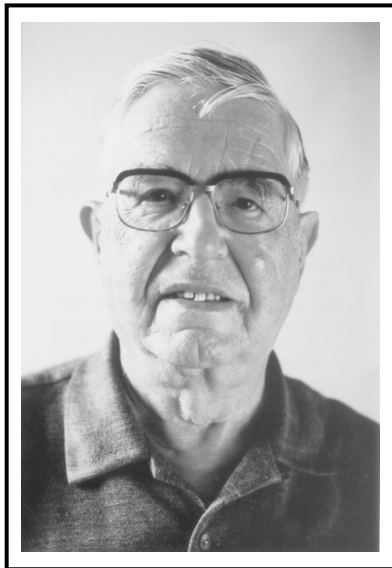


## In Memoriam Thomas Immoos (1918–2001)



ON 20 OCTOBER OF last year Thomas Immoos, a long time friend and colleague of the Nanzan Institute, former director of Sophia University's Institute for Oriental Religions, and first president of Japan's Jung Club, passed away of a heart attack in his native Swiss Canton of Schwyz. He was 83 years old. On behalf of the other members of staff, I have been asked to write a few lines in his memory.

Professor Immoos was born in the town of Schwyz on 15 September 1918. As a young man he entered the seminary of the Missionsgesellschaft Bethlehem to prepare for the priesthood. After completing his undergraduate studies at the seminary in Schöneck, his mind set on a mission to China, he went to London where he studied Chinese literature and learned English. Political conditions at the time prohibiting an appointment to China, he came instead to Japan at the request of the bishop of Sendai. He landed on Japanese soil for the first time on 5 January 1951 at the age of 32, and began at once to learn Japanese, largely studying on his own.

During the seven years he spent at the headquarters of the Bethlehem missionaries in Morioka, Professor Immoos was deeply impressed by the rituals and ancient culture of the Tōhoku region, and their many points of commonality to his

native Switzerland. It seems to have being during this period that his attention was drawn to C. G. Jung's idea of the archetypes.

He taught briefly at Iwate University and Tōhoku University, before moving to Sophia University in 1958 as associate professor. From 1959 to 1960 he returned to Switzerland to study German literature at Zurich University, at the same time honing his understanding of Chinese literature. After receiving his doctoral degree with a dissertation on "Friedrich Rückerts *Aneigun des Shi-king*," he returned to Tokyo and resumed teaching. He was named professor in 1964, and continued to teach at Sophia University until his retirement.

Although a specialist in German literature, Professor Immoos's interests were wide-ranging, including a profound knowledge of Japanese culture and in particular Noh drama. In 1969 he helped Umewaka Manzaburō 梅若万三郎 and his Noh troupe enroll in the Luzerne Music Festival and accompanied them to Neuchâtel, Brussels, and Paris for presentations, performances, and exhibitions aimed at introducing Noh to Europe. On a similar trip in 1972 he brought Takarai Hideo 宝生英雄 and his Noh troupe to the festival in Luzerne and later arranged for performances and public lectures.

He was also active as a journalist, and hardly a day went by that he did not take up his pen. From 1972 he served as special Tokyo correspondent for the Swiss Political Press a number of other German-language newspapers.

In 1979 he was appointed director of the Institute for Oriental Religions at Sophia University. Soon thereafter he worked actively for the Japan Jung Club, of which he is regarded the founder. An operation for a heart condition in that same year did nothing to slow him. By 1980 the Jung Club was set up and he was named its first president. His heartfelt intention was to serve as a bridge to facilitate the advance of Jungian psychology in Japan. In its early years the Club was given financial aid from Pro elvetia to assist with the publication of a journal; once again, it was Professor Immoos who was at work behind the scenes.

In 1983 he was awarded the Special Award of Merit from the Republic of Austria (in 1983 he had served briefly as visiting professor at Vienna University); in 1988 Canton Schwyz awarded him its Culture Award; and in 1989 the Japanese government honored him with the Fourth Degree of the Order of the Rising Sun.

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Sophia University arranged a symposium on "Switzerland: Change and Continuity," to which the Swiss ambassador was invited—a further tribute to the enormous effort he invested in the cultural exchange between the two countries his life had straddled for over 47 years.

Professor Immoos's life is too multi-faceted to capture in a single portrait: Catholic priest, poet, scholar of German, Chinese, and Japanese literature with a Jungian hue, and journalist. But what is most surprising is the zest and energy with which he devoted himself to each of these tasks. I can never remember him saying he was "too busy" for anything. At the university he would lecture on German the-

atre and on the weekends he would head off to participate in some Japanese festival or other, somehow finding the time to publish several novels and volumes of poetry, not to mention the endless stream of articles for the German press. The same wonder and enjoyment that reflected in his almost childlike eyes, he tried to bring to expression in his writing. As a Catholic priest, he lived the single life of a celibate, but it was a life, if I be permitted to say so, which he lived creatively and to the full.

I first met Professor Immoos over twenty-five years ago, in 1976. At the time his office was left open to give access to the collection of Swiss reference works kept there, and I was a frequent visitor, pursuing my interest in reading Jung's writing in the original. Though I was barely twenty years old, he took me in warmly and over the years offered his guidance. Thinking back to the time some years later when the Jung Club was being established, I recall how a number of friends and I began a Jung study club of our own at Sophia. At the time I was busy preparing a master's thesis on Kantian philosophy, and was about to talk to the others about discontinuing our meetings. As fate would have it, Professor Immoos approached me and asked for the cooperation of our little study circle in getting the Jung Club off the ground. Before I knew what was happening I had become general secretary.

As it happens, that was to change the course of my life. At first my interest in Jung was little more than an academic curiosity, but later I would write my doctoral dissertation on the topic. Thanks hardly seem enough to express the grace it has been for me to know Thomas Immoos. No sooner would I drop him a line about this or that, or even a simple greetings, than he would write me back. I always had the sense—and have it still—that he has been watching out for me. May he rest in peace.

WATANABE Manabu