions
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Foreword

Hong Kong recently saw the launch of a new movement calling itself the Hong Kong Network on Religion and Peace. It brought together representatives of almost all the religious bodies in the territory as well as some interested individuals and non-government organizations.

The inaugural meeting was a lively affair, with the main item on the agenda being the approval of a name and charter. There was much discussion on the name, reflecting a concern that it correspond as closely as possible to the agenda of this new group. It looked for a while as though the meeting would become bogged down in a mire of semantics. In the end, wisdom prevailed and there was a consensus that, while the name is important, what really counts in the long run is the work and activities the group engages in. It struck me that it is very easy to get caught up in dotting i's and crossing t's to the neglect of more crucial and important matters.

One encouraging aspect of the inaugural meeting was the willingness of so many participants to commit effort and time to this new venture. It also confirmed that inter-religious dialogue and cooperation are clearly on the rise. This is great news and wonderful encouragement for those individuals and organizations which have been working quietly and consistently in the field for so many years.

One good example of this ongoing effort in the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto which celebrated its 35th anniversary last year. In this issue of Inter-Religio. Martin Repp, Associate Director of the Center, writes a report covering those 35 years of activity. It is an impressive testimony as to what can be achieved with minimum funding provided there are enthusiastic and innovative people on hand to do the necessary work.

With the continuation of the old network and the emergence of new members we can be hopeful for the future. If the new Network for Religion and Peace in Hong Kong can transfer the enthusiasm of its inaugural meeting into concrete activities in the coming years, then perhaps we can look forward to an equally impressive report from them in the year 2040.

Brian Lawless

The Jesuit Mission in East Asia

Vision or Mirage?

Frank LIVESEY

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The Jesuit mission to Japan and China in the 16th. and 17th. centuries has long excited interest and controversy: by its admirers it is acclaimed as a pioneer of a wholly new approach to mission, ultimately vindicated, for Catholics, by Vatican II; and viewed by its detractors as a betrayal of the full vigour of the Christian message by its willingness to search for value and truth in others cultures. Two notable contributions to the debate have recently appeared:

Ross, A.C., *A Vision Betrayed. The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1572*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1994, and Mungello, D.E., *The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

Ross, a lecturer in the history of mission at Edinburgh University, gives us a brisk and lively account of the Jesuit Mission in Japan and China. It is likely to become essential reading for any serious student. Jesuit readers in particular will take pleasure in its generous endorsement of the mission's rationale and methods, as well as its verdict that it was a success, prematurely cut short by xenophobic fears in Japan; and China and by incomprehension and ignorance in Rome.

The 'vision' which, if not betrayed, was at least deeply suspected by European Christians of the time, was of a church disengaged from its connections with colonial adventurism and set free to accommodate itself to the cultural preferences of East Asian societies. The mission was predicated on the drawing of a distinction between the incidentals of European culture and the essentials of the Faith. It was a rejection of the earlier Iberian missions to America, Africa and South Asia which were an extension of the 'Reconquista' of their countries from the Muslims. They were underpinned by the unitary concept of 'Church and Throne' which meant that, whatever the ideals of the missionaries, in reality the Kings of Spain and Portugal enjoyed unlimited rights over their 'colonial' churches and often exercised these rights to the detriment of the mission. The Pope

was little more than a spectator. The Society of Jesus, a product of the CounterReformation which strove for the reassertion of papal power, placed itself in direct obedience to the Pope; Jesuit mission hoped to advance under a papal flag distancing itself from the political and commercial expansion of Europe, and particularly from the 'conquistador' mentality of the Spanish, identified by Alessandro Valignano, architect-in-chief of the Jesuit mission, as the major impediment to the reception of Christianity in the East. Ross does not linger long over the ironies to which this subsequently gave rise: that the Jesuits partially liberated mission from the grip of Iberian monarchs only to find themselves enthralled to new masters, the rulers of Japan and China, whose whims could mean life or death; that it was the papacy itself which, in the Chinese Rites affair, acted as 'hanging judge' for its fledgling mission.

Ross sees the mission as animated by the urge "to integrate Christianity and indigenous culture so that there developed a pattern of Christian life which was Japanese or Chinese and not a replication of European Christianity" (p.204). This vision, so much at odds with the spirit of the age, is partly attributed by Ross to the effects of the Ignatian method of training which was "so rigorous and profoundly effective that it enabled individual Jesuits to be secure psychologically and spiritually so that they could shake off conventional notions and rely on their own novel solutions to local problems, even if it meant going against the local establishment of Church or State." (p.xiv). Of course this was true of the best of their number and Ross does not obscure the fact that many Jesuits did not share 'the vision'; these, however, were usually Iberian Jesuits, which Ross cites as evidence of his second explanation: that 'the vision' grew out of Italian humanism, the leading figures in the mission being almost all Italians, although later joined by French and German Jesuits. Italians were free of the 'conquistador' mentality, and were still touched by the afterglow of the Italian Renaissance despite the more sombre mood of the Counter-Reformation. It was the Jesuits who patronised Galileo and fostered the 'New Science' of the early 17th century.¹

The new concept of mission was also a result of the encounter with the 'higher civilisations' of Japan and China. In America, along the coasts of Africa, among the peoples of the east coast of India and the Spice Islands and as far as the Philippines, missionaries had come across only simple societies, each of which was a 'tabula rasa' on which Christianity could be written in bold type; in Japan and China, by contrast, the Jesuits met with 'white' people, 'white' in that they exhibited the accomplishments of European Societies. Francis Xavier and Alessandro Valignano were

persuaded that these societies had to be taken seriously in a way no other non-European society ever had been (including Muslim societies which had been dismissed a 'satanic' because of their anti-Christian thrust). Faced with drastically new realities the Jesuits rethought mission.

Ross sets Valignano at the centre of the mission. Without his "insight, imagination and determination" a lot less would have been achieved. He makes some large claims for Valignano: that he shaped the mission "in such a way as to challenge the Eurocentric understanding not only of Christianity but also of history and culture" and that his strategy broke free from precedent "not only in practice but at its deepest theological and philosophical level." (p.30) The reader will judge for himself whether this was so. Whereas in China he was able to direct "a mission that was his from the beginning", in Japan he was under greater constraint, "having to work with what was already in being, reshaping attitudes and structures as best he could." (p.32)

In Japan Valignano found a lot to reshape: he held Cabral, the Portuguese head of mission, responsible for failing to develop the mission along the lines set out by Francis Xavier; he had tried to reverse the policy of adaptation of life-style to the Japanese way; he had sown seeds of racial distrust between the missionaries and converts and encouraged dubious mass conversions of peasants under the 'persuasion' of *daimyos* (local feudal chiefs), especially in Kyushu. By contrast, he took heart from the work of Fr. Organtino Gnecci-Soldi near Kyoto who, out of a well-informed and deep respect for Japanese culture, lived a life as close to the Japanese style as possible. (It was, interestingly, Organtino who advised Valignano that Japan would be won for Christianity if only a hundred Jesuits were sent, provided that they were all Italians, whose 'modo soave' was the best way to win the people.) Overall, Valignano concluded, as a result of our not adapting to their customs, two serious evils followed, as indeed I realised from experience. They were the chief sources of many others: First we forfeited the respect and esteem of the Japanese, and second, we remained strangers, so to speak, to the Christians." (p.63)

His subsequent account of the mission, its persecution and suppression leads Ross to conclude that, developing along the lines set out by Valignano, it was "one of the successful missions": in one hundred years its numbers had risen to 500,00 despite increasingly fierce bouts of persecution. It could be destroyed only by utter ruthlessness, and for two hundred years thereafter an orchestrated campaign of anti-Christian propaganda was thought the only guarantee against re-infection.

Ross sees the Amakusa and Shimabara Rebellions of 1637-38, in which some 30,000 Christians were finally overwhelmed and destroyed by Tokugawa forces as “proof of the effectiveness of 90 years of Jesuit activity in Kyushu”. (p.102) He is impatient of attempts to explain the rebellion in economic and social categories; the rebels were “Christians, fighting with a specifically Christian inspiration” which was something “that came from their own experience” rather than from Jesuit instruction. (The rebels were exclusively Japanese, without any foreign involvement). It was a “messianic revolt” rooted in a “people’s religion”, compelling evidence that Christianity had become “domesticated to meet the needs of the situation of ordinary Christians in ways not laid down by the official theology of those who brought the Christian gospel to them or of the existing hierarchies.” (p. 103) Ross argues that it is proof that Christianity had truly penetrated Japanese life, and that the rebellion is “a confirmation that acculturation, assimilation, indiginisation or whatever the term used to describe the reality of Christianity’s integration with a new culture, has occurred.” (p. 103)

Some will question, however, whether this claim is warranted by the evidence. Others will ask if ‘acculturation’, ‘assimilation’, ‘indiginisation’ can be loosely thrown together under the umbrella of ‘integration’, and might like to draw finer distinctions. The Jesuits clearly broke new ground in the policy of ‘accomodation’: missionaries should conform to local custom in matters of life-style; the hierarchical structure of the Jesuits should replicate exactly the hierarchical distinctions familiar to Japanese; converts should lay aside only those local customs which were in conflict with Christian values. This was set down in Valignano’s “Il ceremoniale per i missionari del Giappone” of 1580. The scope of the policy, however, is limited: it is to allow the missionaries to blend into the local society without appearing to be unassimilably foreign, and thus to gain a hearing. Accomodation is a necessary condition for ‘integration’ but it is not the end itself.

Was the church ‘indigenised’? The answer is both ‘yes’ and ‘no’. Some 300,000 Japanese were Christians in 1614 when the systematic persecution began; despite the persecution, the 2,000 martyrs, and the expulsion of some missionaries, numbers did not fall. As there were never more than 150 foreign missionaries, evangelization was largely in the hands of the Japanese. At the cutting edge of growth were the *Imaos* (Jesuit scholastics), *Dojuku*; a kind of auxiliary clergy, celibate and in vows but not ordained,

and assigned to a variety of ancillary tasks, and the *Kambo*, the local lay leaders who organised the ‘confraternities’ which proved so sturdy under persecution. This might be thought a new local church structure, specifically adapted to local needs, self-sustaining, self-motivating, less dependent on foreign direction. But was it? Despite the oft-proclaimed call for a local priesthood, it was only in 1602, 50 years after Xavier’s arrival in Kagoshima, that the first Japanese Jesuit and the first Japanese secular priest were ordained. The clergy remained overwhelmingly European. Japanese resentment against discrimination in this area was a strong and divisive force. (It was a strong sense of resentment that led to the apostasy in 1609 of Fabian Fukun, the foremost Japanese Jesuit apologist.) The extensive use of the *dojuku* and *kambo* looks less like a considered policy for the creation of ‘indigenised’ structures and more like an improvisation necessary to deal with the chronic shortage of both European Jesuits and of money. If there had been more money there would have been more foreign priests. The Tridentine Church was resolutely clerical; it had no place for lay responsibility, a Protestant ‘fad’. Jesuits shared these views. If a church had developed in Japan with a much greater role for the local non-clerical leadership, we can be sure that Rome would have extinguished it.

