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Editor's notes

1. Wherever possible, quotations from the Scriptures of Tenrikyo—the Ofudesaki (*The Tip of the Writing Brush*), the Mikagura-uta (*The Songs for the Service*), and the Osashizu (*The Divine Directions*)—are taken from the latest editions of the official translations provided by Tenrikyo Church Headquarters. In cases where the author cites material from the Osashizu that is not contained in officially approved English-language sources such as *Selections from the Osashizu*, a trial translation prepared by the author or translator is used.

2.1. The Foundress of Tenrikyo, Miki Nakayama, is referred to by Tenrikyo followers as “Oyasama” and written as 教祖 in Japanese.

2.2. The Honseki (本席) or the Seki (席) refers to Izō Iburi, who delivered the Osashizu, the Divine Directions, and granted the Sazuke.

2.3. The one who governs Tenrikyo shall be the Shinbashira (真柱). The first Shinbashira was Shinnosuke Nakayama, the second Shinbashira Shōzen Nakayama, and the third Shinbashira Zenye Nakayama, who was succeeded in 1998 by Zenji Nakayama.

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CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES OF THE TENRIKYO MISSION IN PREWAR CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES

Takayuki ONOUE

Introduction

This paper analyzes the characteristics of the missionary activities conducted by missionaries of Tenrikyo, one of Japan's new religions, and the challenges that the missionaries faced in spreading the teachings in the Continental United States in the prewar period. Religion can be considered an essential aspect to view and discuss how immigrants adjusted to the society and the culture where they permanently settled. Research on Japanese religions in North America has increased in the 1980s⁽¹⁾ and recent studies have detailed how Japanese religious groups conducted missionary work in North America. Other research has shown the religious practices of Japanese immigrants and their descendants.

The Japanese missionary work in North America started in the late 19th century. Nobutaka Inoue categorized the Japanese religious groups who conducted missionary work in Hawaii and the West Coast in the Continental United States into three groups: 1. Buddhist and Shinto representatives who started missionary activities soon after the arrival of the Japanese immigrants; 2. "Older" new religious groups such as Konkokyo and Tenrikyo as well as smaller Buddhist groups who started their activities after Japanese immigrants' life became stabilized to some extent; and 3. Religious groups (mainly new religions) who started overseas missions after the war.⁽²⁾

Tenrikyo, placed in the second category, started its organized mission in the late 1920s and achieved rapid development within a few decades. In 1934 it established the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, which took charge of its mission activities in North America. Tenrikyo's development before the war was portrayed in a book referred to, "Its

influence is increasing”⁽³⁾ among the Japanese immigrant society. Many books, articles, and records about the history of Tenrikyo’s overseas mission have been published by Tenrikyo Church Headquarters⁽⁴⁾ and some of them detail the mission in the Continental United States.⁽⁵⁾ The studies of Japanese religions in the immigrant communities in the Continental United States in the prewar period, however, have usually focused on Buddhism, which is one of Japan’s traditional religions. This traditional religion became one of the main religions among the immigrant communities, together with Christianity, which was the main religion of the host society. Tenrikyo has until now been rarely researched in depth.⁽⁶⁾ In addition, few studies examined Tenrikyo’s prewar mission in the context of historical, social, and cultural aspects among the Japanese immigrant communities, although some research has appeared in recent years.⁽⁷⁾

Therefore, this paper focuses on the period between the end of the 1920s, when Tenrikyo started its systematic mission and attained a rapid growth in America, until the outbreak of the Pacific War. This paper attempts to clarify the characteristics and challenges among the Japanese immigrant communities in the Continental United States, thus aiming to further research on Japanese religious belief among the immigrant communities in the prewar period through consideration of the social, cultural, and religious situations in their adoptive country. In the discussion, the paper utilizes diaries and reports written by missionaries who engaged in missionary activities in the Continental United States⁽⁸⁾ as well as local newspapers and books published in the Japanese immigrant communities.

At first this paper provides a brief background to the early history of Japanese immigration to the Continental United States and looks at the missionary activities of Japanese Buddhist and Christian missionaries there. Secondly, it provides an overview of the Tenrikyo mission in the Continental United States in the prewar period. Then, it considers the characteristics of the missionary work in the Japanese immigrant communities during that period, which contributed to the expansion of

Tenrikyo, and also details some challenges that Tenrikyo missionaries had to face in their missionary work.

1. Japanese Immigrant Communities and Japanese Religions in the Prewar Continental United States

Before discussing the Tenrikyo mission in the Continental United States in the prewar period, this chapter briefly overviews Japanese immigration to the Continental United States and immigration law registration, and then presents other Japanese religious organizations among the Japanese immigrant communities.

1-1. The Japanese Immigration to the Continental United States

Increased Japanese immigration to America started in the approximately twenty years between 1885, when the Meiji Government sent some Japanese to Hawaii as contract laborers for sugarcane and pineapple plantations, and 1904, when the Japanese-Russo War broke out.⁽⁹⁾ The number of Japanese visiting Hawaii rapidly increased from 1,964 between 1881 and 1885 to 14,296 between 1886 and 1890, and it reached 52,853 between 1896 and 1900.⁽¹⁰⁾ Hawaii was annexed to the U.S. in 1898 and the U.S. immigration laws started to apply to Hawaii in 1900. From that time visits and immigration of Japanese to the Continental United States increased sharply. Anti-Chinese sentiment intensified on the continent and this caused a lack of laborers, which became another driving force to attract Japanese immigrant. Thus, the number of Japanese entering the Continental United States doubled from 8,329 between 1891 and 1895 to 17,370 between 1896 and 1900.⁽¹¹⁾ The total number of Japanese in the Continental United States became 24,326 in 1900, 72,157 in 1910, 111,010 in 1920, 138,836 in 1930, and 126,947 in 1940 respectively.⁽¹²⁾ Thus, Japanese immigration and their residence in the Continental U.S. steadily increased.

After Japan won the Japanese-Sino War (1895) and the Japanese-Russo War (1905), it became apparent to the U.S. Government that the Japanese

military force could be a threat to the United States. This created concern and a fear against Japan and anti-Japanese sentiment became intensified. As a result, between 1907 and 1908 Japan was forced to sign the Gentlemen's Agreement with U.S. that restricted new labor immigrants from Japan. Even after that, however, Japanese people, mainly family members of the existing immigrants, continued to enter America. With the continuous increase of Japanese immigrants, the anti-Japanese sentiment became heightened and furthered the actions of movements to stop Japanese immigration.

This culminated in a new immigration law, the Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act), which aimed at a stronger restriction of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe as well as Asia.⁽¹³⁾ Since this act intended to exclude Japanese who constituted most of the Asian immigrants of those days, it was also called the "Japanese Exclusion Act." The Japanese immigrants in the Continental United States "interpreted the enactment of the 1924 Immigration Act as the culminating act of rejection by the United States."⁽¹⁴⁾ Upon its enactment, new Japanese immigrants entering as laborers were prohibited, which had a huge impact on the Japanese immigrant communities in various ways.

1-2. Japanese Religions in the Early Japanese Immigrant Communities

Religion plays a considerable role for immigrants in adjusting to the host society and in establishing their immigrant communities. When ethnic minority groups in any society form a community, their ethnic religion often played a central role. Noriko Shimada analyzed a case in Hawaii and stated that Buddhism and Shinto played such a role when Japanese formed their communities.⁽¹⁵⁾ In the Continental United States, when the Japanese immigrant communities were gradually established in their early stages, Japanese Christian and Buddhist groups, particularly the Nishi Honganji sect, played a significant role.⁽¹⁶⁾

In Christianity, the Fukuin-kai (Japanese Gospel Society) was organized in San Francisco in 1877 as the first Japanese Christian church

in America.⁽¹⁷⁾ After that, it divided into Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational branches of Christianity. Among the early immigrant communities, most of the immigrants were either students or temporary laborers. They desired to study and acquire new academic knowledge, or work hard to gain considerable amount of money and return to Japan. The authorities of the Christian churches realized that the Japanese immigrants needed to get a good job, become able to communicate in English, and live a decent life in order to attain their desires so that they tried to support them with these targets. Responding to their demands, the churches provided them with “activities of temperance, education, and introduction of jobs.”⁽¹⁸⁾

According to the *Zaibei nihonjin shi (2) fukkoku ban*,⁽¹⁹⁾ the Jōdo Shinshū sect of Buddhism was the first group to start its missionary work in the West Coast. San Francisco Buddhist Church was established there in 1898. After that, as a reflection of the areas where the Japanese immigrants lived in those days, other Buddhist churches were also established one after another on the West Coast including Sacramento, Fresno, Portland, and Los Angeles respectively. As part of the social background for the establishment of Buddhist churches, it was said that due to the tough, hard labor life, people sought out religious comfort. Nobukata Inoue has remarked that, “even though they [immigrants] intended to stay as temporary laborers, they must have felt lonely with the lack of religious rituals or customs in their daily life. Moreover, as an unavoidable problem, some of them passed away, due to old age, hard physical work or because they suffered an unexpected accident. Thus, at a minimum, there were times when they needed a Buddhist monk to conduct a funeral.”⁽²⁰⁾ Like in Japan, the main activities of the Buddhist groups in the immigrant communities were to conduct funeral, annual rituals, and pray for ancestors.

