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In Memoriam
YUKI Hideo (1926-2012)

Yuki Hideo, Professor emeritus of Doshisha University and former Director of the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, passed away November 26, 2012 at the age of 86 years. During his long service at the NCC Study Center, he shaped its work and reputation considerably on both the national and international levels. He continued the work of his predecessors, Rev. Harry Thomsen, Prof. Ariga Tetsutaro and Prof. Doi Masatoshi, who laid the groundwork for interreligious dialogue in Japan from the Protestant side. Prof. Yuki proceeded to transform this small place into a trusting space where all kinds of religionists and scholars could meet and communicate who otherwise would not have had the opportunity in Japan to encounter each other. For many scholars from abroad, their affiliation with the NCC Study Center opened gates to many religious organizations in Japan. At the same time, numerous Japanese religionists of very diverse organizations met with others for the first time at this modest place. Yuki Sensei's impartial attitude as scholar and his humbleness as a Christian created a unique space in a country full of polarizations. He maintained a conciliatory and communicative attitude while always taking a clear personal stance, religiously and politically. And he could listen very well. As he wrote in his article "Dialogue in Religions":¹ "Any teacher is unable to 'teach,' if he or she does not listen to the student and does not respond to the student's consciousness of problems, but only engages in one-way communication." This is true also for interreligious dialogue: it starts with listening. Yuki Sensei, a true gentleman in physical appearance and spiritual constitution, may be called a "master of interreligious dialogue."

Yuki Hideo was born in Tokyo and raised in Pusan, Korea, during the era of Japanese colonialism. Here, in a Japanese congregation, he converted to Christianity already at a young age.² Such early experiences in Korea constituted a major challenge for his academic work later, where he continuously studied and consistently criticized Japanese imperialism, especially the Tennō-System at its very

* I would like to thank Dr. Galen Amstutz for kindly correcting the English.

1. Reprinted in this issue of *Japanese Religions*.

2. He was baptized in 1942, at the age of 16.

core.³ When treating Uchimura Kanzō's (1861-1930) refusal to bow before a picture of the Tennō in school, Yuki wrote about his own experience in the essay "Shinto and Buddhism in Japan" as follows:

I myself grew up in this age of fanatic Tenno-worship. In my childhood we wrapped our lunch-box with used newspapers. At a picnic excursion we used these papers as a substitute for a mat. But if there was a picture of the Tenno in that paper, to sit on it was thought of as violation of the people's loyalty.

To every primary or secondary school was distributed an official copy of Tenno's picture (*go-shinei*). In case of fire, the most important duty of the school-master was to save this picture. Many school-masters who failed to bring the picture out from the fire committed suicide. (In: John S. Augustine (ed.), *Religious Fundamentalism – An Asian Perspective*. Bangalore: South Asia Theological Research Institute 1993: 44)

At that time, a lay leader of the church helped Yuki to counter public criticism that Christians were not loyal citizens. "Patriotism is believing in the true God and praying for Japan," he said.⁴ Hence, Yuki was prevented from being caught by attachment to the Western forms of Christianity introduced by missionaries. Such attitudes had caused inner splits between religious and cultural (or national) identity within Japanese Christians. Later, in the NCC Study Center's academic activities, Yuki promoted the theme of indigenization or acculturation of Christianity in Japan.⁵

As a student Yuki entered the Faculty of Letters at Kyoto Imperial University⁶ in order to pursue religious studies. This department was shaped mainly by outstanding philosophers of religion, such as Nishida Kitarō, Tanabe Hajime and Nishitani Keiji, but Yuki decided to pursue historical studies of religions. Throughout his life, he maintained and continued academic work in this discipline. All the topics he would take up later, such as Shinto, State Shinto, Tennō-System, Japanese church, interreligious dialogue, and so on, were treated according to this

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3. See the numerous titles in Yuki's bibliography published in the present issue of *Japanese Religions*.
 4. See the interview "Christianity and Japanese Culture" published in this issue of *Japanese Religions*.
 5. See, e.g., his articles *Kirisuto-kyō to 'sosen sūhai' no mondai* ([comments on the Guidelines for Catholics with regard to the ancestors and the dead], *Deai* Vol. 8 No. 2, 1985; *Kirisuto-kyō to nihon no bunka* (Christianity and Japanese culture). *Deai* Vol. 13 No. 2, 1999.
 6. *Kyoto teikoku daigaku*; after World War II renamed Kyoto University.

methodological approach. The university teacher most important to him at that time was Matsumura Katsumi (1908-1991), a lecturer in the Chair for Christian Studies in this department.⁷