The claim that the mission in Japan broke free from former practice “at the deepest theological and philosophical level” seems also questionable. For a process of ‘inculturation’ to have begun, a serious engagement with the principal elements of Japanese belief and thought would have been necessary. As Confucianism had not yet attained dominance in Japan it was Buddhism and Shinto that counted. The Jesuits found little to admire in either. From the start there was a confrontational approach to Buddhism: in Kyushu there was a good deal of temple and shrine destruction by Christians, and Buddhist monks living in Christian areas had marriage forced upon them. Valignano eventually urged the study of Buddhism and Shinto in seminaries; one suspects that this was so that they could better be refuted in polemical exchanges. It is difficult to see how a process of ‘integration’ or ‘inculturation’ could take place until a more positive evaluation of Japanese thought and sensibility was arrived at—similar to Ricci’s appreciation of Chinese thought.²

How far in the future an integration of Christianity with Japanese culture lay we will never know; in the early 17th century Christianity came into collision with the emerging Tokugawa state ideology—Shinkoku (literally, ‘the country of the gods’). This ideology subordinated all religious institutions to the interests of the State. It was the work of the three ‘Great Unifiers’ of Japan, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi and Tokugawa

Ieyasu, who aimed at the cutting down of all sources of opposition or dissent whether secular or religious. Principal targets were the daimyo, over-mighty subjects entrenched in their fiefdoms, and the Buddhists, particularly the warrior monks of Mt. Hiei and the *Ikkō* of the True Pure Land Sect, who constituted a state within a state. Over time the Buddhist sects became agencies of state control, a kind of 'spiritual police'. It was under daimyo protection that Christianity had first taken root; its foreign origin, suspicions about its connections with Spanish imperial ambitions, and its rapid growth made it increasingly suspect to Shinkoku thought. It had to be uprooted. As Ross notes, this ideology had no pedigree; it was a fabrication of the 16th century, but it was to become central to Japanese ideas about the proper relationship between religion and the state. It justified the demonisation of Christianity in Edo literature for the next 200 years.³

Looking beyond the 17th century when Ross closes his account, we can see that it was the Shinkoku ideology which, in the Meiji period, provoked a second bout of persecution, this time of the Buddhists, underpinned the Shintoist civil religion of the years between 1870 and 1945, and today is still alive and well in its secularised form as 'Nihonjinron' (Japanist) literature. It is perhaps this ideology which, at the time of the Jesuit mission and since, has done most to frustrate the reception of Christianity by imputing to it a 'foreignism' incompatible with a proper Japanese identity.

In China Ricci realised that the traditional methods would make little headway as "the Chinese look upon all foreigners as illiterate and barbarous and refer to them in just those terms. They even disdain to learn anything from the books of outsiders because they believe that all true science and philosophy belong to them alone." he wrote in his diary. His strategy was a response to the implications of this. Other features of Chinese life also posed problems for the evangelist: the supreme importance of the written word over the spoken word as a conveyor of ideas made preaching an act of folly; official suspicion of all religious groups as potentially subversive suggested that a religion of miracles and magic attracting a following among the poor would not be tolerated; the crucifix itself would be seen as a fetish. Ricci had to forge new tools of evangelism. He realised that progress would be very slow; before his death he commented that he had "only opened the door". A hundred years later the mission was closed. At the end a very good account of the development of that mission, Ross analyses the forces which destroyed it: the cross-currents of European policies, Jansenist and Gallican influences, squabbles among

the Religious Orders, and the mounting unease of Rome. "It was", he concludes, "ultimately the Church's denial of the validity of the way of Valignano and Ricci that led to (the Emperor) Kangxi and China's rejection of Christianity." (p. 176)

Rome's disavowal of Jesuit methods doubtless was crucial. The legate to China, de Tournon, commented that the mission would have to be destroyed before it could be reformed. But a suspicion remains that, whatever the attitude of Rome, the mission itself was in difficulties by the early 18th century, and that China was proving impermeable to Christian ideas. Ross makes it clear that he does not intend to enter the philosophical and theological debate on 'Confucianism and Christianity' to which Gernet, Rule and others have contributed.⁴ (p.xvi)

Mungello, already a substantial contributor to the study of the interplay of ideas between China and the West,⁵ sheds new light on this debate. He breaks new ground in his fascinating account of the Christian community in Hangzhou in the 17th. century under the direction of Frs. Martini and Intorcetta. (The church itself, built in 1662 is again a Catholic church today, and Mungello includes photographs of it.) This account is a prelude to an analysis of the writings of Zhang Xingyao (1633-1715) a literatus convert, baptised in 1678. Of his several works the most substantial are his *Similarities and Differences between the Lord of Heaven Teaching and the Literati Teaching*, begun in 1672 and under constant revision for 40 years, and his *History*, a massive work of 1700 pages. His works were not printed but circulated in manuscript.

Mungello believes that the significance of Zhang lies in the fact that he belonged to the third generation of Chinese Christians who were less dependent on their Jesuit teachers than had been, for example, the 'Three Pillars' of the first generation, Li Zhizhao, Xu Guangqi and Yang Tingyun. The Jesuits had been excellent teachers who were not content merely to transmit information but encouraged their students to go beyond the thinking of their teachers."⁶ Zhang was of a new generation able to think new thoughts about the harmonisation of Christianity and Confucianism, and so "he carried forward the inculturation of Christianity into Chinese culture." (p.18) 'Inculturation' he sees as "the absorption of Christianity into a culture to the degree that it not only finds expression in the elements of that culture, but also becomes an animating force that transforms the culture." (p.2)

Mungello argues that Zhang departed significantly from the received Jesuit view. Ricci had maintained that 'original', uncorrupted Confucianism was a philosophy that contained little that was incompatible

with Christianity. It was analogous to Aristotelianism in that it could provide the materials out of which a Chinese expression of Christian truth could be made. This 'original' Confucianism had, however, been obscured by an overlay of Buddhism, and in particular by the neo-Confucianism of the Song period, which had used Buddhist metaphysical categories to arrive at an interpretation of Confucianism irreconcilable with Christian faith. Zhang did not share this hostility to neo-Confucianism but rather saw his conversion as anchored in it. For Zhang, moreover, the Lord of Heaven Teaching (Christianity) was not a foreign import to China. The 'ancient truths' had been revealed at the same time in both East and West. The same God worshipped. "Zhang traced the Lord of Heaven Teaching to impeccably orthodox figures in the Confucian tradition, including the three legendary Emperors, Yao, Shun and Yu; the founder of the Shang dynasty, King Tang, the founders of the Zhou dynasty, Kings Wen and Wu, the exemplary model of selfless service to the State, the Duke of Zhou; and Confucius. Zhang believed that these sages had all transmitted the knowledge of revering Heaven." (p.82)

In the East, the teaching had been undermined by Buddhism but salvage work was begun by the Song Neo-Confucians. In the West, however, the teaching was not lost; indeed, it was improved upon 'by the revelation of Christ'. The task of the Jesuits was not, therefore, to introduce to the Chinese a new and foreign religion, a notion repugnant to the Chinese sense of self-sufficiency, but to help them recover their own ancient religion and their former God. "Zhang did not see Christianity as a foreign religion which surpassed Christianity. Rather he saw the ways in which Christianity transcended Confucianism as a form of completion or fulfillment of elements already present in China since early antiquity." (p.101) In Zhang's view Christianity was a restoration and fulfillment of the ancient Chinese religious tradition. One wonders whether many Christians, even in Jesuit circles, could have endorsed this view.

In what ways did Zhang find that the teaching of 'the great sage who had transcended human fortune and misery' (Jesus) had supplemented Confucianism? Mungello shows that Zhang believed that it deepened moral self-cultivation by promoting self-examination; it emphasised 'honour' rather than wealth as the determinant of our reward in Heaven; it directed attention to 'what is distant' (the afterlife) rather than to our daily needs; it encouraged the overcoming of our selfish desires, even to the point of self-sacrifice, by affirming the reality of eternal life. In support of this Zhang was able, by virtue of his elaborate training as a literatus, to cite evidence which no Jesuit could have commanded: The Jesuits relied on the

Four Books whereas Zhang made extensive use of the Five Classics and a wealth of historical illustration, thus establishing a more ample basis for the harmonisation of Confucianism and Christianity.

Zhang was primarily a historian and it is on his massive *History* that his reputation in China has always rested. "It is his extensive use of Chinese history to support the inculturation of Christianity in China that makes his work unique." (p. 102) Although the *History* contains few direct references to Christianity, "it contains one of the pillars of his argument for the inculturation of Christianity into China, namely his criticisms of Buddhism and Daoism." (p. 144) The betrayal by Buddhists and Daoists of the 'Ancient Truths' had left the way clear for 'the teachers from the West' to assist in the recovery of the ancient way.

Zhang was then both Christian apologist and Confucian prophet, summoning his people back to the true path. The *History* with all its subtlety and erudition, might have served, Mungello thinks, as a "Trojan horse for facilitating the inculturation of Christianity into China." (p.147)

My few comments can do little more than hint at the riches that await the reader of Mungello's book which will take its place as a major contribution to our knowledge. Some may question, however, the confidence with which he speaks of 'inculturation', as if substantial progress had been made. One difficulty is in accepting that inculturation could take place on such a selective reading of Christianity. I was left with the impression that on those rare occasions when Zhang did refer to beliefs such as Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption, Resurrection and the Church, they were not integrated with the main thrust of his work, which was to demonstrate the congruity of the Confucian and Christian moral visions. Zhang had little to work on: he would have been familiar with only those few selected passages of Scripture which the Jesuits had translated for the Prayer-book of 1625; the diversity and depth of the theological tradition would have been entirely unknown, as would the history of the Church (Zhang wrote innocently that the Church had preserved unsullied for a thousand years the moral standards of the Teaching!) He does not seem to have had much notion of the Christian experience being a corporate as well as personal one. Can inculturation take place if all that is available is a very carefully edited version of the faith?

