

schools (only in private schools affiliated with a religion). Since the Aum incident 1995, the issue of the necessity of religious education for young people became subject of public discussions in Japan.

Lecture Series on “How Christianity thinks about ...” (2007)

Since the NCC Study Center is a Christian institute involved in interreligious dialogue in Japan, it has the responsibility to respond to critical questions from other religions. This is part of the apologetic task of the church. This lecture series was held from May 25 – July 20, 2007 and consisted of the following talks: 1. Why are evil and calamities occurring in this world? (Prof. em. Mizugaki Wataru, Kyoto University); 2. Has history a meaning? (Prof. em. Mizugaki); 3. Is it permitted for human beings to control nature? (Prof. em. Mizugaki); 4. Is Christianity for or against war? (Rev. Harada Hiromitsu); 5. How do Christians think about other religions? (Prof. Miyasho Tetsuo, Doshisha University)

Lecture series on the theme “Reviewing Christianity in Japan” (2008)

The first Catholic missionaries (P. Francisco Xavier S.J., etc.) arrived in Japan in 1549, and the first Protestant missionaries came in 1859. Therefore, Japanese Christians celebrate in 2009 a 460th and a 150th anniversary respectively. This is an important occasion to critically review and examine the history of Christianity in Japan and to reflect on its present and future way. The lectures were held in June and July 2008 and the following themes were treated: 1. Japanese Christianity in the context of the whole Church history; 2. Japanese Christianity from the standpoint of the Catholic church; 3. Japanese Christianity from the standpoint of the Protestant churches; 4. Japanese Christianity from the perspective of the Korean church.

**Report of the Interreligious Studies in Japan Program (ISJP)
Fall Semester 2007**

Participants

The following four students, all from Germany, participated in the ISJP Fall Semester 2007: Ms. Cornelia Buhk (Japanalogy, Hamburg University), Mr. Tobias Eckert (Theology, Kirchliche Hochschule Neuendettelsau), Ms. Angelika Germann (Theology, Heidelberg University), and Mr. Valentin Wendebourg (Theology, Tübingen University).

Orientation

The orientation took place from September 27 to October 6. It consisted of introductions to religions in Japan in general (Prof. Yuki, Ms. Patriacia Yamada,

Dr. Yoshinaga, Prof. Repp), to Japanese culture and history (Prof. Hayashi and Prof. Schauwecker), and Japanese language (Mr. Arimoto). Also the first fieldtrips to Buddhist temples, Shinto shrines and museums were organized. During this time, the ISJP-Board hosted a reception party for the new students.

Courses and teachers

The regular program was held from October 9 to December 14 (10 weeks) and consisted of the following seven courses and teachers:

Shinto and Folk Religion by Prof. Peter Knecht (Nanzan University)

Buddhism by Prof. Robert Rhodes (Otani University), Rev. Thomas Kirchner (Zen; Hanazono University), and Rev. Teramoto Tomomasa (Modern Buddhism; Nishi Hongan-ji)

Reading of a Classical Buddhist Text (Lotus Sutra, Golden Light Sutra) by Prof. Michael Pye (Marburg University and Otani University)

New Religions by Prof. Martin Repp (Ryukoku University)

Japanese Church History by Prof. Yuki, Mr. Iwano Yusuke (Kyoto University), Rev. Peter Hamaya (Anglican Church), Dr. Higashibaba Ikuo (Kirishitan; Tenri Kyoko), Prof. Shigeru Hiroshi (Kyoto Women's College)

Theology in Dialogue by Prof. Mizugaki Wataru (Kyoto University), Prof. Yasunaga Sodo (Zen; Hanazono University), Prof. Yokota Shunji (Jōdo Shinshū; Kyoto Women's College) and Prof. Martin Repp

Basic Introduction to Japanese Language by Mr. Arimoto Tadao

Fieldtrips and extra-curricular activities

The following fieldtrips were organized during the semester:

Shinto shrines: Kasuga and Tamukeyama (Nara), Heian Jingu (Kyoto)

Buddhist temples: Tōdai-ji and Kōfuku-ji (Nara), Enryaku-ji, Kōzan-ji, Mibudera, Chūgen-ji, Nishi Hongan-ji and Tenryū-ji (Kyoto)

New Religions: Tenri-kyō (including a stay over-night at Tenri City) and Oomoto-kyō

The students attended also a meeting for continuous Nembutsu recitation (*betsuji nenbutsu*) in Shigaraki (Shiga Prefecture). At several occasions they met also with Buddhist students from Otani University and Ryukoku University for interreligious dialogue among peers, as well as with Christian students from Dōshisha University and Kyōto University.

This year's public ISJP Annual Memorial Lecture was held by Prof. Fujimoto Kiyohiko (Bukkyō University; member of the ISJP-Board), on the theme "Language and religion – Standing on religious borders and the act of translation" on Nov. 28, 2007.

After the official program ended, some of the students also made an internship in a Japanese congregations or a social institutions: Angelika Germann in Nishi Chiba church (Chiba prefecture), Tobias Eckert in Kyoto and Osaka, and Valentin Wendebourg at Sado church on Sado Island (Niigata prefecture).

Trip to Tokyo

The regular program was concluded with a trip to Tokyo from December 15 to 22 which was organized by Prof. Hayashi Tadayoshi, the ISJP-Coordinator. It consisted of the following program: Sightseeing in Asakusa and Akihabara; visit of the Risshō Kōsei-kai Headquarters, talks with their representatives, and a lecture on Risshō Kōsei-kai; attending a church service and a Christmas party at Tomisaka Christian Center; guided tour to the Yasukuni Shrine and its museum, with a lecture on the Yasukuni Shrine problem; guided tour in Kamakura.

During the stay in Tokyo, the following special lectures were held for the students: Prof. Takayanagi Shin'ichi (Sophia University) on the History of the Catholic Church in Japan; Dr. Peter Baeckelmanns (Oriens Institute) on Shingon Buddhism; Dr. Yamaguchi Satoko on Japanese feminist theology; Dr. Arai Jun on religious education in a multireligious society.

Reports by ISJP-Participants*Insights into the Variety of Japanese Religions*

by Angelika Germann

From September 2007 to March 2008 I took part in the “Interreligious Studies in Japan Program” (ISJP) in Kyoto. In this report I will summarize some of my impressions of the study program, and relate how I personally benefited from this stay abroad.

Fortunately I had no specific expectations concerning the contents of the different courses of this study program when I went to Japan. Therefore I was open-minded to whatever would happen. The subjects of the courses were “Japanese Church History,” “Theology in Dialogue,” “Japanese Buddhism,” “Shinto and Folk Religion,” “Reading a Classical Buddhist Text” and “Japanese New Religions.” In the class on “Japanese Church History” we learned about the beginnings of Christianity in Japan in the 16th century. It was exciting to find out how this revolutionary, complex religion, which was not introduced from China like Buddhism, was established in Japan. We learned about the enculturation of Christianity in a country which was not only linguistically but culturally, socially and mentally completely different from European countries. How to teach a new religion, which has just one nameless God who is one but triune, or details like the holy communion in a country where people do not have bread as daily food? Further, it was very interesting to study the subsequent history of the hidden Christians during the time of the closed country from the middle of the 17th until the middle of the 19th century, as well as some aspects of present Christianity in Japan which has more than one hundred denominations.