In the 1920s and 1930s the Japanese immigrant communities had achieved a certain level of stability and Japanese immigrants began to call America their home. Then, one of their main concerns became the education for the “Nisei,” or second generation of the Japanese

immigrants. Most Issei, the first generation, who settled in the host society, desired to educate their children as Japanese so that schools run by Buddhist churches provided a place to educate the second generation in Japanese morals, customs, and ways of thinking. On the other hand, the Nisei started to go to local schools in the host society as well. For those in Christian churches, this provided a place to educate them in the host society's values based on Christian culture and morals and guide them to a better American life. Buddhist and Christian churches competed in various aspects of Japanese immigrants' life and education. The former Buddhism had "a strong connection with the past including Japanese ethics, customs, and funerals rather than weddings," while the latter Christianity focused on "the present and future, which is, how immigrants could lead a better life in the host societies of the U.S. or Canada."⁽²¹⁾

Thus, Buddhist groups, with Honganji sect as the largest, and various Japanese Christian churches played a leading role in the religious culture in the Japanese immigrant communities in their early stages. Shinto and other Buddhist groups also started their activities a little later. According to the 10,000 Anniversary Issue of the Japanese Los Angeles Newspaper *Rafu Shimpo* published in 1934,⁽²²⁾ Shinto's presence in the Continental United States began with the establishment of a Shinto church in San Francisco in 1905. The church later moved to Los Angeles and was named the Hokubei Daijingū Hon-in in 1933. Devoted ministers later established four branch churches. Shigeru Morioka from Hiroshima Prefecture established the Beikoku Shinto Kyōkai in 1921 and Shinkichi Miyoshi from Aichi Prefecture established the San Francisco Daijingū in 1930 respectively.

1-3. Religious situation in the 1920s and the 1930s in the Immigrant Communities

In the 1920s "older" new religions such as Konkokyo and Tenrikyo and smaller Buddhist groups started their missionary activities and developed respectively. Among them, Konkokyo and Tenrikyo attained

rapid growth and became recognized as two of the major religious groups in the immigrant communities. According to Konkokyo official website, their mission in North America started in 1919 and in Hawaii in 1926.⁽²³⁾ In 1928 a church was established in Seattle. Then, other churches were established one after another in each region such as Tacoma, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland. One missionary, Yoshiaki Fukuda, arrived in the West Coast from Japan in 1930 and established the Headquarters of Konkokyo in North America the following year,⁽²⁴⁾ which furthered the Konkokyo mission in North America.

According to Rafu Shimpo, the major religious groups in the immigrant communities in South California of the 1930s included Christianity, Buddhism, Shinto, Tenrikyo, and Konkokyo. The approximate number of members were 6,000 for Nishi Honganji sect, 1,000 for Higashi Honganji sect, 700 for Sōtōshū Hokubei Bukkyōkai, 1,300 for Hokubei Kōyasan Daishi Kyōkai, 700 for Hokubei Daijingū Hon-in, and 500 for Beikoku Shintō Kyōkai, while Konkokyo had over 100 follower households.⁽²⁵⁾

Tadayoshi Moroi, head minister of Tenrikyo Meikyo Grand Church, visited North America in 1928 and reported about the religious situation in the immigrant communities as follows: Christianity has about 20,000 followers and 15 churches including in Hawaii. Among them Kyūseigun (Salvation Army) conducted not only missionary work but also social welfare so that it was well developed. Its headquarters was set up in San Francisco and twelve or thirteen Shōtai, corps, were established as well. Buddhism has about 26 churches and approximately 10,000 followers in the Continental U.S. Especially both Higashi and Nishi Honganji sects established huge temples and lead large religious communities. Other Buddhist groups included Nichiren, Shingon, Jōdo, and Sōtō sects. Those sects offer Sunday school, kindergarten, and Japanese language school. Among the Shinto religious sects, Konkokyo lead the groups, while others included Izumo Taisha, Kurozumikyo, and Kamo Jinja (Kiyomorikō) Daijingū.⁽²⁶⁾ His report was from a perspective of a Tenrikyo missionary who desired to encourage the Tenrikyo mission in North America by saying that the situation in the immigrant communities

would be good for Tenrikyo to develop its mission. He did not describe other religious groups in a positive light. Never-the-less, his report provided some insights to the circumstance of major religious groups in the Japanese immigrant communities of those days.

2. The Commencement and Development of Tenrikyo's Mission in North America

Tenrikyo achieved a rapid progress in North America between the late 1920s and the middle of the 1930s. This chapter clarifies when the Tenrikyo mission started, how it developed, and what kind of activities it conducted. It also refers to some background of the overseas mission promoted by the Tenrikyo Church Headquarters in Japan.

2-1. Pioneers of the North American Mission and the Start of a Systematic Mission

The Tenrikyo Church was first established in the Continental United States in the late 1920s. However, previously there were some followers who immigrated and lived there as laborers while simultaneously conducting individual missionary activities. *Tenrikyō Beikoku Fukyō Jūnenshi* stated that Japanese followers who arrived in the West Coast around 1900 engaged in missionary work in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Turlock, Portland, Seattle, and Missoula. Some performed a monthly service with dozens of people every month, while others conveyed the teachings to not only Japanese but also to American citizens and gained a firm trust from them.⁽²⁷⁾ Thus, Tenrikyo followers who stayed in the Continental U.S. as immigrant laborers engaged in missionary work as part of their practice of faith in their daily life.

The first pioneer who went to the Continental U.S. with a clear intention of missionary work was said to be Sentarō Tamaki from Tenrikyo Senba Branch Church (now Grand Church). In response to a strong desire for the overseas mission by Umejirō Umetani, then successive leader of the church, Tamaki came to the Continental U.S. in

1896. He energetically engaged in missionary work for some time but the details of his records from that time do not remain.⁽²⁸⁾ In the latter half of the 1920s, more systematic missions started in the Continental United States. Tenrikyo San Francisco Church was established in 1927 as the first church in the Continental United States. Then, other churches were established one after another in Seattle, Portland, and Los Angeles among the immigrant communities, like other religious groups had done prior. The intention of promoting the organized mission was seen through the actions of Tsunetarō Kamisawa who lived in San Francisco as an immigrant, and who visited the Japanese Consulate and the Immigration Office to make inquiries about religious activities.⁽²⁹⁾

Tenrikyo churches consist of Church Headquarters and general churches which belong under the Church Headquarters. General churches are classified into grand and branch churches in Japan, while churches abroad are called either mission headquarters or churches.⁽³⁰⁾ The core guidelines for various mission activities have been established by Church Headquarters. However, practical activities and the implementation of the guidelines were often conducted individually by each individual church. The missionary work in the Continental United States was promoted by several grand churches in its early stages. Yoshizō Katayama, head minister of Tenrikyo Honjima Branch Church (now Grand Church), dispatched a total of 17 missionaries to North America between 1927 and 1932 and established seven churches in the West Coast. Tadayoshi Moroi, head minister of Tenrikyo Meikyo Grand Church, visited the West Coast between March and July 1928 and conducted film and lecture meetings in each region. Since then, a considerable number of missionaries were sent there. Yoshinori Kashihara from Tenrikyo Myōdō Grand Church visited Hawaii, the Continental United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, other European countries and India between 1931 and 1933. He visited not only the West Coast but also the East Coast including New York in the Continental United States.⁽³¹⁾

2-2. Shōzen Nakayama, Second Shinbashira, and the Mission Headquarters in America

Following the promotion of missionary activities by several grand churches from the latter half of the 1920s, what accelerated the Tenrikyo mission in North America was the visit in 1933 by Shōzen Nakayama, the Second Shinbashira, administrative and spiritual leader of Tenrikyo. The main purpose of his visit was to attend an international religious conference held in Chicago. He also visited various local facilities in the Continental United States and Hawaii, such as universities, museums, and churches and had interaction with many local people including Japanese immigrants, local religious ministers, academics, politicians, and journalists. He tried to gain every possible opportunity to spread the Tenrikyo teachings of world salvation through exchanges with a wide variety of people. His attendance to the international religious conference in Chicago became an opportunity to “have the existence of Tenrikyo known to the religious people throughout the world at an official meeting for the first time and to be noted in the history of Tenrikyo.”⁽³²⁾

Susumu Yoshida, the third bishop of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, stated:

It seemed that the Shinbashira was welcomed by not only Tenrikyo followers, but also by all Japanese in America. . . . In those days, Japanese immigrants were half-isolated due to the enactment of the new immigration law in America and sought for nostalgic feelings to their home country far away, while facing a storm of exclusion. The Shinbashira’s visit under these circumstance became good news for the followers while other Japanese welcomed him as a great visitor from Japan so that the atmosphere became very excited.⁽³³⁾

Local newspapers, particularly on the West Coast, carried his visit, such as, “Tenrikyo Head Gives Address,”⁽³⁴⁾ “Tenri Chief Leaves S.F.: Patriarch to Inspect Salt Lake City,”⁽³⁵⁾ “L.A. Greets Tenri Chief: Nakayama Welcomed By 400 Followers,”⁽³⁶⁾ “Shinto Leader Eats ICE

Cream, Discusses U.S.,”⁽³⁷⁾ and “Faith Congress to Hear About Shintoism Acts.”⁽³⁸⁾ They showed their interests in the visit of a religious leader from Japan amid growing tensions between the U.S. and Japan.