There may have been a deep contradiction at the heart of what the Jesuits were trying to achieve. Sebes has suggested that as Ricci realised "that the Chinese world view was a global one in which science,

technology, ethics and philosophy formed an organic whole”, he tried to present Christianity as a similar ‘world-view’⁷. If this was so then it followed that those features of Christianity which marked it off as a ‘religion’ had to be obscured. Hence the disassociating of Christianity from Buddhism. But there is an inconsistency here:

Christianity could not be both a ‘religion’, as it traditionally understood itself, and an element in a world-view. Zurcher has pointed out a parallel inconsistency: in China the roles of ‘priest’ and ‘literatus’ were sharply distinct and incompatible.⁸ The Jesuits wanted to be both. It was not possible. Was it any more possible for Christianity to be both a ‘religion’ and also the philosophical keystone of an overarching world-view?

Mungello tells us that “Zhang viewed the Heavenly teaching as involving a unity of church and state in regard to China.... His view was based on the Confucian perspective in which separation of church and state would have been undesirable, because it would have violated the cosmological unity that existed between Heaven, earth and man.” (p.116) Quite so; in China the public domain was reserved for Confucianism alone; Buddhism and Daoism were matters of private concern, to be licensed, patronised, manipulated or persecuted according to Imperial whim. It is not surprising, then, that a literatus like Zhang had little sense of a ‘community of believers’; it would have relegated Christianity to the status of a sect and excluded it from the public domain, whereas his purpose was to portray it as China’s ancient wisdom recovered. Had his views taken root, Christianity might have been little more than an elevating influence on the official ideology rather than a distinctive force in its own right. Paradoxically one could argue that this would have been a partial ‘sinification’ of Christianity in so far as no regime, from Zhang’s day to the present, has shown much indulgence to any competitors with the prevailing ideology, whether it was Confucianism or its successors, Nationalism and Maoism.

But Zhang’s views were not to have a future, not only because of papal intervention, but also, as Mungello shows, because few literati were any longer interested in the Heavenly Teaching. By the mid-17th. century hostility was mounting. The Jesuits staked all on a penetration of the literati class whose patronage would both confer respectability and provide shelter against enemies. By 1719 not a single eminent gentleman in Hangzhou was a Christian; converts came from the lower strata. The rug had been pulled from under the Jesuits, who, henceforward, had to rely directly on Imperial protection which was extended to them increasingly in return for their scientific services. In early Manchu China the literati turned to orthodox

forms of Confucianism, and the Emperors sponsored the Song Neo-Confucianism so suspect to the Jesuits. So much so that the Jesuit Fr. Bouvet abandoned Confucianism as Christianity's 'dialogue partner' in favour of the *I Ching*.

In this context the edict of toleration granted by the Kangxi Emperor in 1692, giving the Jesuits the right to teach their beliefs and allowing Christians freedom of worship, cannot be seen as unqualified vindication of Valignano and Ricci, as Ross would have it. It was the result of a vigorous Jesuit counter-offensive to use their personal high standing with the Emperor to extract a measure of protection in the face of mounting hostility. By declaring that Christianity was not a 'subversive' sect, it was put on an equal footing with Buddhism and Daoism. But that was something rather less than what Ricci and Zhang had worked for. Moreover, the Edict was a grace-and-favour concession, and as Mungello tells us, "appears to have been primarily the work of Manchus on or near the throne." (p.64) The hostility of the literati was not assuaged and "it was only a matter of time before the negative attitudes of the literati towards Christianity resurfaced in the monarch's political policies." (p.64) The provocations offered by the papal representatives, de Tournon, Maigrot and Mezzabara were enough to prove the literati right and to prod the emperor into prohibition of Christian activity.

The erosion of literati interest, together with the fact that the Christians numbered only some 300,000 invites the conclusion that Lord of Heaven teaching no longer met any very great need in Chinese society:⁹ the literati had turned elsewhere and the religious needs of the masses were amply catered for by Buddhism and Daoism. Missions make little headway unless they serve some clearly felt need.

Ricci acknowledged that he had only opened the door. To be truly inculturated in China, Christianity would probably have had to follow the trajectory of Buddhism, which over centuries, underwent 'sinification' until the point was reached at which the Chinese made their own outstanding contributions to the practice of the Dharma. Historians of the Christianisation of medieval Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire have shown how prolonged and incomplete was the mission to the 'Barbarians'.¹⁰ In its encounter with Germanic and Celtic societies the 'Ancient Christianity' of the Graeco-Roman world was just as much transformed as it was the transformer. Barbarian values and Barbarian 'Rites', like Chinese 'Rites' later, seemed incompatible with Christianity, but gradually, by 'skillful means' (*Upaya* in Buddhist terms) they were accommodated; for example the values of warrior societies, only thinly dis-

guised in the concept of the 'Christian knight', animated the Crusades and still flourished in the Conquistador mentality that Valignano so deplored.

When Catholic mission resumed in the 19th. century the Valignano-Ricci approach was discredited; the Church was unblushingly 'foreign'. The Church built by the Jesuits in Hangzhou in 1622 was confiscated in 1731 and served as a Tian Hou (Goddess of the Sea) temple, while the chapel for women was converted into a Guanyin temple. It was restored to the Society in 1862, but was not re-dedicated as 'The Church of the Saviour' as it had been known, but as 'The Church of the Immaculate Conception'; a doctrine perhaps not immediately accessible to the Chinese mind.

As an 'envoi' Mungello speculates that inculturation may have been decisively moved forward by the Cultural Revolution which cut off ties with foreign Christians. As far as Catholics are concerned it does not seem that substantial progress has yet been made. More significant, however, may be other developments: the emasculation of Buddhism, the collapse of Confucianism and its successor ideology, Maoism, and in the last decade the apparent erosion of all values and the descent into a 'war of each against all', may together have created that 'felt need' which was missing in the 17th. century.

Each in his different way, Ross and Mungello have given us spirited and scholarly accounts of the Jesuit enterprise, and deserve to be widely read. Was it all a 'vision', betrayed in its own age but whose time is about to come? Or was it a 'mirage' fated to be dispelled on exposure to East Asian particularity? Perhaps we should echo the sentiments of Zhou Enlai who, on being asked his opinion about the importance of the French Revolution, replied, "It's still too early to say."

NOTES

- 1 Prominent among Galileo's opponents were the Dominicans who supervised the Inquisition. They had been displaced by the Jesuits as the intellectual elite of the Church and their hostility to the Jesuits played its part too in the Chinese Rites dispute.
- 2 For a more extended discussion than Ross allows himself of the relationship between Christian values and Japanese culture see Fujita, N.S., *Japan's Encounter with Christianity*, New York, Paulist press, 1991.
- 3 For a forceful statement of the view that Christianity was almost entirely incompatible with Japanese culture see Ebson, George, "The Cross and the Sword: Patterns of Momoyama History", in Elison, G., and Smith, Bardwell L., *Warlords, Artists and Commoners, Japan in the Sixteenth Century*, Honolulu, Hawaii University Press, 1981; and Elison, George, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan*, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1973.

- 4 Gernet, Jacques, *China and the Christian Impact*, Cambridge, Cambridge Univeristy Press, 1985; Rule, Paul, *K'ung Tzu or Confucius, The Jesuit Interpretation of Confucianism*, Sydney, Allen and Unwin, 1986; Young, John D., *Confucianism and Christianity: The First Encounter*, Hong Kong, Hong Kong Univeristy Press, 1983.
- 5 Mungello, D.E., *Curious Land: Jesuit Accomodation and the Origins of Sinology*, Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 1985.
- 6 For a study of thought of Yang Tingyun who took the first steps in expressing Christian ideas in a Chinese idiom see Standaert, N., *Yang Tingyun, Confucian and Christian in Late Ming China*, Leiden, Brill, E.J., 1988; and Standaert, N., "Inculturation and Chinese-Christian Contacts in Late Ming China", in *Ching Feng* 34 (4) (December 1991)
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Religious Broadcasting and Inter-Religious Dialogue

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The concept of inter-religious dialogue has found a respectable place in disciplines like theology, anthropology and the social sciences in general. While academics are proud of this development, some of the media practitioners are beginning to ask themselves whether they could play a role in the process of dialogue with other religions. The following article tries to see whether religious broadcasts can offer any possibility. It also tries to examine the communication, theological and philosophical basis for such broadcasts.

Dear presenter,

Today is the last day that I will ever listen to your broadcasts, because you are preaching the words of the devil and not of God. How can anybody be saved without believing in Christ? How can you call ourselves a Christian...?"

"... I beg you to stop your broadcasts today and stop misleading people by teaching that other religions too contain truths...?"

"... I have been a Hindu all my life, but after discovering the Saviour of the world, The Way, The Truth and The Life I have converted myself to Christianity. And now if you say through your broadcasts that people of other religions can also be saved, then why on earth did I convert from my religion to the Way of Christ..

These are just a few extracts from some of the letters received from the thousands of listeners of the Hindi service of Radio Veritas Asia, Manila. There were, indeed, hundreds of others who went along with the contents of the weekly multi-religious or interreligious dialogue programme called *sarvad-harama sadabhava*, (good-will among all religions). These programmes on dialogue were entirely separate from the programmes focusing exclusively on the Bible, which included biblical reflections on the Sunday liturgical readings and a weekly programme on the Bible in a serialized drama form. In the latter, the whole Bible was virtually rewritten into radio

drama format. All of these programmes still continue to be on air from what is known to be a religious radio station, called 'Radio Veritas', and which is owned by the Federation of Asian Catholic Bishops' Conference.

One would certainly be very curious to know as to what precisely evoked such overtly outrageous reactions from the listeners to the programmes. In order to answer that query, one would have to go into the whole set of arguments in the sphere of inter-religious dialogue. The purpose of this article, however, is not so much to look at the justifications for and against the concept of inter-religious dialogue, as to see if such a dialogue is at all possible through radio broadcasts.

The inter-religious programmes have their roots in personal experiences. I grew up in a town in the North of India and, besides one other Catholic family in this densely populated neighbourhood, the others were largely Hindus, with a good number of Muslims and a small number of Sikhs. Though I always witnessed different kinds of worship and religious celebrations as a growing child, these never sparked any significant questions in my mind.

Later in life, I was invited to speak on a few occasions in simple town gatherings, where religious leaders from different religious groups would also be invited to speak. These gatherings were called *Sarvadharama Sadabhava Sam melan*. *Sarvadharama* could be translated as 'all religions'; *Sadabhava* means 'good-will', 'amity' or 'understanding', and *Sam melan* means 'gathering', or 'assembly.' The goal of these meetings was to create better understanding and harmony among believers of different religions. These gatherings were in response to growing fundamentalism in some religions, giving birth to tensions, and sometimes riots, in many towns of India.

