

BOOK REVIEW

Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name?: A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, Orbis Books, 1985, pp. xvi + 288, \$14.95.

This is an important synoptic presentation of the principal theories about the relationship between Christianity and other religions, full of wonderful quotations reflecting the emergent awareness of the relativization of the place of Christ and Christianity on the map of religions. Knitter persuasively invites us to embrace the pain of letting go which this evolutionary shift, or Copernican revolution, imposes. He does not provide a knock-out argument against the Roman Catholic entente on the question of other faiths, namely, that they are a *praeparatio evangelica* (Vatican II), a first dawning of faith (Paul VI), to be fulfilled and purified in the complete light of Christian revelation. But his accounts of how thinkers like Ernst Troeltsch and John Hick found themselves forced to outgrow such claims for the unique centrality of Christianity, and of the blind alleys into which some of those who insisted on this centrality found themselves trapped, effectively sow the suspicion that we may have to relinquish such claims, as belonging to a vanishing classicist culture.

Inevitably, many readers will find ancient instincts of orthodoxy stirring within them, in resistance to the implications of Knitter's vision. Yet to rule out the questions raised by the experience of pluralism in the name of such instincts would be an act of theological bad faith. This experience has undoubtedly plunged us into a situation of relativity, at least to the degree that Christianity is seriously called in question by the other faiths for the first time. Nor can we map in advance the extent and the implications of this solicitation of our tradition from outside. Theologians will be tempted to dismiss some of Knitter's arguments as reductionist. In the *religionsgeschichtlich* perspective, which he largely adopts, the early Christian claims about the uniqueness of Jesus can appear as the typical rhetoric of religious commitment, or as expressing the self-identity of a minority religious group, but most theologians would question the credentials of this perspective as a foundation for theological judgments. Again, argu-

ments of the type: "If God wants all to be saved, why does he become incarnate only in Jesus?" will strike the theological ear as extremely naive. But even if they reject Knitter's view of the status of Jesus Christ, as I think they will, they should not reject his call for credible reformulation of the stance of Christian faith in a pluralistic, relativistic context.

It seems to me that, paradoxically, the weakness of Knitter's book is that he is still interpreting the other faiths in western terms. Thus on the basis of a theology of the incarnation which derives from Rahner, process theology, and the "myth of God Incarnate" school, he asks that we face "the question why the eternal Word cannot be fully incarnated in more than one person. The Council of Chalcedon stressed that, although the union between the divine and human natures in Jesus was complete, the differences between them remain. That would imply that the Word is free for other incarnations. Also, why must God's full and irrevocable offer of grace be given only once? Granted the huge number of potential recipients, a plurality of offers would seem to make sense" (191). It seems to me that Knitter is working here with metaphysical constructions of the incarnation which belong to the very classicist culture he is trying to escape. Several theologians today would claim that the classical doctrines on which these metaphysical constructions rest should be interpreted as defensive rather than constructive statements, and what they serve to defend is the phenomenality of the Christ-event, to which they can add nothing. The Fourth Evangelist and St. Ignatius of Antioch reveal that Christians soon began to feel that the acclamation "my God" was an appropriate way of naming that phenomenality. The later dogmatic fortunes of that formula no doubt entailed a forgetfulness of whatever it was that inspired the formula in the first place. I doubt if we can overcome that forgetfulness by regarding the faith in Christ's divinity as a matter of convenient mythic models or religious rhetoric, enlightening as the study of such factors may be.

In any case such a reduction of the myth and metaphysics of incarnation to its underlying experiential basis would render Knitter's incarnation-model obsolete, and set new terms for dealing with the riddle of Jesus in dialogue first with Judaism, and then with other faiths. The "scandal" of the historical positivity of Jesus of Nazareth can be lessened in many other ways than by the proposal that he be seen as but one among many possible incarnations of the "Word" (and of course this notion too, and even that of a personal God, are not immune to a critical *mise en question* in the inter-religious situation). One can stress that the universality of Jesus is that of a question ("Who do you say that I am?") rather than an answer; there is no final