This visit heightened the North America mission and Church Headquarters decided to set up a facility functioning as a core to promote the mission there. Thus, the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America was established in Los Angeles in 1934 and Toyohiko Tsuji was appointed as the first bishop. On July 5 in the same year, the headquarters was official approved as a non-profit corporation by the State of California.⁽³⁹⁾

Until then, missionary activities in North America were promoted mainly by individual church affiliations. In Tenrikyo organizational history, church affiliation has been very important. However, it was hard for the offshoot churches in North America to have frequent contact and exchanges with their grand churches in Japan. In addition, communication and co-operation among different church affiliations and missionaries in North America did not function well enough. Followers’ local organizations were set up only in Los Angeles and Seattle. Bishop Tsuji visited each region in the West Coast soon after his arrival. He strongly felt the need of followers’ organization beyond church affiliation to expand the mission, and thus, Tenrikyo America Seishin-kai, Association of Sincere Hearts, was formed in 1934 as a Tenrikyo network throughout North America. The initial number consisted of 1,125 members.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Thus, the Mission Headquarters in America supervised by Church Headquarters took the role to unite churches in America beyond their home affiliations.

The Mission Headquarters also served to settle some problems in the missionary work in North America. Due to a strong encouragement of the overseas mission in the entire Tenrikyo organization, many missionaries entered North America in the 1920s and 1930s. However, various problems occurred one after another. Some violated the immigration law and resulted in deportation, while no missionaries could take charge in some churches after they had been established. Thus, the purpose of establishing the Mission Headquarters in America was not only to

promote the North American mission but also to deal with these issues. Seishin-kai also served to connect missionaries and followers throughout North America and developed various activities.

2-3. Momentum toward the Overseas Mission within the Tenrikyo Organization

The Tenrikyo mission further developed in North America in the 1930s with the second Shinbashira's visit and the establishment of the Mission Headquarters in America. This was part of the Church Headquarters' promotion of the overseas mission in those days. At the foundation of the Tenrikyo faith is the salvation of all people in the world, as it is explained that, "Salvation as envisaged in Tenrikyo has no limitations in terms of race, ethnicity, nation, or social class" and "Tenrikyo seeks to spread the teachings in the hope of making salvation available and accessible to all humankind."⁽⁴¹⁾ Thus, it can be said that the teachings contained the intention for an overseas mission from the beginning.

Tenrikyo came into existence in 1838 and expanded within Japan in the 1890s. The Meiji Government felt concern for the rapid increase in membership numbers and the Home Ministry announced the Directive No.12, which is also called the "Secret Instruction," in 1896 to strictly restrict Tenrikyo's activities. This became an opportunity for Tenrikyo missionaries, particularly young people, to seek missionary activities outside the country. It was said that the Foundress had foretold: "Within seventy-five years after God descended to this Residence, God's teachings will be spread all over the country. After that, the divine name, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto, will be spread from one end of the world to the other."⁽⁴²⁾ This prophecy coincided with the circumstance for the establishment of the overseas mission in those days because 1912 marked the seventy-fifth year since 1838 when God became revealed and Tenrikyo was established.

The 40th Anniversary of the Foundress was celebrated in 1926. Around that time, the Church Headquarters made announcements of their policies

to promote the overseas mission. The second Shinbashira set up Tenri Foreign Language Institute (now Tenri University) in 1925 to help promote the overseas mission. He also delivered the Instruction Three proclamation in 1927, in which he “announced the uplift of the intention for overseas mission and the start of an organized overseas mission.”⁽⁴³⁾ Then, he set up a new section for the overseas mission within the Church Headquarters, decided rules and regulations for the overseas mission, and thus promoted the system for the overseas mission. Through these activities the momentum toward the overseas mission was heightened.

Nobutaka Inoue stated, in order to compete with the existing religious groups such as Buddhism and Christianity, “it is indispensable for the headquarters to have an interest in overseas missionary work” and “for Tenrikyo which has achieved a tremendous growth in Japan, the development naturally leads them to the overseas mission.”⁽⁴⁴⁾ Thus, the factors in Japan behind the start and the development of the American mission by Tenrikyo included its growth in Japan, the suppression and persecution by the authorities in Japan, and the implementation of overseas mission contained in the foundation of the faith.

2-4. Missionary Activities in the Continental United States

Next, this paper examines what kind of activities the Tenrikyo missionaries conducted in their missionary work in the Continental United States. In 1929 the San Francisco Tenrikyo Church listed as its action guidelines such activities as “PR through newspapers, lectures, and publications,” “efforts in missionary work to American citizens,” “religious discussion, children gatherings, home meetings, and conveyance of the teachings based on God’s words,” “Americanization of language, custom, and behaviors as much as possible.” They then discussed ways of their implementation, namely, “salvation of sick people,” “visit to hospitals,” “house meetings,” “public lectures,” “utilization of newspapers,” and the “distribution of leaflets.”⁽⁴⁵⁾

Many missionaries recorded their days of missionary activities. In

April 1929, Mitsuzō Funo living in Seattle conducted a six-day mission tour to Oregon. He visited a Japanese immigrant's house in the afternoon every day and conveyed the teachings while having a chat with the resident woman over tea. Other women including her neighbors, friends, and those who came from the same town in Japan often gathered at the house and earnestly listened to his talks of the teachings. Some of them faced troubles so that they even asked how to settle the matters with the help of the faith. Others who became interested in Tenrikyo also came to him one after another. It seems that they had known little about Tenrikyo and found the teachings something new and attractive.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Another missionary Minoru Yoshizawa described his missionary activities in Sacramento in 1931 as follows: On May 31, he started walking at 7 a.m. to a Japanese follower's house, eight miles away. Although he found some difficulty in finding the house, he reached it at 10:30 a.m. with a help of a kind American local. He was welcomed to the follower's house, offered some monetary donation, and even given a ride to another Tenrikyo follower's house. Then he had a lot of conversation with the other follower. He left from a station at 6:50 p.m. and returned to his church at 8:30 p.m.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Missionaries tried various means to spread the teachings. Diaries and reports by the missionaries in those days showed that they often conducted Tenrikyo's traditional tandoku fukyō, or independent proselytization,⁽⁴⁸⁾ and held film and lecture meetings to reach out to as many people as possible at one time. The film and lecture meetings were often conducted and favorably accepted among the Japanese immigrant communities. In a record of the visit by Tadayoshi Moroi from Japan in 1928, a meeting at a picture hall in Seattle was "very popular and around 500 to 600 people attended" and another at Seiyōken Hall in Portland "attracted about 250 participants and was held in enjoyment."⁽⁴⁹⁾ This kind of gathering was impossible to be held by individual missionaries and therefore can be said to be one feature that was made possible only by an organized mission.

2-5. Statistics of Tenrikyo in the Prewar Period

The establishment of the first church in 1927 activated the Tenrikyo mission in the Continental United States. Until 1936 a total of 147 missionaries were dispatched from Japan by different church affiliations and 39 churches were established in the West Coast including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland and Seattle. Although the number of followers was much smaller, Tenrikyo activities were also conducted in other states such as Utah, Arizona, and Idaho.⁽⁵⁰⁾

In 1938 the Mission Headquarters in America conducted a survey for followers in North American including the Continental United States, Hawaii, and Canada. According to the results through “counting the most reliable number of followers and their children as a follower,” the number of followers were 5,816 in total: 3,431 in the Continental United States; 2,294 in Hawaii; and 91 in Canada.⁽⁵¹⁾ According to the 1940 census of the U.S., the number of Japanese and Japanese-Americans living there was 126,947 and among them 36,866, approximately one third, lived in Los Angeles.⁽⁵²⁾ The survey conducted by the Mission Headquarters in America estimated that 2,021 followers lived in and around Los Angeles, which means about five percent of the total Japanese living there.⁽⁵³⁾ Based on these figures, Tenrikyo which competed with other religious organizations in the immigrant communities where the pre-existing religious groups had already been dominant, was considered to have achieved a certain level of success in the communities at the end of 1930s.

3. The Background of Tenrikyo Expansion into Japanese Immigrant Communities

So far this paper has overviewed Japanese immigration to the Continental United States and the development of Japanese religious groups and then clarified the beginning and the development of Tenrikyo’s mission and Church Headquarters’ promotion of the overseas

mission. This chapter examines economic, social, and cultural factors in the Japanese immigrant communities, which were considered to contribute to the rapid progress of Tenrikyo's overseas mission.

3-1. Tenrikyo Followers in the Japanese Immigrant Communities

One of the reasons of the Tenrikyo's development was the relatively stabilized financial circumstance of the followers who had already settled in the host society. As mentioned earlier, a considerable number of Tenrikyo followers were among Japanese who immigrated to the Continental U.S. and desired a religious environment. After the Japanese Exclusion Act was enacted in 1924, anti-Japanese movements temporarily ceased and previous Japanese immigrants could lead a more financially stable life than before. Under these circumstances, some Tenrikyo followers living on the West Coast further engaged in missionary work by themselves, while others requested their churches in Japan to send missionaries to America by confirming their support for the missionaries. Thus, "missionaries who came to America upon request could engage in missionary work without worries and concerns about their livelihoods in the Japanese communities where they had established their lives to some extent."⁽⁵⁴⁾ Although Japanese laborers were not permitted to enter America due to the Japanese Exclusion Act, missionaries were allowed to come and engage in missionary work.⁽⁵⁵⁾ However, they did not have any ways to gain some income without paid work. Therefore, followers who had settled in there as immigrants, including some running laundry shops and others operating hotels, often financially supported the missionaries' lives.⁽⁵⁶⁾

These devoted followers also supported missionaries sent from Japan by introducing their friends to the missionaries or inviting others to various meetings and events. Some of them became even head ministers of Tenrikyo churches in the end. Before the start of the Pacific War, Tenrikyo churches numbered 41 associations. Among the head ministers of these churches, about half were missionaries who came to America

for the purpose of missionary work, while one third were those who initially came as immigrants.⁽⁵⁷⁾ This shows the variety of missionaries. *Zaibei nihonjin shi (2) fukkoku ban* described a unique characteristic of Tenrikyo: “[Its] feature is pioneers of a mission were not missionaries sent from Japan but Japanese who immigrated into America first and engaged in mission work later, which is not observed in other religious groups.”⁽⁵⁸⁾ Thus, Tenrikyo followers who had already settled in the host society as an immigrant took a huge role in the promotion of the Tenrikyo mission.