After graduating from university, Prof. Yuki taught at Shikoku Gakuin University (Kagawa prefecture, Shikoku island) between 1950 and 1964. Then he became Professor for History of Religions at Doshisha University, School of Theology, in Kyoto, where he taught from 1964-1992. He spent his first sabbatical at the University of Chicago during 1969-1971, pursuing research in religious studies with Mircea Eliade and Joseph Kitagawa. In 1979, he became a member of the Board of Trustees of the Japanese Association for Religious Studies. For his second sabbatical Yuki went to Edinburgh (Scotland) for one semester in 1987 in order to pursue research at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World. One of the fields of his research was the history of Christianity in Japan since the Meiji period.⁸

After having moved to Kyoto, Prof. Yuki became involved in the work of the NCC Study Center.⁹ In 1977 he became its Associate Director, and in 1985 he succeeded Prof. Doi Masatoshi (1907-1988) as its Director. Yuki Sensei retired in 2003, but continued to support the work of the NCC Study Center as long as he was able.

I got to know Yuki Sensei in 1988 when I arrived in Japan and joined the staff of the NCC Study Center. Integrating a foreigner into the local staff is not an easy task; it requires mutual understanding and cooperation. Yuki Sensei expressed his view of this problem's solution by the saying: "We do not see well with one eye, we need to perceive things with two eyes!" It certainly was a privilege to work under a director who did not view foreigners as ignoramuses or competitors, but who was able to integrate them into the work through acknowledging complementary perspectives. I began to appreciate his attitude fully only after I saw that there were only a very few places in Japan like that, although it was during a time when claims

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7. For the Chair for Christian Studies, a unique institution at a state university, see Mutō Kazuo, *Christianity and the Notion of Nothingness – Contributions to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue from the Kyoto School*, ed. by Martin Repp. Leiden and Boston: Brill 2012, pp. 9-15. For biographical data of Matsumura Katsumi, see op. cit. pp. 11, 22 and 28. Since 1951 he taught Systematic Theology at the Theological Faculty of Kwansai Gakuin University.
 8. See, e.g., *Kirisuto-kyō to nihon* (Christianity and Japan), Kyoto 1978; *Kirisuto-kyō to nihon no shakai* (Christianity and Japanese society), *Deai* Vol. 7 No. 2, 1981; *Nihon Kirisuto Kyōdan to Nihon Kirisuto-Kyōkai* (The United Church of Christ in Japan and the Church of Christ in Japan), *Deai* Vol. 9 No. 1, 1986.
 9. Since 1966, Yuki published in the NCC Study Center's journal *Deai*, 1967 he became member of the editorial board, and since 1985 the responsible editor.

of “internationalization” were popular in all areas of society. Moreover, Yuki Sensei understood his leadership according to the principle “The director is the servant of all.” Incidentally, a visitor once presented the NCC Study Center with a woodblock print by Watanabe Sadao depicting Jesus washing the feet of a disciple which now hangs at the wall of our otherwise spartan office. This Christian principle contradicts the feudalistic, authoritarian system still prevalent in Japan – and elsewhere.

In the following I would like to take up some events to whose challenges Yuki Sensei responded in his research and in the Study Center’s work.¹⁰ In 1988 Emperor Hirohito became seriously ill and the media reported each day in detail about his state of health until he passed away in the next year. Yuki Sensei carefully observed these and the subsequent developments of funeral and enthronement ceremonies and organized study meetings, lectures, seminars and publications on the Tennō-System and the relationship between state and religion. His main concern was that the pre-war Tennō-System had survived in a modified form, and that the separation between state and religions was not observed properly, e.g. it was contradicted by public funding of religious ceremonies such as imperial funeral and enthronement. His political concern was the revival of right-wing politics on the national and local levels, in other words, a renewal of Japanese nationalism.

1995, the 50th anniversary of the end of WWII, was a year that twice rocked Japan at its fundamentals. First, the devastating earthquake in the Kobe-Osaka area (*Hanshin dai-shinsai*) occurred on January 17, leaving numerous people homeless, injured or dead. The quake also undermined the economic optimism prevalent at the time. A Japanese Christian organization in Kobe had mobilized many volunteers for aid activities but was hampered by lack of economic means. Since Yuki Sensei had developed a trustful relationship with a major organization among the New Religions, he was able to request its financial support. This is one of the remarkable cases where dialogue developed into practical interreligious cooperation.