answer till the eschaton. Or one can emphasize that the risen Christ is a life-giving Spirit, whose form is constantly dissolving into something new; whom we can never define without idolatry; who is neither male nor female, Jew nor Gentile; whom we constantly rediscover anew as we die and rise with him in the travail of difference. If Christ and his Spirit dwell in all hearts, as Vatican II implies, then that Christ is one who is constantly other, and *sem per maior*, than the Christ we have known. Again, one can attend to the concrete connections of the figure of Jesus within our human history, a history which after all may still be in its earliest stages: as a monotheistic prophet he is firmly embedded within the Jewish-Christian-Islam complex, whose unique position and historical fortunes he shares. To treat this complex as one religion among others would be to ignore the obvious empirical uniqueness of its monotheistic creed, law and worship. This complex as a whole is confronted by its most significant religious other in the no less diverse, no less profound, Indo-Sinitic complex of spiritual wisdom. It does not seem that we can map the relation of the other to ourselves in a satisfying way. If we could the other would cease to be other. Even Paul VI's generous vision of the convergence of world faiths on Bethlehem may have been a refusal to live with ineradicable difference. In this situation of listening to the east the figure of Jesus is bound to change in a radical way. Metaphysical models of incarnation do not seem to help us attend to the concrete modalities of this change. Finally, one could lessen the embarrassment of a historically unique savior by positively reveling in it in the style of Kierkegaard and Barth, at least to the extent of asking if there is not a profound affinity between the message that "the Lord thy God is one" and the message that this God chose to be identified in a unique way with a certain historical time and place. It may still be true that the uniqueness of Jesus as the Christ is not an invitation to idolatry, as Knitter fears, but an antidote against it. Which, after all, are we more likely to idolize: a quasi-Hegelian absolute, incarnating itself in humanity at the high points of its spiritual development, or a naked, crucified Jew, hurtling us back on our own finite history as the place in which God chose to pitch his tent? Any of these lines of thought may offer a promising and viable alternative to Knitter's proposal. None of them, however, should be used as an escape from the need of a radical revision of our traditional sense of identity, such as Knitter so lucidly and irenically proposes.

In conclusion, I would only register a certain sense of dissatisfaction over the fact that Knitter's references are confined to twentieth century western theological and philosophical sources. One is reminded of David Tracy's *Analogical Imagination*, which discusses the Christian

“classics” at such length without ever quoting one of them. We can only hope Knitter’s next book will show him engaged at closer range with the immense hermeneutical difficulties which still stand in the way of any valid theological sharing between, say, Christianity and Buddhism.

Joseph S. O’LEARY

EVENTS

From 11 to 15 March of this year, a meeting of the Working Group on Dialogue of the World Council of Churches was held in Swanwick, England. The Working Group made plans for interfaith work for the coming six years. Peter Lee of the *Tao Fong Ecumenical Centre* in Hong Kong attended the meeting and has been asked to aid in strengthening Buddhist-Christian dialogue in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Korea.

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The Third Asian Theological Workshop, sponsored by the Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Center and the Association for Theological Research in Southeast Asia, will take place at the Kansai Seminar House in Kyoto from 10 to 20 July of this year. Dr. C. S. Song serves as Dean of the Workshop, which has decided this year to focus on popular movements in Asia as part of its continuing general theme of “Doing Theology with Asian Resources.”

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The 11th Annual Summer Session on Mindanao and Sulu Cultures, conducted by the *Peter Gowing Memorial Research Center* to promote understanding between Christians and Muslims, was held from 15 April to 10 May at Marawi City. A total of 34 persons from throughout the Philippines—mostly priests, sisters, teachers, and lay workers—took part in courses focusing on “An Introduction to Islam,” “Islam in the Philippines,” and “The Muslim-Filipinos.” During the course of their studies, a formal dialogue was held between participants and a group of local Muslim leaders to discuss “Muslim and Christian Response to Past and Current Injustices.”

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The Second International Summer Institute for Islamic Studies is being held at the *Center* since 13 May of this year and will run until 3 August, with some 30 persons from the Philippines and neighboring

Asian countries enrolled in the courses. The Institute has been designed for professional church workers presently engaged in or preparing for ministries in countries where Muslim people and culture predominate. The courses are taught by a mixture of local and foreign scholars, Muslim and Christian.