The problems of conflicts between different religions or among different sects within one religion was not a new problem at that time nor has it diminished since. The opportunities at the town gatherings were great, but the realization that the benefits were reaching only those who were able to be physically present at such a meeting also become apparent. The next question which rather spontaneously arose in my mind was: Would it be possible at all to reach a greater number of people with this message of *Sarvadharama Sadabhava*. Then came the opportunity to head a new broadcast service in Hindi from Radio Veritas Asia, Manila.

This programme was indeed, and still continues to be, only an attempt at multi-religious understanding or inter-religious dialogue. As we shall see below, radio broadcasts are basically monological in format. They are not

dialogical. Although in exceptional cases, like 'phone-ins', this objective can also be achieved, but it in no way replaces face to face dialogue. And even face to face communication does not guarantee genuine dialogue.

THE PROGRAMME'S RATIONALE

The problems of multi-religious societies are quite obvious. Different theories try to explain the causes behind these conflicts. Nobody denies that this is not a real and growing enigma in many parts of the world, though sometimes it expresses itself in other shades such as 'ethnic cleansing', 'Neo-Nazi propaganda', claims of the 'true original Church', etc.

Many of the problems, misunderstandings and tensions that exist with regard to religious beliefs could be reduced if people just knew more about other religions. Media in general could play a vital role in the dissemination of information about other religions. Underlying this concept is the conviction that all religions are in themselves noble and convey admirable moral precepts; they indicate a certain proven path to reach God, and are based on the solid foundation of centuries' old religious experiences and traditions, handed down to us through many generations, sometimes despite the terrible onslaught of invaders or well meaning 'missionaries'. How could these rich experiences of the Divine be discarded as pagan and not comprising of any truth? Does God have a monopoly of one religion, one scripture, one race or one people?

Recent church documents have recognized the richness of other religions and of different Christian churches and include ecumenical dialogue or inter-religious dialogue on their agenda. Another assumption of the programme was that if the adherents of different religions, who desire to coexist in harmony with society and the world around them, would only have the opportunity to discover what other religions really are; what their neighbours believe in; what the other person on the street keeps close to his heart; what the classmate or the teacher in the school reveres; what the meanings of different religious festivals are; what different religious symbols stand for; and how various religions come into existence, then they would begin to regard believers of other religions differently, probably with a much greater spirit of tolerance, respect, understanding and sensitivity rather than with fear, prejudice and, in some cases, hatred.

FORMAT OF THE PROGRAMME

The target audience of the programme consists of both rural and urban listeners in Northern India who understand Hindi. The programmes

are not designed for any specific social, economic or religious group. The purpose of the broadcasts is not to convert but to try to dispel the many prejudices that exist in the minds of people against other religions and their believers. The programme is broadcast on short wave. The radio station itself functions on a very limited budget, which prevents it from having 'phone-in' arrangements. Nor may the producer make long distance telephone calls to solicit reactions. In broadcast terminology these programmes are just 'talk shows'.

They appear in two slots of 5-6 minutes every week. In the first slot, the presenter tries to speak in general about the basic function of any religion, any place of worship, or scripture, or religious founder or leader, about one's relationship with God, or the general moral teachings of religions. This general slot is not on the specific teachings of any one particular religion. This is then followed by an appropriate hymn which tries to link the second slot to the first. These hymns are not always Christian hymns. The selection is made from different religions or from organizations which claim to be nonreligious. Sometimes spiritual songs from films are selected.

In the second slot the presenter tries to give information on a different religion each week. He presents some basic information, such as the origin of a religion, its founder, its different sects, its spread, its world-view, its festivals, its rituals in worship, its understanding of women, its basic teachings, etc. The information is no theological or exegetical discourse but a rather simple talk which any ordinary rural listener can understand.

SARVADHARAMA SADABHAVA — A POSSIBLE MODEL

Paddy Scannell in *Broadcast Talks* (1991:3) elaborates on what Hilda Matheson (1933), had noted: that "within this sphere (radio broadcast), people did not expect to be talked down to, lectured or 'got at'. They expected to be spoken to in a familiar, friendly and informal manner as if they were equals on the same footing as the speaker." Unfortunately, by and large the model of religious broadcasting to our day, has been one of 'sermonizing, 'getting at', and 'talking down to'. When one thinks of elements of dialogue in a radio broadcasts, one has to conceive of a model which is different from the one held hitherto.

The programme from Veritas was called *Sarvadharama Sadabhava*. The meaning of these words does not contain an element of dialogue. It has been said earlier that it is not easy to achieve dialogue through radio broadcasts. Dialogue, however, is a term with many different meanings and

nuances. The concept is discussed in depth in a recent article in *Media Development* (1993:54-61) with the title "Toward a Communication Theory of Dialogue".

During the time when I was toying with the possibility of such a radio programme and had informal discussions with several of my colleagues, they supported the idea of a dialogue programme. They unwittingly got the impression that this was another technique of evangelization, to convert the others by slowly deceiving them through this innovative magical trick called 'dialogue'.

The reason it is to be considered 'a possible model' of dialogue is that it is not/cannot be really dialogical in the strict sense of the word. It is basically monological. In other words, the very nature of this medium poses difficulties for dialogue. Unfortunately, representatives of different religions could not be brought together on one platform or programme to have an appropriate dialogue. This possibility should be considered if this model is to evolve further and get greater currency in broadcast media.

Religious broadcasting must have a theological foundation to justify its functions. In the case in question, it is an activity that is inspired by a Christian view of God, of humanity, the world and people's inter-personal relationships, based on the values of the Gospel.

The New Testament is full of incidents where Jesus enters into a dialogue with other individuals, some of whom do not belong to his own social group, e.g. the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn.4:7-42). One could easily draw a precise communication model of dialogue from this incident. The respect, the equal status in mutual communication accorded to the Samaritan woman despite her protest: "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" sets a unique model of communication before the believer.

There are clear moments when Jesus leaves his disciples free, not only to enter into communication with him but even to associate with him, when for example (Jn.6:66ff), many of the disciples leave him and go away, he asks Peter, "Do you wish to go away too?" There is no imposition of himself on his disciples, followers or others. He makes this quite clear each time he pronounces, "Whoever wishes to be my disciple..." He welcomes the children (Lk.9:46), establishing communication on their own level. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, now more popularly known as the Forgiving Father (Lk. 15), he sets up a model where barriers to communication collapse altogether. It is not only an instance of dialogue, but of total acceptance of the other. Again, before the Last Supper, bending down to wash the feet of his disciples- (Jn. 13: 5ff) he establishes a supreme model of

communication to be adopted when one is, by unavoidable circumstances, superior to the other: “So if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.”

Even before entering into the concept of inter-religious dialogue, one can get into enormous difficulties trying to understand the plain term ‘dialogue’. According to Brenda Dervin et al., “Theorists disagree about conceptual boundaries—where the dialogic begins and the non-dialogic ends”. Religious dialogue can range from the concept of incarnation whereby the Logos, the Word, becomes human thus entering into communication with humans, to the nature and quality of that communication as shown in the Gospel.

PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTIONS

There is certainly something unique in the way Jesus communicated. His success, however, was not due to his ‘techniques’ but simply because he was able to establish what Jurgen Habermas would describe as a level of intersubjectivity.

In his two volumes, *Towards a Theory of Communicative Action* (1981) Habermas basically points out that the essential presupposition for the success of the speech act is that the other partner is considered as equal, is given full freedom of expression, and has an equal right of participation. The partner in communication has the full freedom to leave the framework of action and to enter into a discourse for the purpose of reaching an agreement, in case the interaction gets into an argument. He offers a lengthy set of arguments to establish what he calls ‘communicative rationality’.

Habermas in some way elaborates the communicative action of Jesus by articulating it in more philosophical terms. A scrutiny of these two approaches could possibly lead us towards a theory and praxis of multi-religious or inter-religious dialogue. The approaches used by Jesus are practical illustrations for those serious about entering into dialogue. They provide us with a solid theological foundation. The insights offered by Habermas could well form a theoretical and philosophical basis for dialogue.

Radio certainly offers a chance to experiment with a wide variety of ideas, for in radio the limits of imagination can be stretched to their maximum. There are no limits for the presenter to stop him from taking the listeners into a new undiscovered world of other religions.

CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCHES

In the long history of Christianity it has never been easy to adapt the attitude and message of Christ to daily-life situations. It will certainly be

more difficult to adopt it to our attitude towards other religions. There are still many who protest strongly against the very idea of such a dialogue.

People planning to enter the arena of inter-religious dialogue should not expect much support from Christian institutions. Therefore, they will face financial problems in meeting production costs. For enthusiastic producers this can be very frustrating experience. These efforts may end up in a vicious circle: lack of programmes because of lack of funds, because of lack of information, because of lack of a change of attitude towards other religions. It is always comfortable to stroll on the trodden path, but, so far, broadcast media have not even found a path of dialogue to tread upon.

The lack of ready-made programmes or formats for this kind of venture could be another problem that broadcasters may encounter. Hence there is an urgent need to do research in this area so that the broadcasters can have something on hand to make use of. There are certainly scores of media practitioners who hold a tolerant and compassionate attitude towards other religions, but are unable to enter into a regular radio or TV programme, mainly because of the lack of available formats in this area. But a start has to be made at some point.

“Broadcasting is an institution-a power, an authority-and talk on radio and television is ‘public institutional’ talk, an object of intense scrutiny, that gives rise to political, social, cultural and moral concerns,” according to Scannell (199 1:7). It is thus not only a question of checking and possibly changing attitudes towards other religions, but of combining it with the discipline of public communication. A suitable method has to be found to present the other as an equal partner in communication. Religious topics must be handled with extreme care. No one wants to take the responsibility of being wrong or misunderstood. The example of Salman Rushdie is often quoted in such discussions.

Inter-religious dialogue has not yet caught the attention of the media, neither the public service nor the commercial media. Is this because the task is too gigantic? Has it do with costs or with the attitudes of media workers towards other religions? Or do media practitioners lack the imagination to initiate ideas for programmes which can captivate audiences?

Feelings related to the Divine are embedded in the innermost depths of an individual’s heart. Training in print or broadcast journalism cannot easily remove them. Thus even if a media institution decides to take up inter-religious dialogue through communication, can it do it with a total spirit of detachment from its own religious beliefs?

In the last sixty or so years since religious broadcasting began, it has taken several forms depending on the ownership of the station, the mission and vision of the particular institution, and, finally, the creativity and imagination of the broadcaster him/herself.

One of the characteristics of the future is its uncertainty. One thing, however, is certain: both religion and media will play a very significant role in the unfolding of events of the remaining decade and in the 21st. century. Hans Kung (1991:138) in *Global Responsibility: In Search of a New World Ethic*, concludes his book with these basic statements: “No human life together without a world ethic for the nations; no peace among the nations without peace among the religions; no peace among the religions without dialogue among the religions.”