3-2. Spiritual and Physical Salvation

Although Japanese immigrants achieved economic stability to some extent, they sought for spiritual certainty in a tough situation due to racial discriminatory immigration policies that continued. As a result they were placed in a position isolated from both the host society and their mother country. As Japan was expanding its influence in Asia with their military force, the relationship between Japan and America became worse, which increased concerns of Japanese immigrants on the West Coast. The spread of the Great Depression that started in 1929 caused catastrophic damage to the American economy, and also had a huge impact on immigrants’ financial situation.

Tadayoshi Moroi, who visited North America in 1928, observed the situation of the Japanese immigrants of those days, referring to a number of findings such as “Japanese people here are struggling more and feel more worried in a foreign land than those in Japan so that it seems easier for them to embrace the Tenrikyo faith,” “Most Japanese earlier settlers in America have reached fifty years of age or over so that they feel some emotional problems and are seeking something spiritual to rely on.” He goes on to say: “It is no doubt that Japanese immigrants would welcome Tenrikyo as one of the mother country’s religions under this uncertainty and desire to clear away their worries with the teachings, which means that Tenrikyo’s overseas mission would arrive at an opportune time.”⁽⁵⁹⁾

Japanese immigrants often became physically and mentally ill due to harsh labor conditions and were filled with spiritual uncertainty so that they sought prayers and healings for their illness. Tenrikyo teachings include a method of healing illness called the Sazuke, the Divine Grant,⁽⁶⁰⁾ which undoubtedly became one of the reasons for which immigrants were attracted to Tenrikyo. The Tenrikyo's way of reaching out to the people can be observed in a leaflet distributed in the immigrant communities of those days, entitled "Announcement for those suffering physically and mentally."⁽⁶¹⁾ In his research on Japanese new religions, Nobukata Inoue analyzed Tenrikyo religion's great social influence in the early 20th century in Japan and noted, "[t]he most potent motive that initially brought people to Tenrikyō was its practice of faith healing, a feature that had continued since its very first days."⁽⁶²⁾ This tendency could also be observed in the Tenrikyo mission to the Continental United States.

3-3. Community Centers

Another factor to promote the Tenrikyo mission in North America was that it served as a "community center" for the Japanese immigrants. New immigrants were not allowed to enter America after the proclamation of the Japanese Exclusion Act, and interpersonal exchanges with Japan became less frequent than before. Under these circumstances Japanese religious churches became a place for Japanese immigrants to "recognize their identities as Japanese and function as a community center"⁽⁶³⁾ through providing immigrants with opportunities to gather and exchanges various information. In addition to the existing churches of Buddhism and Christianity, Tenrikyo churches offered the immigrants another option. A considerable number of Tenrikyo missionaries were allowed to enter and stay in America as "religious ministers" even after the enactment of Immigration Act of 1924 and they developed their activities in each of the various regions. Not only missionaries but also immigrant followers came and went between America and Japan so often that they took the role of

providing the Japanese immigrants with a source of vital information.

Tenrikyo church events and activities were regularly announced in local papers, like “Tenrikyo Seishin-kai’s Opening Ceremony: All Members Compete in their Performance After the Solemn Ceremony”⁽⁶⁴⁾ and “Dinner Bento Provided to All Attendees.”⁽⁶⁵⁾ Film and lecture meetings often attracted the Japanese immigrants. The contents included not only an introduction into Tenrikyo teachings and faith but also general films of Japan,⁽⁶⁶⁾ which were favorably accepted by all. Immigrants came to gather at Tenrikyo churches or followers’ homes to socialize with each other. Some of them became interested in Tenrikyo through that opportunity and came to embrace the faith in the end.

3-4. Kenjin-kai, Prefectural Associations

The existence of Kenjin-kai, prefectural associations, became another factor to promote the Tenrikyo mission. Among the Japanese immigrant communities Kenjin-kai was an “organization made up of Japanese-Americans deriving from the same prefecture in Japan” and it served as “an important social and sometimes economic grouping”⁽⁶⁷⁾ in the immigrant communities in the prewar period. Tenrikyo missionary work was often conducted based on Kenjin-kai of the prefectures from which missionaries and followers came.

In 1928 Tadayoshi Moroi, the head of Tenrikyo Meikyo Grand Church located in Aichi Prefecture, and other missionaries including those from Yamanashi Prefecture and Nagano Prefecture visited Salt Lake, Utah, by request of an acquaintance of a follower. The Shizuoka Kenjin-kai helped organize a film and lecture meeting in a mining town where approximately 40 to 50 people gathered, while the Kenjin-kai of Aichi, Yamanashi, and Nagano sponsored a welcome party for his party respectively in Sacramento.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Tenrikyo was introduced into each community through these occasions. Thus, Tenrikyo missionaries and followers’ relationship with various Kenjin-kai contributed to the promotion of their missionary activities.

This chapter has examined various factors in the Japanese immigrant communities to encourage Tenrikyo mission activity. Tenrikyo missionaries tried to adjust to the economic and social situation of those days, utilized their features of healing illness and active involvement of immigrant followers, and responded to the religious desires that the pre-existing religious groups had not fully covered. It also provided another option as a community center for the immigrants and took advantage of the existence of Kenjin-kai associations in promoting various missionary activities.

4. Issues for the Tenrikyo Mission in the Continental United States

With the circumstances of the Japanese immigrant communities discussed in the previous chapter, Tenrikyo rapidly expanded within a few decades since it started its organized activities. At the same time, however, it faced various issues and problems. This chapter looks at anti-Tenrikyo feelings in the immigrant communities, the “Nisei Problem” which had been a big concern for the Issei in those days, and its challenges for the mission of non-Japanese, and localization that had been a challenge for not only Tenrikyo but also other Japanese religious groups.

4-1. Anti-Tenrikyo Feelings and Conflicts with Other Religious Groups

Tenrikyo made tremendous progress in Japan after the Foundress “withdrew from physical life”⁽⁶⁹⁾ in 1887. On the other hand, however, it became a target of oppression by the Government and the Home Ministry’s Directive No.12 ordered a strict control over Tenrikyo. Various media carried articles and reports against Tenrikyo.⁽⁷⁰⁾ As a result, the general public looked at Tenrikyo as “Jakyō Inshi, the deviant and immoral religion” so that Tenrikyo missionaries and followers were often looked down on and faced discriminatory movements. This tendency was also observed in the Japanese immigrant communities in

the Continental United States. Local Japanese newspapers often carried anti-Tenrikyo articles.⁽⁷¹⁾ Thus, missionaries who went abroad to engage in a new missionary work faced another discrimination in a foreign place, which became a transnational experience extending beyond nations. The missionaries in the immigrant communities, therefore, tried to clean up their bad images, which was observed in articles carried in the local papers.⁽⁷²⁾

Tenrikyo followers also often faced criticism by believers of other existing Japanese religious groups in the immigrant communities. A missionary noted that when he went to a Buddhist church in San Francisco in 1929 to listen to a sermon, a Buddhist monk condemned Tenrikyo.⁽⁷³⁾ Another missionary stated of the religious culture in the immigrant communities in the late 1920s, "At present, the main religion of Japanese immigrants seems to be Christianity. However, the immigrants prefer Japanese religions so that Buddhism (Honganji) and Konkokyo are now popular choices. In addition, Tenrikyo started its mission. Therefore, these three will compete with each other from now on."⁽⁷⁴⁾ Furthermore, the American society was based on Christian culture and racial discrimination had existed in the Anglo-Saxon White society, which resulted in anti-Tenrikyo feeling among American people as an alien religion.⁽⁷⁵⁾ Thus, Tenrikyo rivaled other religious groups in their activities among Japanese living in the West Coast, while seeking for a way to be accepted by non-Japanese people.

On the other hand, some cases were also observed of missionaries' steady efforts to cultivate an atmosphere by which Tenrikyo was accepted positively by local Japanese immigrants, as well as non-Japanese people. Chu Muranaka of Tenrikyo Central Church in Gardena was first condemned and frightened by local Japanese when he established a church there in 1933. After he earnestly engaged in missionary activities, however, their misunderstanding became lessened and he gradually became accepted in the community.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Another case was that of a Japanese Christian priest who married a Tenrikyo follower, through

whom he converted to Tenrikyo and became a Tenrikyo church head minister in the end.⁽⁷⁷⁾ Some exchanges with non-Japanese people were also noted in missionaries' diaries.⁽⁷⁸⁾

4-2. The Nisei Problem

The Nisei problem raised in the Japanese immigrant communities was an important factor in consideration of the development of Tenrikyo in the Continental United States. The number of the Nisei of Japanese American born and raised there observed a rapid increase from 269 in 1900 to 4,502 in 1910 and 29,672 in 1920. The number of the Issei was 70,477 while that of the Nisei was 68,357 in 1930. The numbers were 47,035 and 79,642 in 1940 respectively.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Thus, before the Pacific War broke out, the number of Nisei largely outnumbered the Issei.