Both summer programs at the Center offer a limited number of scholarships, and can be contacted directly for further information.

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The *Oriental Religions and Cultures Institute* of the University of Santo Tomas in Manila joined with the Pacific Economic and Culture Center to sponsor a special film festival on Chinese Culture during September of 1984.

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During January of this year, the *ORCI* conducted two special symposia on the themes "Ways of Contemplation" (with Yves Raguin of the *Ricci Institute of Chinese Studies*) and "Advances in Medical Technology and Christian Ethics" (with Bishop Cirilio Almario and Dr. Vicente Rosales). In addition, a colloquium on the theme "Sin, Justice, and Social Commitment" was organized in collaboration with the University's Social Research Center.

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The *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions* in Kyoto conducted a seminar-workshop on "Shingon and Esoteric Buddhism" at Mount Koya, the center of esoteric Buddhism in Japan, from 5 to 7 September of last year, focusing on the general principles and history of esoteric Buddhism and the life of Kobo Daishi. A total of 55 pastors and others took part in the event, which included excursions to temples and the Mount Koya Museum.

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In early November a similar workshop was directed by the *Center* in English at Mount Hiei, the Japanese center of Tendai Buddhism. In addition to lectures on Tendai philosophy and ascetic practices, the 30 persons taking part joined in morning worship and a fire ritual.

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The *NCC Center's* monthly research meeting has chosen to continue its formal discussions of the problem of ancestor worship. On several occasions it has attempted to come to grips with the recent Catholic statement, "A Guide for Catholic Believers Concerning the Ancestors and the Deceased," in order to offer constructive criticism on this still unresolved issue.

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The *NCC Center* hosted a special evening for the annual missionary conference of the United Church of Christ in Japan held in March of this year to discuss Asian theology and the role of women in Japanese religions.

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For the topic of its ongoing weekly Buddhist Study Group, the *NCC Center* has chosen as this year's theme a study of the *Yuishinshomon'i*, a commentary by Shinran on a work by Shogaku, a 13th century Pure Land Buddhist.

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Sophia University's *Institute of Oriental Religions* in Tokyo continues actively to promote depth-psychology as a tool to foster interreligious dialogue, an idea that began under the inspiration of its former director and head of the Japanese Jung Club, Thomas Immoos. The *Institute's* new director, Kadowaki Kakichi, has added to this the dimension Zen Buddhist practice, his own speciality. In May of this year, a round of public lectures and discussions were held on the theme, "The Depths of the Soul." Included in the program were lectures by the two on "Japanese Festivals and Depth-Psychology" and "The Depth-Psychology of *Do*" respectively. James Heisig of the *Nanzan Institute* in Nagoya also contributed a lecture on "Jung and Japanese Religiosity."

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In October of 1984 the *Institute of Oriental Religions* was visited by a delegation of theologians from Scandinavia and Germany. On the occasion, Thomas Immoos delivered a talk on "Problems of Interreligious Dialogue," and Kadowaki Kakichi on "The Rosary in Japan."

From 14 to 18 January of this year, the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* in Nagoya joined with the Nanzan Institute for Social Ethics to co-sponsor a series of five public lectures on the theme “Approaches to Work.” Two of the *Institute’s* staff, Jan Van Bragt and Jan Swyngedouw, delivered talks respectively on “Christian Attitudes to Work” and “Buddhist Attitudes to Work.” The annual lecture series is aimed at broadening the goals of the two Institutes to include the engagement of the general public.

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The 5th Nanzan Symposium was held at the *Institute* from 25 to 27 March on the theme “Historical Religion and Folk Religion: Shingon Mikkyo and Christianity.” As with its predecessors, the proceedings are being edited for publication.

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The last two meetings of the *Ecumenical Group for the Study of Interfaith Dialogue*, a group composed of the four Christian interreligious centers in Japan, featured talks by K. Kadowaki on “Praying the Rosary in a Japanese Way” (10 November, *Institute for Oriental Religions*) and T. Immoos on “How to Define *bona fide* Religions as Proper Partners for Dialogue” (16 February, *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture*).