With all the challenges facing the world in the next century, can the churches afford to miss the greatest challenge of all: interreligious dialogue?

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NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto:

35 Years of Interreligious Encounter in an Ecumenical Context

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In 1994, the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto celebrated its 35th. anniversary. This is reason enough to inform the member institutes of *Inter-Religio* about the history and development of this Study Center. But it is also worthwhile to introduce it to a wider audience, for example in Europe and America, because the religious situation there has changed in the last decades, and the call for interreligious dialogue has become louder. The necessity to reflect anew on the relationship between Christianity and other religions has become unavoidable. During the time of its existence and activity, the Study Center in Kyoto has accumulated a considerable amount of experience and knowledge in its encounter with a multi-religious society and culture. Therefore, it has become a place where the traditional relationship between the so-called ‘young and the ‘old churches’ has fundamentally changed. It is a place which offers American and European churches, for example, the chance to learn to improve their relationship with the other religions surrounding them.

In the following, I try to give a brief outline of the beginnings and development of the NCC Study Center. In the second part, its present work and significance for the churches in Japan and of the ecumene shall be presented.

I. HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

Effective Witness

At the end of the fifties, the NCC Study Center was established in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan and the center for many religious groups. Its

roots, however, reach further back; namely to the Scandinavian mission society “Christian Mission to Buddhists” which had been founded by the Norwegian Karl Ludvig Reichelt (1877-1952). In the first half of this century, Reichelt had been a missionary to China and, due to his direct encounter with Buddhists, he recognized how inadequate traditional mission work was. Therefore, he studied Chinese Buddhism, and in 1931, on a mountain in the Hong Kong New Territories, he built houses, accommodation for mendicant monks, and a Christian chapel, all in Chinese style. This institution, called *Tao Fong Shan* (Mountain of the Way [Logos]-Wind), became an important place of encounter between Buddhists and Christians, between East and West.

In the fifties, the “Mission to Buddhists” sent the Rev. Harry Thomsen to Kyoto. In 1959, he established the *Christian Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions* and became its director. He also started to publish the journal *Japanese Religions* (JR) where he explained the task of the study center in its first issue:

Hoping for your co-operation, that the ‘Christian Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions’ may fulfill its purpose: to give to the Christians in Japan a deeper knowledge of the Japanese non-Christian religions, in order that we may be better servants of God in this country, and that Japan in more than one meaning may be the Land Of The Rising Sun. (JR 1.1:4)

Accordingly, the cover page of the first issue was decorated by a (somewhat tacky) picture of a cross shining on the top of Mt. Fuji. The first contributions indicated already the themes which in the future would become important: Ariga Tetsutaro reviewed Ernst Benz’ article on the “Difficulty of Understanding Foreign Religions”, and Tucker N. Callaway treated the “Intolerance of Christianity”. In the second issue (JR 1 [2]), Kan Enkichi dealt with the “Problem of Christian Communication in a Non-Christian Culture”, while the poet Rinzo Shiina wrote an article on “The Japanese People and Indigenous Christianity”, discussing the foreign character of Christianity to the Japanese and its lack of success in this country. In 1963, Ariga Tetsutaro already treated the problem of the indigenization of Christianity in Japan (JR 3 [11])

One of the first publications of the Study Center was also a religious map of Japan as well as the presumably first bibliography on Japanese new religions. Harry Thomsen also wrote one of the first books in a western language on new religions in Japan; *The New Religions of Japan* (Tokyo: Tuttle 1963) which he dedicated to Karl Ludwig Reichelt.

Very soon, in 1960, the Study Center was put under the umbrella of the *National Christian Council in Japan* (NTCCJ) and received its present name, the *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions*. Hereby, the important step was performed of transferring the responsibility of an institution from a foreign mission board to the indigenous churches. The task of the Study Center under the umbrella of the NCCJ was defined in the following way:

The purpose of this Center is to promote a study of Japanese religions for the sake of an effective witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In order to accomplish this general purpose the Center shall:

- a. supply information concerning Japanese non-Christian religions and their impact on Japanese culture and society;
- b. provide a place where Christians and adherents of non-Christian religions can meet;
- c. produce Christian apologetic literature directed toward adherents of non-Christian religions. (J7R 2.1:11)

In what followed, the method of its work was outlined: activities should be performed within the larger framework of the churches worldwide; contributions to the theology of mission should be made; lectures and conferences for Christians (lay, missionaries, ministers) as well as for adherents of other religions should be organized (also with the participation of non-Christian speakers); and a library for research as well as rooms for seminars should be provided.

ENCOUNTER

In 1962, the directorship was passed to Ariga Tetsutaro who had already played a vital role in transferring the Study Center under the umbrella of the NCCJ in 1960. As one of the important Japanese theologians, Prof. Ariga (1899~1977)² held the (for a state university unique) chair for “Christian Studies” at Kyoto University. Having Japanese leadership proved to be a blessing in the future. Adequate cooperation and communication with representatives of other religions definitely require a Japanese national as director.

Indicating a shift in direction towards “encounter”, Ariga wrote in 1963:

Our NCC Center is here to provide a meeting ground for Christians and non-Christians in Japan through literature, conference, and joint study. For Christians, a place to meet with non-Christians in a direct and personal way will provide deeper insights into the mentality, thought, and problems of people outside the church; while non-Christians will, through such a

contact, be better able to know Christians and what they stand for. (JR 3.1:ii)

As for publication policy, Ariga wrote that not only should knowledge about religions in Japan be conveyed in an objective way, but non-Christian authors should also be encouraged to contribute to the journal. Furthermore, theological articles dealing with the situation of Christianity in Japan should be included. In any case, “freedom of thought and speech” were to be honored. In accordance with the goal to create a place of encounter between Christians and representatives of other religions, Ariga, from 1961, led a study group on “Mysticism in Buddhism and Christianity” to which the well known Zen-Buddhist Hisamatsu Shin’ichi and his disciple Abe Masao belonged. At the same time, contacts with the church worldwide were cultivated. Visitors such as Visser’t Hooft (1959), Paul Tillich (1960), and Hendrik Kraemer (1960) had been invited to give talks, and seminars and were provided with the chance to meet and encounter non-Christians.

DIALOGUE

The next phase in the development of the Study Center began in 1965 when Doi Masatoshi took over the directorship and held it for the next twenty years. Doi (1907- 1988)~ was Professor of Systematic Theology at the Christian *Doshisha University*, where the Study Center now had been housed for a while. In 1969, it was moved to a building of the Episcopal Church, located at the Western side of the Imperial Palace and park (*Gosho*). In this central location it is still housed today.

In 1974, Notto Thelle joined the staff, and became Associate Director in charge of the foreign-related activities of the Study Center. As the son of a long-term co-worker of Reichelt, Thelle had grown up at *Tao Fong Shan*, and therefore was very well acquainted with this work as with the “Mission to Buddhists”. Also in 1974, the NCC Study Center started to organize annual seminars in English for missionaries and foreign church personnel. The annual seminars for Japanese pastors had started already in 1964. These seminars are held at various religious centers in Japan in order to give the participants the chance to experience for two or three days another religious community, attend the ceremonies, and learn about its faith, religious thinking, history, and organization. By doing this, direct encounter and first hand information not available by reading only books were made possible. At these seminars, a process was started among the participants which transformed somehow the original conception of the

Study Center. This becomes very clear in the annual report of 1977/78:

When Christians engage in the study of other faiths, they enter a process which challenges and sometimes shakes their faith. A study is not only a mechanical learning process in which one accumulates knowledge about other faiths and seeks to utilize the knowledge in different ways. It also becomes a deeply personal quest for truth: to grasp the depth of the Truth who was born as a Jew 2000 years ago, and then to integrate into one's belief truth as it has been grasped by other faiths. The question was put radically in one of our forum meetings by Professor John Cobb, "Can a Christian be a Buddhist, too?" That is, is it possible for a Christian to integrate into his faith even central Buddhist insights and experiences, and by this realize his Christian faith in a deeper and more universal way?

The answer is not easily given. But this is one of the questions that forces itself on Christians who try to live and practice their faith in close communication with indigenous beliefs. Some people may feel that something is wrong when Christians who are sent to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ start to wonder whether insights of other faiths can be integrated into their own faith. The NCC Study Center was started in order to "promote a study of Japanese religions for the sake of an effective witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ" as it was formulated in the beginning. Has this basic idea disappeared? No. When the concern for communicating the truth of Christianity disappears, study and dialogue becomes irrelevant in our context. The Study Center regards itself as a genuine expression of Christian mission. That is the background of our concern to motivate and prepare Christians in Japan for the encounter with other faiths. The basis of the work is research and study programs. But this naturally leads to active contact, dialogue, and cooperation with different religious groups. In this context reflection becomes an inevitable part of the work; reflection about the basis of one's own faith and its relation to other faiths. This is not just an academic problem, but a vital question for Christians who live in non-Christian surroundings.(Annual Report April 1977— March 1978)

The basic questions of how 'mission' and 'interreligious dialogue' have to be understood, and of how the relationship between both should be defined properly, becomes the red thread through the history of the *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions*. The task of the institute, as it had been set at its beginnings, to be an 'effective witness', remained as a constant challenge to be dealt with. However, over against the basic declaration of 1960, an important change of perspective took place: Besides the

objectifying study of other religions, a self-reflection on the part of the Christians appeared—a reflection upon their own faith and its contents in the new light of the encounter with other religions. Encountering believers of other religions directly became a religio-existential challenge for the Christians themselves. It questioned them in their traditional position. Concerning what he calls ‘missionary dialogue’, Notto Thelle, in 1978, wrote the following in respect to the declaration of 1960:

Very few of us would be able to talk about the study of religion as a ‘strategy’ for an ‘effective witness’. We feel that such hidden motives would destroy the radical openness, and neglect the fact that God is working also outside the church.... The missionary concern is certainly still a part of its [the NCC Study Center’s] work. One aims at motivating and educating Japanese Christians for the encounter with other religions. We have annual seminars for pastors at religious centers and head temples, and similar arrangements for missionaries; we have lectures on Buddhist sutras and publish periodicals such as *Japanese Religions* and *Deai* (Encounter), all of which intend to make the Christian witness more relevant, more ‘effective’ to use a crude expression. But an interesting thing happens. Those who engage in the study of other religions enter a process; they become engaged in a dialogue that forces them to change attitudes. The contact becomes a mutual search, and Christians become also receivers. What started as an effort of effective witness has deepened to include a spiritual search; not only preaching the truth but also a search for the truth. Mission and dialogue have become one in a new openness to God’s working in people seeking the Way. If a missionary dialogue means a dialogue that is carried out with conviction and faith, it should not prevent a radical openness. A real search for understanding is open to the truth, wherever it may be found. A true dialogue will not yield to the temptation of propaganda and apologetics. But it will inevitably involve the risk of conversion.(JR 10.3:701)