At first most Japanese who went to the Continental United States went expecting to find short-time labor or study-abroad. With continuous restrictions on new immigrants such as the introduction of the America-Japan Gentlemen's Treaty in 1907 and 1908 as well as the regulation by the Immigration Act 1924, Japanese who stayed in America gradually decided to settle in the new land and eventually created families there. Their children were born as second generation Japanese and their education became a big issue in the immigrant communities. As mentioned earlier, many children went to local schools and acquired an American way of life while learning Japanese language, culture, and customs at Japanese schools. There were also a considerable number of children who temporarily returned to Japan for their education.

The relationship between Japan and America worsened with Japan's expansion into Southeast Asia, some Issei started to formulate a concept regarding the Nisei education that proposed, "the Nisei should be nurtured to become a kusabi or kakehashi, a link or bridge of understanding between the United States and Japan."⁽⁸⁰⁾ In those days the Issei was defined as "aliens illegible for naturalization" so that they had to suffer a lot of racial restrictions in the American society such as their inability

to own property. Thus, they expected the Nisei as an American citizen to owe their future to their parents. In addition, it was indispensable for the stability of the Japanese immigrant communities that their mother country Japan and their host country America maintained good relations. The Issei desired the Nisei to contribute to these relations. Thus, various approaches had been considered and implemented to foster the Nisei as a “link” or a “bridge.” However, most Nisei were not keen on this issue, partly because it had little relation with their daily lives in America.⁽⁸¹⁾

Tenrikyo conducted their mission under these circumstances. It developed various activities for children and youth, particularly around the establishment of the Mission Headquarters in America. Kunio Higashida of Tenrikyo North America Church established Tenri Gakuen in 1934 to teach Japanese language and nurture the next generation who had a good command of both Japanese and English.⁽⁸²⁾ As part of America Seishin-kai, children associations were formed in San Francisco and Los Angeles in 1935 respectively, while another “Tenri Gakuen” was established in Seattle in 1936. The Mission Headquarters regularly held a gathering for children in Los Angeles, which was participated in by 50 to 60 children at large. In addition, a friendship gathering for the Nisei at the age of 15 or over was held there in 1934. In the following year “Tenrikyo America Junior Church” whose members were only Nisei followers from the age of 21 or over was established in 1935 with official permission by the State of California.⁽⁸³⁾

Local Japanese newspapers paid attention to religious groups’ activities concerning this issue. An article carried on *Rafu Shimpo* was entitled as “Tenrikyo’s active development and religious issues in South California: the bridge between the Issei and the Nisei is questioned” and concluded by asking, “Tenrikyo and Konkokyo are both Shinto. How will three groups of Shinto, Buddhism, and Christianity develop in the future?”⁽⁸⁴⁾ Thus, it seemed that the Japanese had an interest in the activities and movements of each religious group. A Tenrikyo missionary in Seattle reported that a Japanese university student staying in Seattle commented

regarding the Nisei Problem, “religion rather than education will be more desirable in order to solve this kind of issue,” and expected Tenrikyo to get actively involved.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Thus, Tenrikyo tackled the Nisei Problem by engaging in the missionary work in the immigrant communities. In terms of Tenrikyo mission’s future, missionaries were keen to educate and nurture the Nisei because they desired them to work as a “link” and a “bridge” between Japan and America as well as to contribute to conveying the teaching to non-Japanese people and spreading Tenrikyo in the wider society in the Continental United States.

4-3. Missionary work to non-Japanese

In terms of the target of the overseas mission by Japanese religious groups Nobutaka Inoue categorized them into two types. One is “Kaigai Shucchō gata, overseas assignment model” in which the target was Japanese immigrants living in the mission place and the other “Takokuseki gata, multinational model” in which the target was non-Japanese.⁽⁸⁶⁾ The missionary work by Tenrikyo missionaries in the Continental United States in the prewar period is considered as the “overseas assignment model” while the missionary work aimed at the “multinational model” was for the future. In fact, from the start, Tenrikyo had been developed within the Japanese immigrant communities, but missionaries also tried to convey the teachings to non-Japanese.

Tenrikyo has proclaimed world salvation so that the mission aimed at non-Japanese has been always a big challenge to Tenrikyo. It had been discussed in various occasions in the American mission.⁽⁸⁷⁾ In fact, some non-Japanese with an interest in Tenrikyo regularly attended the monthly services. A non-Japanese woman once visited the San Francisco Church in September 1928. Since then, she regularly attended the church and even held a Tenrikyo study meeting at her house.⁽⁸⁸⁾ A few non-Japanese people went so far as to visit Japan in order to visit the Church Headquarters.⁽⁸⁹⁾ Nevertheless, they did not deepen their faith mainly

because they could not communicate well with missionaries due to the language problem. Therefore, as discussed earlier, the hope for the bilingual Nisei in missionary work had been intensified. In conjunction with the generational issue within the immigrant communities, it was of great importance for missionaries how to transmit the Tenrikyo faith to the Nisei and how they would contribute to the mission to non-Japanese people in the future.

Missionaries' efforts in reaching out to non-Japanese people were also observed in their adaptations to different cultures in the host society, which were considered as an indispensable factor in missionary work for non-Japanese. The missionaries needed to adjust to the local way in terms of religious life and rituals. They reported their struggles to their churches in Japan: "It will be necessary to change our rituals and other religious manners if we start our mission to non-Japanese people."⁽⁹⁰⁾ "Local people in America do not get used to sitting on the floor like Japanese do. Therefore, we do not sit on the floor, rather, sit on chairs putting shoes on when we perform the service, even though we feel some uncertainty or un-comfortableness."⁽⁹¹⁾

The transmission of the faith to the next generations, the mission to non-Japanese people, and the adaptation to the American society were significant issues for not only Tenrikyo missionaries, but also other Japanese religions in their historical development in North America. Tenrikyo planned and implemented various methods. Before finding out better solutions and recognizing the results of their implementation, however, Japan began the war with America and many Japanese religious leaders including Tenrikyo missionaries were arrested and incarcerated, resulting in the halt of their religious activities.

Conclusion

This paper has examined characteristics of Tenrikyo's missionary work and presented the challenges that the missionaries encountered in the Continental United States in the prewar period. In particular, the paper

ooked at the period between the late 1920s and the middle of the 1930s, when Tenrikyo missionaries commenced their systematic missionary work and achieved considerable growth. The paper has reviewed its mission in the light of historical, social, and religious aspects of the Japanese immigrant communities, trying to clarify religious situations and spiritual cultures of Japanese people in America during the prewar period in terms of the studies of Japanese new religion.

Tenrikyo started its mission, following a few decades behind the activities of Japanese Christianity and Buddhism, who had already established their status as main religions in the Japanese immigrant communities. It promoted its mission in the Japanese immigrant communities, like the pre-existing religious groups did. One of features of the Tenrikyo mission was the fact that the missionary activities were encouraged by various Japanese people including followers who had settled in as laborers, missionaries who entered America with a missionary visa, and those who started to follow the faith in America. Another was that it had been accepted as an alternative to the pre-existing religions with its practice of healing prayer, the Sazuke.

Like other religions groups, Tenrikyo provided Japanese immigrants, who felt isolated from both Japanese and American societies, with a place where they could gather together and reconsider their identity. It also tackled with the Nisei problem in the Japanese immigrant communities and accepted the challenge to spread the teachings of Tenrikyo to non-Japanese people. Thus, Tenrikyo attained a rapid development with various ways of missionary work and as a new alternative religion, backed with enthusiastic movements toward the overseas mission within the entire Tenrikyo religious organization in Japan as well as economic, social, and cultural circumstances in the Japanese immigrant communities in the Continental United States during the 1920s and 1930s. At same time, Tenrikyo faced various issues in its mission in the Continental U.S. including problems in church managements, anti-Tenrikyo feeling, rivaling with other Japanese religious groups, and proselytization to non-

Japanese people.

This paper has focused on Tenrikyo and the Japanese immigrant communities in the prewar period. After the war, Japanese pre-existing religions, including Tenrikyo, restarted their activities, while other new religious groups started their systematic missionary work. They have been respectively conducting religious, social, and cultural activities for Japanese, Japanese-Americans, as well as the non-Japanese public in various regions throughout the Continental United States. In recent years American society and culture have been more diversified. It can be said that the presence and activities of Japanese religious groups reflect this diversified society. Under the current social and cultural circumstances, there is more of a need for global and transnational perspectives to examine the relationship between religion and immigration. With these perspectives, continuous research and discussions about Japanese religious groups in the Continental United States, including Tenrikyo, after the war are desirable to contribute to further considerations on the religious diversity in North America.

Author's note:

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Notes

- (1) These studies include Keiichi Yanagawa, ed., *Japanese Religions in California: A Report on Research Within and Without the Japanese-American Community* (Tokyo: Dept. of Religious Studies, University of Tokyo, 1983), Nobutaka Inoue, *Umi o watatta nihon shūkyō: Imin shakai no uchi to soto* [Japanese religions that have crossed the seas] (Tokyo: Kōbundō, 1985), and Hirochika Nakamaki, *Nihon shūkyō to nikkei shūkyō no kenkyū: nihon, amerika, burazīru* [Studies on Japanese religions: Japan, America, and Brazil] (Tokyo: Tōsui shobō, 1989).