The second event in 1995 was the poison gas attack in the Tokyo subways for which leading members of the new religious group Aum Shinrikyō were later brought to court. This act of terror undermined the sense of public safety in Japan. Under Yuki Sensei’s leadership we could invite some Aum members from Tokyo in order to learn more about the group and the Aum incident in the protected space of the NCC Study Center. A foreign visiting student who attended was impressed by our “critical dialogue” because we did not corner the Aum members (as she had experienced once at home in a “dialogue” meeting with a disputed group), but communicated in a friendly way, even when we addressed highly critical issues. Together with the Tomisaka Christian Center (Tokyo), Yuki Sensei later organized an interdisciplinary research group on Aum Shinrikyō and the poison gas attack,

10. This is also reflected in the bibliography published in this issue of *Japanese Religions*.

whose results were published in a book to which he wrote the introduction.¹¹ Yuki Sensei's article is characteristically different from most contemporary Japanese Aum research, including foreign research depending on it, because he analyses this incident in historical and social contexts. For example, he viewed Aum's so-called brainwashing techniques in the context of similar phenomena among Japanese soldiers and civilians during the time of militarism, and the poison gas attack in connection with the Imperial Army's chemical and biological weapon programs during WWII. In contrast the mainstream research tries to explain this incident only by group internal developments centered around the guru.¹²

The Aum incident triggered in Japanese society a critical public debate about the role of religion, religious abuses, and business in the name of religion. Subsequently, using the gas attack and the public discussion on religion, the Japanese Government, ruled by the Liberal Democratic Party, revised the Law for Religious Corporations in order to stem the growing influence of Sōka Gakkai's political party Kōmei-tō. Yuki Sensei organized a number of study meetings on the important subject of the relationship between state and religion, and he also published articles on that subject.¹³ The Aum incident, the public critical discussion on religion, and the revision of the Law for Religious Corporations triggered an important response by some religious organizations to which I will return later.¹⁴

In December 1999 Yuki Sensei was invited to participate in the *Parliament of World's Religions* in Cape Town, South Africa. In an unpublished report sent to its organizers, he wrote:

When the first Parliament was held at the end of the nineteenth century, it was a truly remarkable and unprecedented gathering of representatives from the world's various religious traditions. The simple fact that it occurred at all made it a success.

11. Cf. *Oumu kara no toi, Oumu e no toi* (Questions from Aum, questions to Aum). In: NCC Shūkyō kenkyū-sho – Tomisaka Kirisuto-kyō Sentā (Eds.), *Anata wa donna shugyō o shita no deuska? – Oumu kara no toi, Oumu e no toi*. Tokyo 2004 (the English translation of Yuki's introduction is published in the present volume). See also his earlier article *Oumu shinrikyō no mondai o kangaeru* (Considering the Aum Shinrikyō problem), *Deai* Vol. 11 No. 4, 1995.
12. See Martin Repp, "Aum Shinrikyo and the Aum Incident: A Critical Introduction," in: James Lewis and Jesper Aagard Petersen (eds.), *Controversial New Religions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005: 177-181.
13. See, e.g., *Shūkyō to kokka – Shūkyō-hōjin-hō kaisei mondai o megutte* (Religion and state – On the problems of the revisions of the law for religious organizations), *Deai* Vol. 12 Nos. 1&2, 1997; the English translation is published in the present volume of *Japanese Religions*.
14. This issue is treated in Rev. Amaya's obituary in the present volume of *Japanese Religions*. This situation caused Rev. Amaya and Yuki Sensei to establish the *Kyōdan fuchi kenkyū-sho konwa-kai* in 2002.

But a hundred years has passed, and it is time the process is carried further. For example, most religions advocate peace in general terms, but conflicts nonetheless continue in many areas of the world. Likewise, though most religious traditions emphasize their love for nature, ecological devastation nonetheless continues to spread. It is time for the world's various religions to deal with these problems more concretely. In front of the Civic Center (one of the conference venues in Cape Town), I saw a young man holding a placard which read, "Parliament of World's Religion has no solution for Palestine." While there is indeed no easy solution for problems of this kind, members of all religious traditions must reach beyond the formalistic performance of their own rituals and attempt to tackle real-world issues of this kind. (Unpublished letter, January 17, 2000)

When Yuki Sensei was asked in Cape Town to present a contribution for the workshop "Interactive Religious Space," he introduced the building project of the Museum for World Religions in Taipei by a new Buddhist group from Taiwan. In his report he commented: "I wonder if the Museum for World Religions will truly be a place where many different religions may encounter each other, or if it will become nothing more than a medium for the sponsoring group to portray itself." (Ibid.) The background for this statement was a previous episode where the leader of this group had asked Yuki Sensei to prepare a visit at the NCC Study Center together with his adherents and to organize a dialogue meeting with representatives of Japanese Buddhism. However, this leader used the meeting only to promote his own case. Instrumentalizing interreligious dialogue for one's own benefit frequently occurs; unfortunately, however, it does not foster mutual understanding and trust.