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The *East Asian Pastoral Institute* in Manila has been running more and more courses on interfaith topics. Among them, Aloysius Pieris from Sri Lanka directed a workshop in Buddhism; Thomas O’ Shaughnessy, on Islam; Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud of Marawi, on dialogue with Muslims in Mindanao; and Yves Raguin of the *Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies*, on Chinese Religions.

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A seminar on “The Challenge of Inculturation” was held at the *T’boli Study Center* in South Cotobato, Philippines, from 18 to 22 March of this year under the sponsorship of St. Mary’s Theologate in Ozamiz City, Mindanao. Over 160 persons from the surrounding dioceses took part, bishops, priests, and laity. Sean McDonagh, director of the *Center*, aided with the sessions on culture, religion, and shamanism.

From 15 April to 12 June the *T'boli Study Center* conducted a consultation workshop on T'boli culture for a group of some 20 participants, all of them T'boli with third level education. The aims of the workshop include formal seminar sessions, research papers, the coordination of research, and preparations for publication.

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The *Center* is currently engaged in an education program centered on the Philippine Monkey-eating Eagle. When one of these rare and endangered birds strayed into the area this spring, an aviary was built to house it for two weeks, drawing the attention of tribal and lowland peoples from near and far. A lecture series and slide show were prepared to help people appreciate the importance of this bird and to warn of the dire consequences of environmental destruction in general.

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The *Religion and Culture Institute* in Bangkok conducted a week-long workshop in April of this year for 15 teachers in the monastery of Phra Buddhadassa at Suan Moke, Suratani, in southern Thailand. Professor Ranjuan Intarakumhang directed the program, the second of its kind, which included four sessions with Phra Buddhadassa himself.

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In collaboration with Thailand's Commission for Justice and Peace, the *Institute* recently sponsored a three-day seminar on "Prayer and Development" for a group of 12 persons, mostly Buddhist. Phra Pracha, a Buddhist monk, directed the sessions, both theoretical and practical, on Buddhist meditation. Sr. Theodore Hahnenfeld explained the Christian view of prayer and development, focusing on "centering prayer," whose technique is similar to Buddhist meditation practices.

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From 24 to 28 June, 1985, a regional workshop on "Minorities in Buddhist Politics" was held in Bangkok. The event was organized by Chulalongkorn University in cooperation with the University of Colombo.

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Kannikar Chiwabandit, a member of the *Institute's* staff is participating in a Video Production Course at the Kuangchi Program Service in Taipei with a view to producing media materials related to interreligious dialogue in Japan.

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The *Institute for the Study of Religion and Theology* at Seoul's Sogang University has been holding monthly seminars since spring of last year to study the relationship between the history of religion and theology. Present plans are to begin including Buddhist scholars in the seminars, and a possible year-long program on Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

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From 6 to 9 September of this year, the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* will host the Third Inter-Religio Conference, on the theme "Partners for Dialogue: The Search for Discriminating Norms." The event will bring together some 25 members from throughout the Inter-Religio network in Southeast Asia.

PUBLICATIONS

Continuing its active program of publications, the *Institute for the Study of Religion and Theology* in Seoul announces four new titles: Keel Hee-Sung, *Chinul: The Founder of the Korean Son Tradition*, and *History of Indian Philosophy* (in Korean); Paul Sye, *The Bible and Linguistics* (Korean); and Kim Sung-Hae, *The Righteous and the Sage*.

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Sean McDonagh of the *T'boli Study Center* announces the forthcoming publication by Geoffrey Chapman, London, of a book entitled, *The Case for the Earth: The Religious Task of Our Times*.

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Japanese Religions, published by the *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions* in Kyoto, includes in Vol.13, No.2, a series of articles related to its ongoing study of the problem of ancestor veneration in Japan.

Notto Thelle, until recently a member of the *Center's* staff (see *COMMUNICATIONS*), has completed a historical study, *Buddhism and Christianity in Japan: From Conflict to Dialogue, 1854-1899*, which will be issued by the University of Hawaii Press in the near future.