- (2) Nobutaka Inoue, *ibid.*, 3, 23.
- (3) Zaibei Nihonjin Kai ed., *Zaibei nihonjin shi (2) fukkoku ban* [A History of Japanese-Americans, Vol. II, reprinted edition] (Tokyo: PMC shuppan, 1984), 456.
- (4) Major reference materials about publications regarding Tenrikyo's overseas mission include Ichirō Sōda and Tsutomu Mimura, "Tenrikyo Kaigai Dendō Shiryō Mokuroku (Jō) – Tankōsho no bu –", *Bibliography for Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (I) books*, no. 114, (2000), 202-165; Ichirō Sōda, Yōichi Haruki, and Tsutomu Mimura, "Tenrikyo Kaigai Dendō Shiryō Mokuroku (ge-1) – Zasshi kiji no bu 1–", *Bibliography for Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (II-I) - Periodicals and Articles 1*, no. 118, (2002), 132-95; and Ichirō Sōda, Yōichi Haruki, and Tsutomu Mimura, "Tenrikyo Kaigai Dendō Shiryō Mokuroku (ge-2) – Zasshi kiji no bu 2–", *Bibliography for Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (II- II) - Periodicals and Articles 2*, no. 119, (2002), 125-84.
- (5) Main references on Tenrikyo's overseas mission in general include Tomoji Takano, *Tenrikyō dendō shi (10) kaigai hen* [History of Tenrikyo mission (10) overseas] (Tenri: Tenrikyo Dōyūsha, 1975) and Toshiharu Morii, *Tenrikyō no kaigai dendō 'sekai dasuke'—Sono dendō to tenkai* [Tenrikyo overseas mission 'world salvation'—Its mission and development] (Tokyo: Zenponsha, 2008). They refer to the mission in North America. Also see Tenrikyo Amerika Dendōchō ed., *Tenrikyo beikoku fukyō jūnen shi* [Ten years of the Tenrikyo American mission] (L.A. CA: Tenrikyo Amerika Dendōchō, 1938) for the details of the early North American mission.
- (6) Recent studies on Tenrikyo in North America include Emmett Sebastian Chan, "Relearning religious practice when home is across the sea: the case of Tenrikyō in British Columbia," MA diss., (University of British Columbia, 2020) and Harumichi Fukaya, "Across the Sea: A Study of Tenrikyo's North American Mission before World War II," MA diss., (the Graduate Theological Union, 2020).
- (7) Akihiro Yamakura and Kazuhiro Hatakama discussed the Tenrikyo's overseas mission in Japanese historical context respectively. See Akihiro Yamakura, "Zaibei Tenrikyō fukyōshi senji yokuryū no toransunashonaru na bunmyaku: Manshū, Nihon, Amerika [Transnational context of the internment of Tenrikyo missionaries in America during the war: Manchuria, Japan, America]," in *Amerikas no Tenrikyō: Nanboku Amerika ni okeru dendō no shosō to tenbō* [Tenrikyo in Americas: various issues and aspects of the mission in Americas] ed. by Tenri daigaku fuzoku Oyasato kenkyūsho [Tenri University's Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion,], (Tenri: Tenri daigaku fuzoku Oyasato kenkyūsho, 2011, 1-50) and Kazuhiro Hatakama, "'Fukugen' to 'kakushin'," in *Sensō to shūkyō* [War and Religion] ed. by Tenri daigaku fuzoku Oyasato kenkyūsho [Tenri University's Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion,], (Tenri: Tenri daigaku fuzoku Oyasato kenkyūsho, 2006, 37-173.) Also see Takayuki Onoue, "Shōzen Nakayama's 1933 North American Mission Tour and

- Japanese Immigrant Communities,” *Tenri Journal of Religion*, no. 49, March 2021, 39-70.
- (8) As primary reference materials, this paper has utilized diaries and memoirs recorded by three Japanese missionaries who were actively involved in the missionary work in the Continental United States in the prewar period, namely Mitsuzō Funo, Minoru Yoshizawa, and Shiichirō Ono, all of whom were dispatched from Japan by Tenrikyo Meikyō Grand Church in the late 1920s
 - (9) Makio Okabe, *Umi o watatta nihonjin* [Japanese who crossed the sea] (Tokyo: Yamanaka shuppansha, 2002), 27-28.
 - (10) *Ibid.*, 14.
 - (11) *Ibid.*
 - (12) Bill Hosokawa, *Nisei: The Quiet Americans, Revised Edition* (Colorado: The University Press of Colorado, 2002), 151.
 - (13) *Immigration Act of 1924, or Johnson-Reed Act, including the National Origins Act, and Asian Exclusion Act*, H.R. 7995, Pub Law 68-139, 68th Cong., 43 Stat.153, enacted May 26, 1924.
 - (14) Yuji Ichioka, *The Issei: The World of the First Generation Japanese Immigrants, 1885-1924*, (New York: The Free Press, 1988), 244.
 - (15) Noriko Shimada, “Hawai ni okeru Nikkei bukkyō ni miru bunka henyō to aidentiti [Acculturation and ethnic identity: a case study of Japanese Buddhism in Hawaii], *Rikkyo American Studies* 25, 2003, 33-51.
 - (16) Zaibei Nihonjin Kai ed., *Zaibei nihonjin shi (1) & (2) fukkoku ban* [A History of Japanese-Americans, Vol. I & II reprinted edition] (Tokyo: PMC shuppan, 1984) are considered to indicate the significance of the two groups in the Japanese immigrant communities. The chapter five “Religion” (pp. 340-457) uses sixty-two pages for Christianity and forty-eight pages for Buddhism, that is, these two religious groups constitute ninety percent of the chapter.
 - (17) Dōshisha daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūsho [Institute for the Study of Humanities & Social Sciences, Dōshisha University] ed., *Hokubei nihonjin kirisutokyō undō shi* [A history of the Japanese Christian church’s activities in North America] (Tokyo: PMC shuppan, 1991), 890.
 - (18) *Ibid.*, 8.
 - (19) Zaibei Nihonjin Kai ed., *Zaibei nihonjin shi (2) fukkoku ban*, op. cit., 403-410.
 - (20) Nobutaka Inoue, 1985, op. cit., 14.
 - (21) Dōshisha daigaku jinbun kagaku kenkyūsho, op. cit., 17-18.
 - (22) H.T. Komai, ed., *Rafu shimpo: Dai ichiman gō kinenshi. The Rafu Shimpo: L.A. Japanese Daily News: The Myriad* (October 31, 1934), 40.
 - (23) ‘History’ Konkokyo Official Website, http://www.konkokyo.or.jp/eng/bri/our_foundation/history.html (accessed on December 25, 2021).
 - (24) Yoshiaki Fukuda, *My Six Years of Internment: An Issei’s Struggle for Justice*, (San Francisco, CA: Konko Church of San Francisco, 1990), 2.
 - (25) H.T. Komai, ed., op. cit., 38-41.

- (26) Tadayoshi Moroi, “Amerika dendō ni taisuru shokan [Letters about the Mission in America],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the October 5 issue (1928), 41.
- (27) See Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., 1-9. Sakugo Hiromitsu from Tenrikyo Kochi Grand Church, who arrived in America around 1897, conveyed the teachings to Japanese as well as non-Japanese Americans while working for railway business. Mitsuzō Funo heard that Hiromitsu was respected by even non-Japanese people as a religious minister. (Mitsuzō Funo, op. cit.)
- (28) Toshiharu Morii, op. cit., 279-280.
- (29) Tsunetarō Kamisawa, “Hokubei ni okeru Tenrikyō [Tenrikyo in North America],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the October 20 (1927), 42.
- (30) Translation Section, Tenrikyo Overseas Department, *A Glossary of Tenrikyo Terms*, (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Department, 2010), 47-48.
- (31) See Oyasato kenkyūsho [Tenri University’s Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion] ed., *Tenrikyo Jiten* [Tenrikyo Encyclopedia] (Tenri: Tenrikyo Dōyūsha, 1977), 17 and Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., 51.
- (32) Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, *50 Years of the Path: A History of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America 1934–1984* (L.A., CA: Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, 1984), 10-12.
- (33) Ikuhisa Sasaki, “Amerika-Kanada dendō no sokuseki (20) [Footsteps of the American-Canadian mission],” *Kaigai Fukyō Dendōbu hō* [Overseas Mission Department Newsletter] no. 329 (1992), 8.
- (34) *The New World Daily News*, July 14, 1933.
- (35) *The Japanese American News*, July 15, 1933.
- (36) *The Japanese American News*, July 21, 1933.
- (37) *San Bernardino Sun*, August 17, 1933.
- (38) *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, August 24, 1933.
- (39) Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, 1984, op. cit., 209.
- (40) *Ibid.*, 15.
- (41) Translation Section, Tenrikyo Overseas Department, op. cit., 477.
- (42) Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *A Historical Sketch of Tenrikyo: Focusing on the Anniversaries of Oyasama*, (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission, Department, 1990), 123.
- (43) Keisuke Kaneko, *Tenrikyō Dendōshi Gaisetu* [An overview of the history of the Tenrikyo mission], (Tenri University Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion, 1992), 146.
- (44) Nobutaka Inoue, 1985, op. cit., 31.
- (45) Mitsuzō Funo, op. cit.
- (46) *Ibid.*
- (47) Minoru Yoshizawa, op. cit.
- (48) Inoue Nobutaka explained it as follows: “A Tenri believer would get to a region quite unknown to him or her, seek out families and care for their sick, conveying Miki’s teaching and praying for recovery from illness.” (Inoue Nobutaka ed., *Shinto: a Short History*, translated and adapted by Mark Teeuwen and John

