

## The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions Report of the Activities in 2005

### *Activities*

A meeting of the research group on funerals took place on Oct. 24. Mr. INOUE Shozo, researcher of the NCC Study Center and author of a recent book on the theology of Christian funerals in Japan (see *Publications* below), presented a summary of his work to a group of interested persons which was followed by comments from other researchers and a discussion. On Nov. 8, Prof. Dr. Max Deeg, Vienna University (currently visiting professor at Kyoto University), presented a public lecture in English on “The Brilliant Teaching — The Rise and Fall of Nestorianism in Tang China.” This year’s “ISJP Public Lecture” was delivered on Nov. 26 by Dr. Michael Pye, professor emeritus of Marburg University and presently professor at Otani University, on the theme “Religious Education and Interreligious Dialogue from the Perspective of Religious Studies (*Religionswissenschaft*).” Martin Repp attended the Conference on “Evil in Religion” at Free University Amsterdam in March where he gave a talk on “The Treatment of Evil Persons in Pure Land Buddhism.” He also gave presentations on “Introduction into the World of Japanese Religions,” “Aum Shinrikyo and the Aum Incident,” and “Popular Culture and Religion in Japan” at the Evangelische Akademie Bad Boll, Germany. In May, he delivered a lecture on “Manga and Religion — Miyasaki Hayao’s *Nausicaä*” at Koka Women’s University, Kyoto.

### *Participation in New Networks*

A few years ago, the NCC Study Center was instrumental in establishing a network of some fourteen research institutes belonging to various Buddhist schools, new religions, and churches, called *Sbūkyō kyōdan fuchi kenkyūjo kondan-kai* 宗教教団付置研究所懇談会. Recently, a subgroup was formed to foster research on bioethics (brain death, organ transplantation, etc.). A preparatory meeting was held in January 2005 at the Research Institute of Jōdo-shū in Tokyo, and the first ordinary meeting took place in April at the same place. The second one was held in July at the Head Office of Higashi Hongan-ji (Jōdo-shinshū) in Kyoto.

Recently, representatives of the *Graduate Union of Religious Studies in Kyoto* (GURS-K), established 2005 by the graduate schools of Buddhist and Christian Universities (Bukkyo, Doshisha, Koyasan, Otani, Ryukoku, etc.), suggested that the NCC Study Center becomes an affiliated member. The Board of Trustees agreed to accept the offer and to cooperate. The purpose of GURS-K is to foster cooperation in research and to enable graduate students to attend classes in other universities. This means that those students of the Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP,

see below), who understand Japanese, can participate also in classes of Buddhist and Christian universities in Kyoto, and that English-speaking students of these universities may participate in ISJP-classes. Among various advantages, this kind of cooperation will facilitate exchange and encounter between foreign and Japanese students as well as between Christians and Buddhists.

#### *Home page*

The NCC Study Center has a new homepage which contains current information as well as an archive of previous publications and activities. Its address is:  
[www.japanese-religions.jp](http://www.japanese-religions.jp)

#### *Publications*

Vol. 30 Nos. 1 & 2 of *Japanese Religions* was published in July (for the contents, please see the homepage).

The Japanese journal *Deai (Encounter — Christianity and Other Faiths)* Vol. 14 No. 4, was published in September and contains the following contributions:

- YUKI Hideo: Introduction
- MIZUGAKI Wataru: The Beginnings of Christian Funerals — Funerals in the Early Church
- HIGASHIBABA Ikuo: The Beginnings of Christian Funerals in Japan — Kirishitan Mission and Funerals
- HINONISHI Shinjo: Funeral Customs in Japan — Ethnology of Burial and Grave
- Panel Discussion and Symposium: Reflections on Christian Funerals (SUGINO Sakae, HAMAYA Norio, GOTO Masatoshi, INOUE Shozo)

#### *Publications by Staff Members*

Mr. INOUE Shozo, researcher of the NCC Study Center, published a book on the theology of Christian funerals in Japan, entitled *Kokoro ni nokoru kirisuto-kyo no osishiki to wa* (Shinkyō Shuppansha, Tokyo 2005).

Rev. MATSUDA Fuhito, Buddhist priest and researcher of the NCC Study Center, published a book on the Heart Sutra with the title *Hannya shingyo tatsui* (Sangaku shuppan, Otsu 2005)

Prof. Dr. Martin REPP published his study of Hōnen and structures of religious renewals, entitled *Hōnens religiöses Denken — Eine Untersuchung zu Strukturen religiöser Erneuerung* (Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden 2005).

#### *Visitors*

- January: Mr. Wokalek, the Consul General from Kobe-Osaka, and Mr. Akamatsu, of the Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany; Prof. Dr. Jeremy Gunn, Emory University, Atlanta.

- February: Prof. Dr. Huber, Kirchliche Hochschule Wuppertal, Germany
- March: Dr. Thomas Hase, Leipzig University; Prof. Dr. Viggo Mortensen, Aarhus University
- April: Ms. Doris Grohs, East Asia Secretary of Basel Mission; Mr. Lutz Drescher, East Asia Secretary of Evangelisches Missionswerk in Suedwestdeutschland (EMS), Stuttgart
- May: Sr. Dr. Maria Di Giorgi S.X., Shinmei-zan, Ms. Gisela Koellner of Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland (EMS)
- July: Prof. Dr. Notto Thelle, Oslo University; Prof. Dr. Ulrich Dehn, Berlin.
- October: Mr. Yukka Vanska, Helsinki University, Prof. Dr. Michael Pye, Marburg University (Otani University, Kyoto)

## **Report of The Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP) Fall Semester 2005**

On January 17, 2005 the ISJP Board hosted a farewell dinner for the students of the 2004 class, their teachers and the host families. Members of the ISJP Board met on July 28 in order to prepare the fall semester. On Sept. 28, the ISJP Board hosted a welcome dinner for the new students. The fall semester began with an orientation for the students (Sept. 20-22). The ordinary classes started September 27, and ended on December 2. With this semester, the ISJP has now been conducted for the fourth year

### *Participants*

Full-time participants of the ISJP fall semester 2005 were Kai Arne Olsen (Ph.D. student of Religious Studies, Tromso University (Norway), Simon Paschen, student of Theology, Greifswald University (Germany), and Constantin Plaul, student of Theology, Göttingen University (Germany).

The following persons participated in classes of their choice: Prof. Dr. John Dougill (Ryukoku University), Mr. ICHIKAWA Sadataka (Ph.D. student, Bukkyo University), Mr. ISHINO Satoshi (researcher of the NCC Study Center), and Ms. Agnoek Spranger (student of Japanology and Law, Leiden University, presently Kyoto University).

### *List of classes and teachers*

Shinto: Prof. Dr. Knecht (Nanzan University), Prof. Sakurai (Kōgakkan University, Ise), Dr. Ogaki (formerly Ise Shrine)