Masatoshi Doi, former director of the *Center* (see feature article in this issue), recently completed his Japanese translation of the Third Volume of Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*.

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In its recent issues, the *East Asian Pastoral Review* has featured a number of articles relevant to interreligious dialogue. Attention is drawn particularly to the following (Vol.2 1, 1984): "Consultation on Christian Presence Among Muslims in Asia"; A. Lazzarotto, "The Church in Deng Xiaoping's China"; M. Amaladoss, "Faith Meets Faith"; and "Culture and Dialogue."

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The *Institute of Oriental Religions* in Tokyo is currently preparing three new volumes for publication (in Japanese), all of them proceedings of its annual lecture series: *Beyond Death* and *Dogen and Christianity* (Sogensha), and *Master Dogen and St. Ignatius* (Hakujusha). In addition, Thomas Immoos's *Jung and German Literature* has just been issued by Shunjusha and Kakichi Kadowaki's *How to Zazen* by Kodansha. Based on his talks and practice of an oriental version of the recitation of the rosary (see *EVENTS*, K. Kadowaki has also issued a recent pamphlet on the topic (in Japanese) entitled "A Japanese Way to the Rosary."

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Thomas Immoos of the *Institute* also draws our attention to the journal *Update: New Religious Movements*, published by the Dialogue Center of Aarhus, Denmark; and *Der Kampf um die Seelen*, a series of publications on gurus, pseudocults, and new religious movements, published by the Evangelischer Pressverband für Bayern in Munich.

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The recent issue of the *Dansalan Quarterly* (Vol. 5, No.3) published by the *Peter Gowing Memorial Research Center* in Marawi includes papers of Jamal D. Rasul on "Muslim-Christian Relations on the Grassroot Level" and Hilario Gomez on "'Rats,' Armalite and Enduring Friendship." These two papers represent the main talks delivered at the 5th National Muslim-Christian Dialogue held at the Notre Dame of Job in January of 1984.

The *Center* also draws our attention to the publication of an English version of a handbook entitled *Christians and Muslims Talking Together*, translated and reworked by Kenneth Cracknell, Executive Secretary of the Committee for Relations with People of Other Faiths of the British Council of Churches.

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The director of the *Oriental Religions and Cultures Institute in Manila*, Fausto Gomez, has just completed a book on *The Praxis of Justice in Christian Perspective*, to be published by the Social Research Center of the University of Santo Tomas.

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In addition to its regular *Newsletter*, the *Thai Interreligious Commission for Development* announces the initiation of a new semi-annual publication entitled *Seeds of Peace*. If the opening issue, with articles by S. Sivaraksa, Seri Phongphit, and Thich Nhat Hanh, and others, is any indication of things to come, this venture looks to be breaking new and creative ground in exploring the borderlands between interfaith dialogue and social concerns. For further information, write to the *TICD* at: GPO Box 1960, Bangkok 10501, Thailand.

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As previously announced in the pages of *INTER-RELIGIO*, the formerly bilingual *Japan Missionary Bulletin* has begun to publish Japanese and English editions separately. The former has now reached a subscription list of 1,500; the latter is still struggling toward its goal of 500 subscribers. For further information, contact the *Oriens Institute for Religious Research* in Tokyo. Incidentally, the summer issue of the English version will contain the main body of the text of the pastoral guidelines for ancestor veneration prepared by the Catholic Commission for Other Religions, now in its 3rd printing.

The *Institute* also draws our attention to two recent publications by Ernest Piryns: "Towards a Japanese Theology: Conditions, Limitations, Perspectives" (*Euntes Docete* 36:2, 1984) and "Japan's New Religions: An Interpretation" (*Update* 8:3-4, 1984).