- Breen, (London: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 185.)
- (49) Tenrikyo Meikyō Daikyōkai Shiryō Bu, *Kōan Meikyōshi kōhen dai-ni kan* [A manuscript of Meikyō history vol.II no.2], (Tenrikyo Meikyō Daikyōkai, 1963), 79-80.
- (50) See Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., appendix 63, 64, and 68-69.
- (51) Tenrikyo Amerika Seishin-kai, *America* no. 19, 1938, 2.
- (52) ‘California, Table 25.- Indians, Chinese, and Japanese, by Sex, for Countries, and for Cities of 10,000 to 100,000: 1940 and 1930’ (page 567) in ‘Section 6 California,’ *Sixteenth Census of the United States – 1940 – Population, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population-Part 1*. <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html> (accessed on December 27, 2021).
- (53) Tenrikyo Amerika Seishin-kai, op. cit., 2.
- (54) Ikuhisa Sasaki, “Dendō shiryō ni miru hito, mono, kokoro (4) [People, materials, minds seen in documents about mission],” *Tenrikyo Kaigaibu hō* no.448, June 26, 2002, 13.
- (55) See Takayuki Onoue “Zaibei nihonjin no transunashonaritī: senkanki no Tenrikyō fukyōshi o jirei to shite [Transnationality of Japanese Issei in America: A case of Tenrikyo missionaries between the wars]” (*Journal of the Americas Studies* no.25, 2020, 43-59) for the details of visa status of the missionaries in those days
- (56) “Yonjū nen yomoyama banashi sono ichi [Various talks on 40 years no.1],” *Ichiretsu* no.231, April 1974.
- (57) The author calculated the numbers from Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1984, op. cit., and Tomoji Takano, op. cit.
- (58) Zaibei Nihonjin Kai ed., *Zaibei nihonjin shi (2) fukkoku ban*, op. cit.,455.
- (59) Tadayoshi Moroi, op. cit., 42.
- (60) The Sazuke is explained as follows: “When a Yoboku—a person who has been granted the truth of the Sazuke—administers it with utmost sincerity to people suffering from illness, God the Parent will relieve any pain or suffering they have.” (Yoshikazu Fukaya, *Words of the Path: A Guide to Tenrikyo Terms and Expressions*, (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Department, 2009), 53.)
- (61) Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., 20-22.
- (62) Inoue Nobutaka, *Japanese New Religions in the Age of Mass Media*, (Tokyo: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 2017), 40.
- (63) Nobutaka Inoue, 1985, op. cit., 110.
- (64) *Rafu Shimpō*, October 16, 1934.
- (65) “Tenrikyō Amerika Seishin-kai hokkaishiki kitaru hatsuka gogo sanji yori Yamato hōru de kyōkō [The Establishment ceremony of the Tenrikyo-American Spiritual Association from 3p.m. on the 20th at Yamato Hall],” *Kashu Mainichi*, October 16, 1934.
- (66) Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., 108-110.
- (67) Brian Niiya ed., *Encyclopedia of Japanese American History: An A-to-Z*

- Reference from 1868 to the present* updated edition, (New York: Checkmark Books, 2001), 242.
- (68) Tenrikyo Meikyō Daikyōkai Shiryō Bu, op. cit., 100.
- (69) Tenrikyo teaches that the Foundress did not “pass away” but is “everliving.” See Yoshikazu Fukaya, op. cit., 32.
- (70) Nobutaka Inoue picked up *Chūō Shinbun*’s anti-Tenrikyo campaign as an example of media criticism. See Inoue Nobutaka, 2017, op. cit., 63-73.
- (71) Tadayoshi Morii, “Amerika dendō ni taisuru shokan [Letters about the Mission in America],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the October 20 issue (1928), 51.
- (72) For example, *Kashu Mainichi* (the July 19, 1933 issue) carried on Shōzen Nakayama’s words, “The Foundress Miki Nakayama considered that it was necessary for herself to fall into the same situation as poor people, took their hardship as hers, and cast away her desire for material goods in order to save others. This led to a misunderstanding later that Tenrikyo required believers to throw away property and fortunes with joy. However, the purpose of the Tenrikyo teaching is to save all humankind.”
- (73) Mitsuzō Funo, op. cit.
- (74) “Hokubei yori harubaru kyōkō bekka ni nyūgaku shita hitobito Okazaki yone san no hanashi [People who entered Tenri Kyōkō far from North America, a story of Ms. Yone Okazaki],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the September 20 issue (1928), 64
- (75) Tadayoshi Moroi, the October 20 issue (1928), op. cit., 51.
- (76) Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1938, op. cit., 52.
- (77) Ikuhisa Sasaki, “Amerika Kanada Dendo no sokuseki [Footsteps of American/Canadian mission] 27,” *Kaigai Fukyō Dendōbu hō*, no. 336, February 26, 1993, 7.
- (78) Mitsuzō Funo, Minoru Yoshizawa, and Siichirō Ono noted their exchanges with American religious ministers, schoolteachers, or other ordinary people in their memoirs.
- (79) ‘United States Summary, Table 4.- Race, by Nativity and Sex, for the United States: 1850 to 1940’ (p.19) in ‘Section2 United States Summary’ (pp.5-154), *Sixteenth Census of the United States – 1940 – Population, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population-Part 1*. <https://www.census.gov/prod/www/decennial.html> (accessed on December 28, 2021).
- (80) Yuji Ichioka, edited by Gordon H. Chang and Eiichiro Azuma, *Before the Internment: Essays in Prewar Japanese American History*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), 24.
- (81) *Ibid.*, 10-52.
- (82) Hideo Nakajima, *Haha hitori umi wo wataru- Higashida Naka to Amerika fukyō* [Mother cross over the sea alone: Naka Higashida and America mission], (Tenri: Tenrikyō Dōyusha), 1986, 58.
- (83) Tenrikyo Amerika dendōchō ed., 1984, op. cit., 19-21.
- (84) *Rafu Shimpo*, May 20, 1934.

- (85) Kiyozō Nakanishi, “Pōtorando kyōkai no setsuritsu to hokubei heno fukyō no hanashi [The establishment of Portland Church and a story of the North America mission],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the July 20 issue (1928), 61.
- (86) Inoue Nobutaka, 2017, op. cit., 130.
- (87) Shiichirō Ono, “Hakujin fukyō no dai ippo [The first step of the mission to non-Japanese people],” *Michi-no-Tomo* the January 20 issue (1929), 60-62, Tadayoshi Moroi, *Michi-no-Tomo* the October 20 issue (1928), op. cit., 51-54.
- (88) Tenrikyo Meikyō Daikyōkai Shiryō Bu, op. cit., 92-95.
- (89) In his memoir Mitsuzō Funo wrote about a young non-Japanese man who visited Church Headquarters with him (op. cit.). See also “American Tenrikyo Teacher Sails June 14: Kathryn Farr to Teach English at Tanbaichi School,” *The Great Northern Daily News*, June 6, 1935 and “U.S. Women Picked Tenrikyo Teacher,” *The Japanese American News*, July 10, 1935, E-3
- (90) Kiyozō Nakanishi, op. cit., 61.
- (91) “Hokubei yori harubaru kyōkō bekka ni nyūgaku shita hitobito Okazaki yone san no hanashi,” op. cit., 64.

A SELF-REFLEXIVE APPROACH TO *INNEN*

Saburo MORISHITA

According to an orally transmitted anecdote, a woman is said to have asked Oyasama one day about her *innen*, causality.¹ Oyasama, however, refused to answer, saying to the woman that she shouldn't be asking about such a thing. Being unable to relinquish the idea of having the Shrine of God reveal a truth about herself, this woman continued to press for an explanation and Oyasama is purportedly to have interjected, "If I told you, your thoughts and fears about your causality would overwhelm you. So you should not ask such a question," and refused to answer.² On another occasion, Oyasama apparently told another follower: "There is not a single person who knows what kind of causality he or she has."³

This short narrative informs two points about Tenrikyo's teaching of *innen*. One is that individual *innen* is probably quite massive, and as such, so bewildering to a point of causing despair if ever revealed. It appears as if it would be just too much for a single person to confront *innen*, let alone do something about, making it difficult even for Oyasama to speak the straightforward truth about it. The second point is that, and very much interrelated to its immense size, it just might be unimaginable to know *innen* in its entirety. Even if there is the sincere will to know, at the end of the day we really do not or cannot know for sure what our *innen* is. Yet at the same time, however, the view of turning a blind eye on *innen* has not always been the applicable thing to do. Despite the drawbacks to fully comprehend *innen*, Tenrikyo history has shown that it really matters not only to become aware of *innen*, but has always encouraged followers to work on it as well.⁴

The purpose of this essay is to make additional suggestions to the list of what the teaching of *innen* might imply for us today by applying a self-reflexive approach to the topic in the hopes of promoting a conversation about it. In short, this essay is my own attempt to get a better grasp at this rather slippery aspect of the teachings which as I understand continues to

be somewhat of a driving force for a variety of faith-based actions today. This exercise of mine is trying to clarify one of the enigmas of Tenrikyo doctrine as its ambivalent nature continues to both discourage and attract minds from both within Tenrikyo circles and beyond.⁵

The pursuit of *innen*'s meaning will be elaborated in the following three sections. Traditional understanding and writings regarding *innen* divide the subject matter into two distinct yet very interrelated poles. On the one hand, there is original *innen*, and on the other, there is individual *innen*. Whereas original *innen* is inscribed on the souls of all human creation as “unconditional joy” since the beginning of time, individual *innen* on the other hand is “the stuff” that every person in the world has accumulated upon the soul since that initial inscription. These two poles will serve to be the basis for the reflections of the first two sections, respectively. The third section is grounded on the presupposition that, once both original and individual *innen* are acknowledged, there is something we can do to liberate ourselves from the accumulated individualized “stuff” we may not have known existed. The key concepts for this brief final section are *tanno* and the mind of sincerity which allows to overturn individual *innen* and veer closer to original *innen*. As it will become apparent, *innen* appears to be a picture we draw ourselves about ourselves, and the way we perceive the world around us, which when combined together, becomes the reality we acknowledge and self-reflexively engage in.