Concerning this change of perspective the following observation can be made: By really opening themselves up to non-Christians, and by giving up treating them as objects of mission, Christians themselves suddenly become opened up to themselves and their own faith in a completely new way that they haven’t experienced before. Therefore, being secure in one’s faith and learning from the other in an open way do not exclude each other, as is normally maintained in traditional concepts of mission, or in the discussion of the so-called Christian claim for absoluteness. This fear of

encountering other religions seems to be without sufficient base. In this kind of encounter, not only a change of perspective within the believer takes place, but also, at the same time, a change occurs in respect to the Christian faith and its contents as a whole. Historical and cultural conditions of the perception of faith not only help to understand the contents of the gospel, but also, at the same time, conceal them to a certain degree. These barriers must be revealed and removed again and again. Therefore, encounter with other religions helps Christians to find their *proprium*. Doi Masatoshi wrote:

Here lies the possibility that interfaith dialogue may contribute to our understanding of Christianity itself. The more our eyesight is broadened and our insight is deepened through interfaith dialogue, the greater becomes the possibility of finding new dimensions of our faith which so far have been concealed to our eyes. In other words, through interfaith dialogue God may speak to us anew the eternal truth which is implied in the traditional Christian symbols.(JR 15.3)

This question of interreligious dialogue was pursued to the extent that, in 1977, a symposium was organized with the theme “Is common worship [sic. with other religions] possible?”

In spite of its modest facilities⁴, the NCC Study Center became a place of attraction and impulses. Among the visitors in the seventies were John Cobb, Joseph Kitagawa (Chicago University), Geoffrey Parrinder (London University), and Bishop John A.T. Robinson, all of whom presented lectures. Huston Smith (Syracuse University), Gerald Cooke (Bucknell University) and others stayed for longer periods of study. Also, regular meetings were held (twice a year) with the Catholic study centers in Japan: the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* (Nagoya), the *Oriens Institute* (Tokyo), and the *Institute of Oriental Religions* (Sophia University, Tokyo). This goes by the name of EGSID (Ecumenical Group for the Study of Interreligious Dialogue).⁵ Such an ecumenical cooperation proves to be very encouraging and helpful for each center’s own work. The NCC Study Center was instrumental in establishing the interreligious study group CORMOS (Conference on Religion and Modern Society) which meets annually. Since 1982, when the first meeting of similar Christian study centers in East and South-East Asia dealing with Asian religions and cultures took place, the NCC Study Center has been involved also in *Inter-Religio*. Since the beginning of the eighties, the Study Center has also been involved in the “East-West Religions Project” of the University of Hawaii, with a Japanese section being founded under Doi’s leadership. In 1984, the third conference of this project was held in Kyoto with the theme “Jesus

and Zen”.⁶ Notto Thelle’s book *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan—From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1987) was written in that period too.

THE “THIRD WAY”

The struggle for theological clarification of the NCC Center’s place between the church and other religions, and between dialogue and mission continued, as can be seen clearly from the Annual Report April 1983—March 1984:

A Christian center for the study of Japanese religions finds itself on the borderline between Christianity and other faiths. As John B. Cobb Jr. suggests in his recent book, *Beyond Dialogue*, commitment to Christ has to be combined with an unreserved willingness to be transformed by the insight and experience of the religions one encounters. We have to find a third way beyond imperialism which imposes Christianity on others as the absolute truth and relativism which abandons the ultimacy of Christ. The daily work of research and dialogue often seems undramatic and peaceful. Nevertheless, the encounter with other faiths is an exciting process where the effort to understand other faiths goes together with a continual search for the essentials of one’s own faith. Our center wants to contribute to the life of the church in Japan through studies and by engaging in dialogue with the religious environment. We want, furthermore, to stimulate Christians in this country to take seriously the fact that Christianity is an outsider in a culture which is strongly nurtured by other faiths, and to inspire and prepare them for the inevitable encounter.(cf. JR 13.3: 87)

When, in the spring of 1985, Doi Masatoshi retired after twenty years as director, and at the same time, Notto Thelle (after having been Associate Director for ten years) took over a professorship in Oslo, a certain era came to an end for the Study Center. At a time when the World Council of Churches in Geneva, as well as the Vatican in Rome, had sent positive signals for a new relationship with other religions, the NCC Centre for the Study of Japanese Religions had played an important role as pioneer. Its involvement in interreligious dialogue had effects reaching as far as America and Europe. When Doi Masatoshi died in 1988, one could read in his obituary:

The Buddhist-Christian dialogue gained ground year by year and resulted in an urgent need on behalf of the Christian churches to re-think their positions vis-à-vis older religious traditions. Doi was instrumental in setting the stage for a productive and meaningful

encounter between Christianity and Buddhism. His insights into and awareness of Buddhism made him the ideal pioneer of a friendly relationship with followers of non-Christian paths and gained him respect and esteem in wide circles. Non-wavering he stated: "Christianity is primarily a religion of dialogue."⁷

After sixteen years of life and work in Japan, Notto Theile described what can happen to a person who becomes engaged in dialogue with other religions:

It often begins as a concern for true witness—in order to transmit the gospel in a meaningful way one has to be in dialogue—and becomes a pilgrimage which has two significant directions: journeying into another faith and at the same time searching into one's own faith. The one-way search becomes a two-way process; it still involves witness, but this is significantly modified by a transformation within. (JR 13.4:20)

RECONNECTING

Doi's successor was Yuki Hideo, professor of the History of Religions at *Doshisha University* and who had already been (together with Thelle) Associate Director for some time. Thelle was succeeded by Hakan Eilers who had written his dissertation on Karl Ludvig Reichelt (*Boundlessness. Studies in Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Missionary Thinking with Special Regard to the Buddhist-Christian Encounter*. Studia Missionalia Upsaliensia, 1974), and who had been sent to the Study Center by the Church of Sweden in 1983/84. The Japanese Associate Director appointed was the theologian Take Kuniyasu, professor at *Doshisha Women's College*.

The work of the Study Center continued. Research fellows in the mid-eighties were Dr. Salvador Martinez from the Philippines, Michael Shackleton from England, Roald Kristiansen from Norway, and Michael Newton from the USA. Frederik Spier, who had served on the staff for several years, left in 1986 for America. In the same year, a series of important lectures were held: Prof. Donald Mitchell (Purdue University) talked on "Buddhism in America", Prof. Frederick Streng on "What is Religion?", Prof. John Hick on "Problems of Religious Pluralism", and Paul Knitter on the theme "No Other Name?". Other research fellows came: Martin Schulz, assistant pastor of a German church, spent 1987/88 at the Study Center. Dr. Jong Sung Rhee, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Korea, did research for half a year, and Siegfried Finkbeiner, pastor of a German church stayed for two years (1988- 1990) with the support of the WCC scholarship program. On the occasion of the arrival of

the young theologians from Germany, Hakan Eilert wrote in the Prospects for 1988:

We are very pleased with developing stronger ties with West German Churches and regard it is a token of the quest for a theology which draws strength from God's universal presence before the world was split up in different nationalities, cultures and religions. We hope that other churches abroad will avail themselves of the opportunity to send young theologians to our center. Such a presence is particularly meaningful since a dialogical relationship will become of utmost importance in the future, not only between the churches but also between cultures and religions.

In 1991/92, Prof. Peter Igarashi, New Testament scholar of the University of the South (Sewanee, USA), and Dr. Rainer Wassner, sociologist of religion at Hamburg University (Germany), did their research at the Study Center. In 1992, a Japanologist and a theologian, both from Denmark, each came for several months. In 1993 Bernhard Neuenschwander, Th.D. candidate of Bern University (Switzerland), studied Japanese Zen-Buddhism in connection with his thesis on mysticism in the Gospel of John. Again there were changes in the staff when Hakan Eilert returned to Sweden in 1991 and was succeeded by the author of this article. In the same year, the Church of Sweden sent Hayashi Midori and Bo Hallengren, a couple who had previously worked with Amity Foundation in China.

II. TASKS AND SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF CHURCHES IN JAPAN AND OF THE ECUMENE

In the following section, we turn to the question of the present work of the *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions*, and its tasks in connection with the churches of Japan and of the *ecumene* at large.

Under the directorship of Yuki Hideo, a certain reorientation of the work as whole was undertaken. His predecessor had, as a pioneer, gone far ahead in interreligious dialogue whereas the concrete connection with the Japanese churches suffered considerably. It was not clear any more why this Study Center had been a Study Center of the *Protestant churches* in Japan, and why this institute and the churches needed each other in close cooperation. In response to this situation, Yuki is trying to tie the work of the Study Center back to the churches. This attempt shall be described in this final section.

The experience of militarism before 1945 (which had been also supported by a wide range of religious groups, including some churches), remains a very important challenge for Japanese churches even today.

Therefore, they watch critically the relationship between state and religion in contemporary Japan, speak up for human rights, and warn against dangerous political tendencies. The NCC Center has repeatedly dealt with these issues in its publications, seminars and lectures. The political and, at the same time, religious character of *Tennoism* (the emperor system) in Japan belongs to the field of research Prof. Yuki is pursuing. As a historian of religion, he maintains the important difference which has to be made between State Shinto, an ideological construct of the Meiji Period, and Shinto, the traditional religion of Japan. In the critical proclamations of the Japanese churches one normally does not find this decisive distinction. In addition, a deeper understanding of Shinto as religion is missing. Hopefully, in the future, Japanese churches will make more use of the rich knowledge and insights the NCC Study Center is able to provide in this respect.

The Study Center's emphasis on social issues is pursued by the long-term staff-member Yamashita Akiko. She deals with the role of women in Japanese churches and society. She critically analyses the reliance of the church upon women who are not given their deserved share of responsibility and recognition. At the same time, she views women's issues in the broader perspective of Asian cultures and religions. Presently, she is involved in a research project on shamanism in Korea and Japan. She is one of the well known feminists in Japan and has co-authored a book on Buddhist discrimination against women (among other books and articles).