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The *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* published by the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture*, has just completed its special double-issue for 1985, dedicated to Heinrich Dumoulin on his 80th Birthday as a tribute to his life-long efforts to bring Buddhism and Christianity closer in their appreciation of one another's traditions. The issue was edited by the *Institute's* James Heisig. *Nanzan Studies in Religion and Culture*, a series devoted to philosophy and religion east and west, announces the forthcoming publication of four new volumes: Winston L. King, *Death Was His Koan: The Samurai Zen of Suzuki Shosan* (Asian Humanities Press, 1985); Tanabe Hajime, *Philosophy as Metanoetics* (University of California Press, 1986); Robert Morrell, *Kamacura Buddhism: A Minority Report* (Asian Humanities Press, 1985); and Nishida Kitaro, *Intuition and Reflection: Explorations in Self-Consciousness* (1986).

NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Paul Sye, former director of the *Institute for the Study of Religion and Theology* in Seoul, was appointed President of Sogang University on 27 December 1985.

The *Institute* has recently welcomed Kim Choon-Ho to its staff to strengthen its work on social ethics. Fr. Kim did his doctoral studies at the University of Mainz.

Kim Sung-Hae has initiated a course on “East Asian Religious Traditions and Christianity” at Sogang University, and sparked an interest among the students that encourages further ventures in this area.

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Shortly after the last issue of *INTER-RELIGIO* was printed and mailed out, word reached us that Sulak Sivaraksa, whose article we featured, had been released from prison suddenly on 30 November and the case against him mysteriously dropped.

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The *T’boli Study Center* in South Cotobato has added another T’boli woman, Alice Swana, to its part-time staff, to pursue research into the shamanic healing tradition among the T’boli.

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The Board of Regents of the *NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions* in Kyoto respectfully accepted the resignations of Masatoshi Doi (see feature article) and Notto Thelle. Yuki Hideo has been appointed new Director of the *Center*, to be assisted by Hakan Eilert (Skandinavian East Asia Mission) and Take Kuniyasu (Doshisha Women’s College) as Associate Directors.

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Jan Van Bragt of the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* is on

a year's sabbatical leave beginning April of 1985. After a period in Europe, he will assume a post as guest professor at the University of Toronto. Jan Swyngedouw has been appointed Acting Director in his absence.

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In April of this year, Thomas Immoos, having reached the age of mandatory retirement, formally stepped down as Director of Sophia University's *Institute of Oriental Religions*, to be succeeded by Kado— waki Kakichi, a fellow member of the *Institute*.

Ruben Habito, another member of the *Institute*, is on sabbatical this year to pursue his study of Mahayana Buddhism

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Philip Wickeri, a recent addition to the staff of *Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre*, has accepted the position of Overseas Coordinator for the Amity Foundation, a project initiated by Chinese Christians to promote health, education, and social service in China. The aims of the group, as announced at a press conference at the Ambassador Hotel in Kowloon on 21 March of this year are: to play a more active role in the nations' social development; to make Christian involvement and participation more widely known to the Chinese people; and to seek to strengthen the ecumenical sharing of resources and international people-to-people relationships.

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Long-term Visiting Research Fellows at the *Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture* in Nagoya this year include Whalen Lai (University of California, Davis), a specialist in Chinese Buddhist history; Joseph O'Leary (formerly of Maynooth, Ireland), who is assisting with the editing of translations of Japanese philosophy; Winston L. King (Vanderbilt University), who plans to complete a book on Japanese Buddhism; Richard E. Wentz (Arizona State University), to study Japanese religions; and Lawrence Sullivan (University of Missouri), who is working on a book on oriental religion and folk medicine. In addition, the *Institute* welcomes Tsuchida Tomoaki, formerly of Pomona College in Claremont, California, as a one-year Research Associate, specializing in Chinese and Japanese Buddhism.

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Michael Diamond has left the staff of the *Gowing Memorial Research Center* for another assignment. In his place, Bishop Bienvendio Tuddud has agreed to increase his collaboration with the work of the *Center* in a formal capacity as an active Consultant.

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Three more scholars at the *Oriental Religions and Cultures Institute* have successfully defended their M.A. theses. The topics, "Folk Catholicism in Central Ilocos Barangay," "Patterns of Decision-Making Among Filipino-Chinese," and "The Concept of Dhakti Marga or the Way of Devotion as Presented in the *Bhagavadgita*," attest to the growing success of the *Institute* to promote further intercultural and interfaith research.