In 2000 the NCC Study Center organized an international conference with the theme "Interreligious dialogue as task for the churches." The background for choosing this theme was that foreign supporters of the NCC Study Center repeatedly had given the advice that it should be integrated into a Christian university in order to secure its economic support. The financial basis of the NCC Study Center had been notoriously weak. Right from the beginning of his work as Director, Yuki Sensei had attempted to strengthen ties with the NCC-Japan head-office in Tokyo and its Protestant member churches. He was not very successful in increasing financial support, but he gained more understanding and moral support. After all, he considered it an essential task of the Protestant churches to run an institute dedicated to religious studies and interreligious dialogue.

This was especially important in the period since the late 1980's, when the churches in Japan became increasingly introverted.¹⁵ At the same time Yuki Sensei knew from other cases in Japan that an organizational integration into a university would not guarantee the future existence of such an institute; on the contrary, it

15. See pp. 24-29 of my introduction to Mutō Kazuo, *Christianity and the Notion of Nothingness – Contributions to Buddhist-Christian Dialogue from the Kyoto School*, ed. by Martin Repp. Leiden and Boston: Brill 2012.

would become a toy in university politics. Thus, in various respects Yuki Sensei tried to maintain balances between church and academia, among the different denominations of the NCC-J, and among the Christian universities in the Kansai area. He was an excellent diplomat, considering always the differing or contradicting aspects of the matter concerned, but he also took clear positions. He was also a committed lay member of a local church congregation, but one who viewed the clergy rather soberly, be it in Christianity or in other religions.¹⁶

Also in 2000, Yuki Sensei supported the establishment of a study group on “Religion and *manga*,” which shows the “youthfulness” and the innovative character of his scholarly approach. The Aum incident had brought to light that many young followers were strongly influenced by *manga* and *anime*. Hence, in order to understand Aum Shinrikyō and the related incidents, one had to study this kind of popular culture. We invited students of Christian and Buddhist universities, encouraged the study and presentation of their favorite *manga* or *anime*, and provided a place of communication for that purpose. For a number of students it was not easy to treat objectively characters and stories with which they had identified themselves spiritually. But this study group became a unique project of interreligious dialogue among young Buddhists and Christians, and some of these contributions even were translated into English and published in *Japanese Religions*. Unfortunately, after a few years this study group discontinued.

The year 2002 saw the establishment of two forward-looking projects in which Yuki Sensei again played a crucial role. First, the Forum of Research Institutes Associated with Religious Organizations (*Kyōdan fuchi kenkyū-sho konwa-kai* 教団付置研究所懇話会) was established. Rev. Amaya Tadao, then Director of Risshō Kōsei-kai’s Chūō Academic Research Institute – moved by the events and discussions since 1995 which fundamentally questioned religious organizations – developed the idea that an exchange between academic institutes of religious organizations might play an important role in analyzing, and helping to solve, the problems in religious organizations which had become apparent since the Aum incident in Japan. Rev. Amaya approached Yuki Sensei in order to help realize this plan since he was trusted by many representatives of religious organizations. After a period of preparation and many personal conversations, the Forum of Research Institutes Associated with Religious Organizations could be launched. The first meeting took place at the NCC Study Center in Kyoto, because it constituted a neutral and trusted place. The first formal meeting then took place in the Tendai Comprehensive Research Center on the slopes of Mt. Hiei. Thirteen institutes joined the group, and by 2010 it had increased to nineteen full members with seven

16. See, e.g., *Seishoku-sha to shinto – Sōka Gakkai to Nichiren shōshū* (Priests and laymen – Sōka Gakkai and Nichiren Shōshū). *Deai* Vol. 11 No. 1, 1992: 52-54; Dialogue in Religions. Present issue of *Japanese Religions* (section “Dialogue between priests”).

institutional bodies participating as observers. Currently annual meetings are held which address various problems of religion and society, and two subgroups or research panels on medical ethics and interreligious dialogue have begun to convene.¹⁷