Another issue Japanese churches have to deal with is the question of *ancestor veneration*. In Japan, ancestor veneration is the fundamental form of religious life, be it in Buddhism, Shinto, or any new religion. Moreover, this form of religiosity is closely intertwined with the Japanese social life, because a family is bound together by the continuously cultivated connection with its ancestors. The missionaries viewed ancestor veneration as nothing but idolatry, and advised newly converted Christians to remove the ancestor altars from their homes. This meant that Christians were asked to place themselves outside their family, which created tremendous tensions. With such a shallow understanding of ancestor veneration, the missionaries caused incredible suffering within Christian individuals as well as within families. Such an approach has been maintained in the Japanese churches until today. One can say that the churches in Japan define their relationship to traditional Japanese culture, religion and society (more or less) in a negative way. Thereby, the Japanese Christians are forced into a tragic split between religious identity (of occidental origin) and national or

cultural identity. This foreign character of Christianity in Japan seems to be one of the major reasons for the stagnation of the churches here. Over a period of several years, the issue of ancestor veneration was treated in a seminar sponsored by the NCC Study Center under the guidance of Prof. Take. He himself is also a minister of a local congregation and therefore knows about these problems of pastoral care. One can only hope that the Japanese churches will take these practical-theological problems more seriously, and that they make use of the NCC Center's work in this respect. For the churches, the question of ancestor veneration can be treated adequately only in close cooperation with theologians of different disciplines, ministers with their concrete experience, and specialists in the study of religion.

In this connection, another important issue has to be mentioned. The religious life of many Christians is focused mainly on the Sunday service, of which the most important part is a (usually, very long) sermon. Like in a lecture, the listeners write down what they hear. With this rather rational or school-like way of approaching faith, less and less Christians are satisfied. Instead, they are searching for authentic forms of *meditation*, *spirituality*, *liturgy*, etc. Not a few Christians (quite often second or third generation Christians) choose a way leading through Buddhism: by the practice of *Zazen* (sitting meditation) or *Nembutsu* (repetitive calling on the name of Buddha) they try to find access to Christian meditation, Jesus prayer etc. One of the staff members of the NCC Center, Matsuoka Yukako, focuses her studies on Zen Buddhism and also practices *Zazen*. The NCC Center could become a place where the many existing attempts at Christian spirituality are taken up, reflected on theologically, deepened through practice and exchange, and applied to the churches. Such an endeavour could give important impulses to the spiritual life of the congregations as well as to Japanese theology. It could become an important step in the process of the inculturation of the gospel in this country. Such a development, eventually, could be of considerable significance for the churches of the *ecumene* which are presently also searching for authentic forms of Christian spirituality.⁸

From the historical outline given above, it has become clear that the NCC Study Center not only serves the churches in Japan, but the churches of the *ecumene* at large. It is characteristic of the work of the Study Center that the activities are performed either in Japanese or English. The annual seminars for Japanese ministers and the ones for foreign church personnel (missionaries, teachers, etc.) are still held today. In 1993, the thirtieth

seminar in Japanese, and the eighteenth in English were held. Being the guest of a religious group for two or three days, the participants are taught directly by representatives of the religion about their faith, life, and thought. Attendance at the religious services, guided tours of the precincts, lectures and discussions help deepen one's understanding. Such a direct encounter goes far beyond the study by books alone; it triggers the process within Christians mentioned in the first section. In this way, a religion is taken seriously as a living reality, something which cannot be perceived sufficiently through objectified knowledge alone. The long tradition of these seminars comprises religious groups (and places) such as Shinto (Ise and Izumo-shrine), folk religion, Buddhist Schools such as Tendai (Hiei), Shingon (Koya), Zen (Eihei-ji, Mampuku-ji, etc.), Jodo-shu (Chion-in), Jodoshinshu (Nishi and Higashi Hongan-ji), the New Religions (Tenrikyo, Soka Gakkai, Rissho Koseikai, Oomoto, Shinnyo-en) and many others. Apart from that, regular study groups or seminars on Buddhist and other texts with competent teachers in those fields are organized throughout the year. Ueda Shizuteru, for example, last year explained the Zen-Buddhist story of the "Ten Ox-herding Pictures".

The NCC Study Center also continues to publish its two journals, *Deai* ('Encounter' in Japanese), and *Japanese Religions* (in English) twice a year. *Japanese Religions* treats themes such as Christianity in Japan, especially the problem of its inculturation, and informs about Buddhist schools such as Zen, Pure Land, and Shingon; on Shinto, Taoism, Confucianism, Shugendo, new religions, ancestor worship, etc. Also themes like interreligious dialogue, theology of religion, philosophy of religion (among them contributions by and about the "Kyoto School of Philosophy").⁹ Documents such as the message of the Pope Paul VI to the Buddhists in Japan are published in JR as well.

In spite of the attempts to cooperate more closely with the member-churches of the National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), this goal unfortunately has not been reached yet. In September 1993, at the last *Inter-Religio* conference in Hong Kong, it became clear that it is not the NCC Center in Kyoto alone which is insufficiently integrated in the work of the church. Many other Christian study centers in East and South-East Asia suffer the same structural problem.¹⁰ On the one hand, they don't receive sufficient financial support from their churches. On the other hand, those churches don't make real use of their institutes which deal with such important issues as "gospel and culture" (indigenization), and "Christianity and other religions" (interreligious dialogue and mission, theology of

religion). Here, the question gets raised whether in this situation of “supply without demand” the supply is superfluous, or whether the demand should be awakened, or what else should be done. In addition, it is desirable that in the future, the *WCC Office on Inter-Religious Relations* in Geneva may co-operate more efficiently with the local Christian study centers dealing with the inculturation of Christianity and interreligious dialogue.

This structural problem of a lack of financial support from, and an insufficient integration in, the churches is connected with the fact that these institutions were usually founded and financed from outside the country or outside their respective church. In the case of Japan, many foreign churches are now withdrawing more and more of their financial and personnel support due to the present economic situation. This new situation could be perceived by the Japanese churches as a great chance to liberate themselves from a paternalistic relationship to the American and European churches in which, consciously or unconsciously, they are still kept, and to take up more responsibility for projects in the own country. Probably, this new challenge is not yet sufficiently recognized by the persons responsible in the churches. In the future, the NCC Study Center may expect less support from foreign churches and will have to look for more support from the member churches of the NCCJ.”

At the same time, however, and this has to be stressed, foreign churches should not completely withdraw their support and cooperation. From its very beginning, the NCC Study Center was an international, ecumenical endeavour, and this character should be maintained in the future under any circumstances.¹² From what has been said, it should be clear that the work of the NCC Study Center is not only relevant for the churches of Japan, but also, at the least, for those in Europe and America which are facing such important issues as the encounter with other religions, the quest for spirituality, etc. The *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions* wants to further cultivate ecumenical exchange and to invite theologians and others interested from overseas to share in this learning. In doing this, the Study Center—as the churches in Japan—should not be focused on the churches of the West. It is conspicuous how few persons from East and South-East Asia have joined the staff of the Study Center up to now. However, exchange and cooperation, especially with the Asian churches, has to be developed and strengthened. In this area also, the Study Center serves the churches of Japan which have started to improve their relationships with their Asian neighbours.

In its rather short history of thirty-five years, the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions has gained such a respectable position that it has become a place where the traditional relationship between Western churches and Japanese churches has changed fundamentally: Here dialogue, exchange, and mutual learning within the church, with adherents of other religions, and with churches worldwide occurs. It has changed from a place where missionaries had been sent to, to a place where the foreign staff can now become 'missionaries' to their churches back home.

ENDNOTES

The author would like to express his gratitude to Bernhard Neuenschwander (Bern University) for his helpful suggestions and to John LoBreglio (University of California at Santa Barbara) for correcting the English version.

- 1 That this theme was taken up in Japan in the beginning of the 1960's is connected with Hendrik Kraemer's visit in 1960. Similar tendencies can be observed in contemporary Korean theology (see Keel Hee-Sung, Korean Theology: Past and Present, *Inter-Religio* 12: 87).
- 2 Ariga had studied (among other places) at Union Theological Seminary (New York) and written his dissertation on Origen. He developed the so called 'Hayatology' (from Hebrew *haya*), drawing from the works of Carl Heinz Ratschow and Torleif Boman. Thereby, he tried to give Asian Christian thinking an alternative to ontology. In 1965, he had been invited as observer to the Second Vatican Council. His articles in English can be found in *Japanese Religions* and in one volume of his collected writings.
- 3 Doi had studied theology at Doshisha and written his dissertation on Tillich's eschatology after the war at Chicago Theological Seminary and Hartford Theological Seminary. In 1963 and 1964, he had been invited as observer at the Second Vatican Council; he also took part in the "Candy Consultation" (Ceylon) of the WCC. His articles in English can be found in JR and in the volume *Search for Meaning Through Interfaith Dialogue* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan 1976).
- 4 In the Annual Report April 1980 - March 1981 one can read:
 Visitors to the NCC Study Center in Kyoto are sometimes surprised to see how small it is: just two rooms. One room is used for the business office, and the other serves as library, reading room, and conference room. Compared to similar centers in Japan and other places in Asia, our Study Center is certainly among the modest ones. The staff is also rather small ... On the other hand, it might be said that the Center has played a central role for the development of religious studies and religious dialogue in Japan. Come and see us some time and see what we are doing!
 Today, visitors may be received in a third room which could be rented due to the generous support of EMS and which serves also as a room for seminars and for the journals.
- 5 The establishing of the Catholic study centers had been inspired by the NCC Center. James Heisig, presently Director of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture (Nagoya) writes in a letter of December 12th 1992: The NCC Center is the oldest interreligious center in Japan, and has been instrumental through the years in helping younger centers like our own to get a foothold in the world of interreligious research. (Letter of December 18, 1992)

- 6 The second conference (1982) dealt with the thoughts of Takizawa Katsumi.
- 7 Hakan Eilert in JR 15.3 (without pages). See also the portrait of Doi, the “dean of dialogue”, which FrederikSpier draws in JR 13.4: 3-15.
- 8 The many foreign monks in Japanese monasteries, mainly from Europe and America, indicate most clearly that the churches at home have not been able to give sufficient response to the religious needs of these young people. Otherwise they would not have been compelled to go on spiritual pilgrimages as far away as India, China, Korea and Japan.
- 9 The following are among the many who have contributed to JR: Abe Masao, Thomas Altizer, Bando Shojun, Ernst Benz, Alfred Bloom, Jan van Bragt, Fritz Bun, Horst Biirke, Carlo Caldarola, John Cobb, Heinrich Dumoulin, Gorai Shigeru, Charles Hartshorne, Winston King, Joseph Kitagawa, Kubo Noritada, Muto Kazuo, Nakamura Hajime, Nishitani Keiji, Heinrich Ott, Huston Smith, Takeuchi Yoshinori, Ueda Shizuteru, Hans Waldenfels, Yagi Sei'ichi, and many others.
- 10 Therefore, the next *Inter-Religio* conference shall be concerned with this issue.
- 11 Support comes mainly from the Church of Sweden, from EMS and EMW of Germany, and from HEKS and SOAM of Switzerland. This most generous support is gratefully acknowledged.
- 12 The NCC Study Center is in urgent need of a native English speaking coworker for copy-editing Japanese Religions, correspondence, etc.! Churches in the English speaking world are kindly requested to respond to this appeal. The task of the co-worker would also include giving information about the life and events in the churches and religions of Japan, and of the NCC Study Center, back to their churches at home.