The second major project starting in 2002 was the establishment of the *Interreligious Studies in Japan Program* (ISJP) at the NCC Study Center. Its aim is to provide students mainly from Western countries with opportunities to study religions in Japan (including Buddhism, Shinto, New Religions, and Christianity), to experience interreligious dialogue, and to reflect theoretically on the relationship between Christianity and other religions. The background for this study and exposure program is that the centuries old “Christian Occident” in the West has changed during a brief period of only 30 years (ca. 1970-2000) into multireligious societies. Church representatives and theologians were responding in various ways, but one gained the impression that their attempts at interreligious dialogue followed only the very elementary (and risky) learning pattern of “trial and error.” Christians in Asian and other countries have a longer history of interreligious encounter and communication, and hence Western countries can learn from their experience, know-how, and insights. During the preparatory stage, Yuki Sensei and I tried to convince representatives of other Christian study centers in Asia belonging to the network *Inter-Religio* to join this project and establish an “Interreligious Studies in Asia Program.” Only when one after the other declined to cooperate I began to understand Yuki Sensei’s enormous courage that as director of the economically weakest study center he had accepted and pursued such a project. However, he was aware that with such a study program he would contribute to the ecumene considerably and that the relationship between Western (mission) churches and Japanese churches could develop from a predominantly one-way West-to-East relationship into that of mutual communication. After running the ISJP for more than ten years now, quite a number of students of theology, religious education, and other fields have participated successfully. Some have entered professional careers in the meantime, and others have begun doctoral studies. A former student even took part in the one-year long basic training of Zen Buddhist monks before becoming pastor in his home country.¹⁸ The Association of Churches and Mission in South-West Germany,¹⁹ for many years a partner of the NCC Study Center, is promoting the ISJP in German speaking countries. Evaluating the experience of the students

17. See Ugo Dessí’s article „Religion, Networking, and Social Issues in Japan – The Case of the *Kyōdan fuchi kenkyūsho konwakai*.” JR Vol. 35 Nos. 1&2 (2010): 87-100.

18. See Tobias Eckerter’s contribution in the present issue of *Japanese Religions*.

19. Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwest-Deutschland (EMS), Stuttgart; now renamed Evangelische Mission in Solidarität.

after some years, its representatives arrived at the conclusion that participation in ISJP helped religiously conservative students to develop a wider horizon and the more liberal students to deepen their religious self-understanding.²⁰

Yuki Sensei's engagement in the ISJP demonstrates that he never lost sight of the important challenges the Japanese churches and the churches worldwide faced. At the same time he continued to focus his work on important social and political issues within Japan. In 2008, he encouraged Prof. Doi Kenji (Kwansei Gakuin University) to establish a research group on medical ethics at the NCC Study Center whose members are nurses, medical doctors and theologians. They discuss issues such as organ transplantations, brain death and other problems posed by modern medical treatment. Later, Prof. Doi became Yuki Sensei's successor as Director of the NCC Study Center.

The last essay which Yuki Sensei wrote before his death in the NCC Study Center's Newsletter in July 2012 dealt with the plans of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to change the Japanese Constitution by including the national flag and anthem in paragraph 3. The Ministry for Education had for some time already exerted considerable pressure on schools to hoist the flag and sing the anthem, a policy which resulted in coercion and bullying of teachers and pupils. Hence, Yuki voiced his criticism of the LDP plans. He had remained vigilant against nationalism and militarism throughout his life. Very recently, in 2013, the Liberal Democratic Party even published a proposal to delete paragraph 9 of the Constitution which prohibits rearmament and stipulates peaceful means for conflict resolution. We really hope that many politically conscious citizens will stand up and defend the unique Japanese "Peace Constitution" today as Yuki Sensei and his friends have long done. In 1968 he, the historian, had concluded his study "The shrine problem and freedom of religion" as follows: "It is only through a strong determination to not abandon our responsibility for the future of history, that history will perhaps not repeat itself."

– After Yuki Sensei's long struggle we pray that he may rest in eternal peace.

20. For ISJP, see the first announcement in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 27 No. 1 (2002): 128, and for annual reports in *Japanese Religions* Vol. 28 No. 1 (2003) and subsequent numbers. For a more detailed description of the ISJP and an explication of its ecumenical and theological significance, see Martin Repp, "From Contextual Theology to Ecumenical Theology – The "Interreligious Studies in Japan Program" (ISJP). In: David Kwang-sun Suh, Annette Meutrath, Choe Hyondok, eds., *Charting the Future of Theology and Theological Education in Asian Contexts*. ISPCK, Dehli 2004: 220-234.