Reports from the Centres

Christian Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture

6F Kiu Kin Mansion, 566 Nathan Rd., Kowloon, Hong Kong

tel: (852)2770-3310, fax: (852)2782-6869

Director: Dr. Simon Chan

Open Lecture Series

Mar 95: "Socio-political Scenario of China in the Post-Deng Era". Mr. Willy Lam (Editor of China Desk, South China Morning Post). "Prospects of the Chinese Church in the Past-Deng Era". Mr. Deng Zhao-ming (Research Fellow, Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture).

May 95: "Religious Policy after June 4: Cooperation and Tension". Mr. Deng Zhao-ming, and Dr. Leung Ka-lun (Alliance Bible College). "How to Read the Bible in a Great Era: The Experience of the Chinese Churches". Mr. Deng Zhao-ming, and Dr. Lau Tze-yui (Religion Department, Chinese University of Hong Kong).

"From *Ai Guo Ai Jiao* (Patriotism and Fidelity to the Church) to *Ai Guo Ai Gang* (Patriotism and Fidelity to Hong Kong): Promise and Practice". Mr. Deng Zhao-ming, and Mr. Leung Shao-wah (China Graduate School of Theology).

Jun 95: "Chinese Society under Reform Policy: Development and Limitations." Ms. Lan Kin-chi (Lingnam College).

"Chinese Church under Reform Policy: Problems and Reflections." Dr. Chan Kim-kwong (Chinese University of Hong Kong).

News

Dr. Peter Lee retired as Director of the Christian Study Centre at the beginning of the year. The new Director is Simon Chan Shun-hing. A graduate of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, he obtained a M. Th. degree from Edinburgh University in 1987. On returning to Hong Kong, he was engaged in student personnel work at the Chinese University and then as Executive Secretary in charge of publications with the Hong Kong Christian Institute. As well as being Director of the Study Centre, he is also a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Sociology at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

The Christian Study Centre is offering a new English language program on religions, society and Church in Hong Kong and China, called the "Education to Service (ES) Program". The program is designed in cooperation with representatives from some mission societies with long working

experience in Hong Kong. The goal of the course is to meet the needs of missionaries and overseas staff working in Hong Kong. It aims to give an introduction to the history, the religions/traditions and the economic-political structure of society in Hong Kong and China. The course is designed as a two year program and will include study trips. The first session is scheduled for September 1995.

New Hong Kong Network on Religion and Peace

The Hong Kong Network on Religion and Peace was formally established on May 5 in Hong Kong after its charter was accepted by those attending the inaugural meeting. Individual and corporate members include Buddhists, Bahais, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Krishna Movement, Raga Yoga, Taoists and Free Thinkers.

The aim of the network is to promote peace at both local and world-wide levels on the basis of spiritual cooperation and common service. The network hopes to serve as a forum to promote mutual understanding and dialogue among member organizations on religion and peace issues from the perspective on justice and human dignity.

On the practical level, the network plans to publish a newsletter with a view to sharing ideas, traditions and events among members and the local community; to set up contacts with other bodies locally and internationally in order to exchange experience and information; to organise regular meetings and special programs; to research, document and publish educational material and to set up long term educational initiatives for schools, youth and families.

The contact address for the new network is that of the Christian Study Centre given above.

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Institute of Oriental Religions

Sophia University, 7-1 Kioi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102, Japan

tel: (81)33-238-5175, fax: (81)33-238-5056

Director: Dr. Matsuoka Koji SJ

Events:

A Training Course on Zazen for Beginners; Exercise, Zen Lectures and practice for beginners. Six sessions during the month of May. Director: Dr. Prof. Kakichi Kadowaki (Daiki) SJ

Open Lecture Series:

Main Theme: "Literature and Religion". Scheduled for September 30 and October 1st. The speakers have yet to be finalised.

Ongoing Programmes: Study Groups:

On "Nishida's Philosophy 'basho' (the place) and the Holy Spirit in Christianity."

On "Modern Japanese Scholar Consciousness and Terminology."

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NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions

Karasuma-Shimotachiuri, Kamikyo-ku, Kyoto 602, Japan

tel & fax: (81) 75-432-1945

Director: Prof. Yuki Hideo

Events:

The monthly seminar of the *Rinzai-roku* led by Prof. Yanagida Seizan (Hanazono College) is taking place from October 1994 until July 1995. In November the Study Center invited Prof. Tokunaga Michio (Ryukoku University) to give a lecture on Gordon Kaufman's book on *Hermeneutics from a Buddhist perspective*. Prof. Yulci and Prof. Take participated at the CORMOS meeting on *Play-Work-Religion* at the end of December in Kyoto. The members of the Study Center have been very much concerned with the devastating earthquake in the Kobe area on Jan 17, and the subsequent emergency activities. A report on the impact on the religions, their response to and religious interpretation of the disaster will be published in the July 1995 issue of *Japanese Religions*. Also in the same issue, a report is planned on the new religious group *Aum Shinrikyo* which is suspected of having committed the poison-gas attack in the subways of Tokyo on March 22 which killed 12 people.

Publications:

The January 1995 Issue of *Japanese Religions* contains articles on Buddha's tooth relic in Japan by John & Sarah Strong, on Taoist Cult in Japan by Livia Kohn, on Sukyo Mahikari by Brian McVeigh, Book reviews and reports of the Center's activities.

Visitors:

Among the visitors to the Study Center were Rev. Dr. Peter Leung (Church Missionary Society), Rev. Ernst Harbakk and the previous Associate Director of the NCC Study Center, Prof. Notto Thdlle (Christian Mission to Buddhists), Ms. Barbara Butler (Christians Aware) and Rev. Dr. Thomas Butler (Bishop of Leicester), and Mr Jorgen Sorensen (Danish Missionary Society).

Nanzan Institute of Religion and Culture

Nanzan University, 18 Yamazato-cho, Showa-ku, Nagoya 466, Japan

tel: (81)52-838-3111

fax: (81)52-833-6157

Director: Dr. James Heisig SVD

Events:

James Heisig gave one of the two keynote addresses at the 50th anniversary commemoration of the death of Nishida Kitaro on June 3rd 1995. His topic was "The Logic of the Specific and the Critique of the Global Village."

A Symposium-Dialogue with *The Insititute of Oriental Philosophy* (Soka University) is being organized.

Publications:

Paul Mommaers and Jan Van Braght *Mysticism: Buddhist and Christian Encounters with Jan van Runsbroec*. (New York, Crossroads, 1995)

News:

Robert Kisala has joined the staff as a permanent fellow. He is a specialist in the sociology of religion and contemporary Japanese religion.

Our post-doctoral research fellow for 1995-1996 is Umezawa Yumiko. She is researching the theology of nothingness/emptiness (*mu no shingaku*)

Jan Van Braght, Paul Swanson and Watanabe Manabu attended the Second Conference of the International Association for Asian Philosophy and Religion in Tokyo on 1-4 June 1995.

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Institute for the Study of Religion and Theology

Sogang University, Seoul, Korea

tel: (82)2-705-8349 fax: (82)2-701-8962

Director: Sr. Kim Sung-hae

Monthly Colloquium

Mar: "Religious Thoughts of the Eastern Learning" by Dr. Myong-suk Mun

Apr: "Theology in the Post Metaphysical Period" by Dr. Kwang-sup Shim

May: "The Concept of God in Islam" by Dr. Yong-kyong Kim

June: "The Concept of God in Israel" by Prof. Kyong-suk Yi

Publications:

Prof. Keel Hee-sung published a book (in Korean) *Post Modern Society and the Open Religion* which is a collection of his articles. His other book *Understanding Shinran: A Dialogical Approach* (Asian Humanity's Press) is in press now.

News:

The Christian Academy had an interreligious meeting with a Vietnamese Zen monk Thieh Nhat Hang on April 21, 1995. About 40 Buddhist and Christian scholars gathered together not only to listen and share ideas, but also to practice walking Zen together. After the practice, there was a shared reflection. A two page article on the meeting was published in *Time Journal* (1995.5.4) of Korea.

Sister Sung-Hae Kim will be on Sabbatical leave from August 1995 until February 1996. Please send your communications to Prof. Keel Hee-sung during this period.

In July Sister Sung-hae Kim will go to Taiwan to take part in the working session on the Confucian tradition for the World -Federation- of the Lutheran Church. It will try to formulate the Church's policy on other Faiths.

Prof. Keel will attend the UCLA Conference, "Korea's Place within East Asian Buddhist Tradition," in September 1995.

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FABC Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs

57 Oriental Avenue, Bangrak, Bangkok 10500, Thailand

tel & fax: (662) 266-3876

Director: Fr. Thomas Michel SJ

Events:

Mar 95: Kyoto, Japan, Seminar on "Interreligious Consultation on Thanksgiving and Service" organized by the Center for World Thanksgiving.

Apr 95: Washington, D.C., Congress: "Muslim-Christian Relations: Prospects for the Twenty First Century" at Georgetown University, Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, with a good number of Muslim and Christian scholars from Asia.

Jun 95: Pattaya, Thailand: FEISA-II (Faith Encounters in Social Action), organized by FABC-OHD, exposure program 19-24 June.

Aug 95: Taiwan, Buddhist-Christian meeting, organized by Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (Vatican).

Oct 95:Delhi, India: BIRA V/3, Hindu-Christian seminar organized by FABC-OEIA. The theme is: "Working for Harmony in the Modern World."

Nov 95:Rome, Italy: Plenary, Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. The theme is: "The Spirituality of Dialogue." Many participants from Asia.

Mar 96:Hong Kong. First Bishops' Institute for Christian Unity (BICU I). We are hoping for CCA joint sponsorship.

Apr 96:Lei Li-O, Taiwan. Confucian-Taoist-Christian encounter, organized by FABC-OEIA, theme: "Confucian and Taoist Contributions to Harmony: Christians in Dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality".

News:

Fr. Thomas Michel SJ has succeeded Sr. Myrna Porta as executive secretary of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs.

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Ethics and Religions Research Center

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Director:Dr. Kirti Bunchua

News:

The Ethics and Religions Research Center is now well established with a library, an archive and a working committee in collaboration with the Graduate School of Philosophy and Religious Studies. They offer regular courses on Oriental Meditation for Christians and Buddhists. Through their journal, they hope to establish contact with similar centers worldwide.