Original Innen

We discover by reading the verses of the Ofudesaki that the term *innen* is mentioned thirteen times (I:6, I:62; I:74; III:147; IV:54-55; IV:60-61; VII:1-2; VIII:47; XI:29-30) of which eleven deal with original *innen*. For our purposes here, I quote three passages referring to original *innen*: “If you wish to know and will come to Me, I shall teach you the original cause of all things” (I:6); “Because the Jiba of Origin and the causality of origin exist, Tsukihi works freely and unlimitedly” (VIII:47); “This is the Residence where I began human beings. Because of this causality, it

is here that I descended” (IV:55). As these verses suggest, original *innen* pertain to what happened at the very beginning of time at a specific place by very powerful means. Based on original *innen*, God mysteriously reemerges in human history at a preordained time and place to disclose the truth of all things. These verses moreover imply the reason and by whom for which human beings and the world exist, and the importance of where and how this original *innen* was eventually revealed to the world. Original *innen* therefore is the underlying cause of all things and is irrefutable through all time, past and present, and explains the direction human beings and the world will proceed in the future. More importantly, God invites us to know original *innen* if we should so desire. But what exactly is this type of *innen* God wishes to convey and have human beings understand, and why would it be so important for us to acknowledge?

To answer these questions, we draw upon the model life of Oyasama. From around 1880 or 1881, Oyasama begins to orally convey a story to her disciples about the beginnings of humankind and the world, and later, requests them to compile what they had heard in writing. It appears that this narrative was meant to be ingrained in memory and retransmitted by word of mouth to others. This story is referred to as the Story of the Divine Records, or *Koki banashi*, and although Oyasama did not rewrite or approve any of the material her disciples compiled and showed her, works written by her disciples were analyzed and reformulated in sections of the first several chapters of *The Doctrine of Tenrikyo*, especially chapter three of that volume.⁶ Today, this narrative is officially dubbed as the Truth of Origin. Although the complete story of creation was revealed during the latter second half of Oyasama’s fifty-year model life, pieces of that larger whole regarding the creation of human beings and the world were already evident a few days prior to Miki Nakayama becoming the Shrine of God, that is, the day of origin of the founding of the Teaching of October 26, 1838. The first words pronounced by God the Parent through the mouth of Miki Nakayama were: “I am God of Origin, God in Truth. There is causality in this Residence. At this time I have descended

here to save all humankind. I wish to receive Miki as the Shrine of God.”⁷ Furthermore, the first few lines of the Truth of Origin reveal features of that original *innen* as follows: “In the beginning, the world was a muddy ocean. Tsukihi, God the Parent, finding this chaos unbearably tasteless, thought of creating human beings in order to see the Joyous Life and thus share in that joy.”⁸

The condition prior to the creation of humankind and the world is described as chaotic and unbearably tasteless, and because God could not savor such disorderliness, comes up with the grand design to bring into motion the makings of humankind and the world. In a nutshell, then, original *innen*, or the first and single cause of all things in this world, is that human beings were created by God the Parent to live a playful joyous life. As Tenrikyo authors are always in want to reiterate, there is no one in the world who does not desire to live a happy and delightful life. They corroborate that this tendency toward joyfulness in real life is deeply imbedded in, and is a natural part of, our very humanity. All human beings, therefore, are programmed with the capacity to live in high spirits because of this first cause.

Glancing at how this joyfulness later unfolds in the same story, we find that in the process of creating human beings, God consumes all the loaches in the muddy ocean, making them the seeds for human beings. Metaphorically speaking, as loaches are the seeds of human beings, it is often emphasized that these seeds are pure at their core simply because of the loaches’ characteristics before them, and that this untaintedness is symbolized in the color of the white loaches dwelling single-heartedly in the turbulent waters of the muddy ocean. Human beings, therefore, are pure and white at their very core, just like when the untarnished loaches were transformed into human seeds. With the passing of time, those human seeds evolve into human beings as a result of the blessings of God’s providence. Needless to mention, this immaculate state at the deep core of our being and etched into the human soul can be translated as the natural disposition—conscious or otherwise—to live the Joyous Life. This rendition of human seed will later be helpful in understanding

individual *innen*, too.

One important implication of the idea that humankind yearns for the Joyous Life is that all things that exist in this world are based upon the same causative principle. When God the Parent created human beings, God also matched that conception through the formation of the world based on the sole desire for human beings to joyfully thrive. The same providences that were applied to help form and nurture human beings are the same ones that operated to help piece together and complete the world. Moreover, these same providences have never stopped as they are incessantly working even now, and will do so well into the future, as the complete providence of God the Parent working in both the human body and permeating through the world over.⁹ And the reason that they continue to flow for us here and now is to enable human beings to realize joyousness through and through.

Another significant factor of original *innen* is the place where human beings were first conceived, the Jiba of Origin, and the surrounding area which has been divinely acknowledged as the Residence of Origin in the above Ofudesaki passage. The specific historical time of October 26, 1838 is when original *innen* was not only openly revealed to the world, but begins to be clarified from that day onward during the divine model of Oyasama and thereafter. The promise made to the instruments that they would be brought back to the Residence of Origin and adored by their posterity after the number of years of the first-born had elapsed—900,099,999—was kept. Moreover, the time and place in the scheme of original *innen* coincide with the person, Miki Nakayama, who possessed the soul of the mother in the story of creation. Thus, a specific person, and at a particular place and time, are highly interrelated with the original cause of all things.

Individual Innen

As mentioned very briefly above, individual *innen* is comparable to the immaterial “stuff” that we have wedged into our soul since the inscription

of original *innen* by God the Parent. At the base of the human soul lies the original cause to live joyously, and the immaterial “stuff” seems to shroud over that substratum, amassing over the span of several generations and lifetimes. What manifests out of the “stuff” itself, however, appear before us in various ways throughout our lifetime. Human beings may, or may not, perceive such disclosures as arising from, or having any affinity with, *innen*. In contrast with original *innen* that was put into motion by God the Parent, individual *innen* has been initiated by the individual who is held accountable for it however unfair this may sound. At the same time, the individual is the only one who can become aware of, confront, and even ameliorate, *innen*. As such, this type of *innen* starts with the individual and comes back around to the individual, enabling one to maneuver about in such a way so as to transform it.

The Osashizu emphasizes that *innen* “is the path of the mind” (April 8, 1907), coupling *innen* with the supreme teaching that the human body is “a thing lent, a thing borrowed.” On the idea that the body is something human beings borrow, the Ofudesaki exhorts: “All human bodies are things lent by God. With what thought are you using them?” (III:41); “So long as you remain unknowing that the body is a thing borrowed, you can understand nothing at all” (III:137). This point is also affirmed in the Osashizu, but supplements it with an equally important clause: “With human beings, the body is a thing lent by God, a thing borrowed. *The mind alone is yours*” (June 1, 1889; italics mine); “With human beings: the body is a thing borrowed. The mind alone is yours. *From just one mind, any kind of truth will appear daily*. I accept any kind of truth. You must understand the truth of free and unlimited workings” (February 14, 1889; italics mine). In a different Osashizu passage, we moreover find: “Not understanding the truth of causality will never do. *Causality refers to the same one truth as a ‘thing borrowed.’* Something that comes about is a manifestation; something that does not come about is also a manifestation. From this, understand” (February 10, 1901; italics mine).

In our common humanity, human beings strive for the Joyous Life, and not a day goes by that such instincts—however minute they may

be—are felt and acted upon, propelling the world towards its complete realization. Indeed, human beings have an inherent tendency to be joyous. Although this birthmark is inscribed upon all members of humanity, we have free use of the mind and use the borrowed bodies in ways we think appropriate. One consequence of “the truth of the mind alone” is that we human beings have total control of handling the mind. It also follows that no two minds perceive the same thing in the same manner. The myriad ways of using the mind, therefore, reflects the truth of “the path of the mind” whereby we are licensed to go through whatever path we choose to follow. In this way, the free use of mind vis-à-vis the borrowed body is very important in the attempt to truly understand the teaching of individual *innen*.

Let me return once again to the concept of the seed mentioned above. The Truth of Origin specifies that human beings and the world began with seed and seedplot. As such, the cause of any and everything can be reduced to this all-inclusive imagery, including individual *innen*, in that any existence human or otherwise, and by analogy the arising of situations and circumstances in our lives, begin with these two components. An occurrence, as it were, takes place before our eyes because the seed of that occurrence was sown, and only when properly embedded in the encompassment of the seedplot (i.e., soil), the seed cracks open and begins to germinate, unveiling its true existence. During its budding process, its root splinter deeper into the ground as the stem surges upward, aiming toward light. And with the passing of time, the first leaflets naturally become visible. Important for our understanding of the path of mind is that the seed in and of itself cannot develop without seedplot. The seed, we are taught, is the direct cause of its effect and the seedplot is the indirect cause of that same end result because the seedplot always lay external to the seed.¹⁰ Not only are the two components of seed and seedplot necessary to produce any kind of result, but the creation story also teaches that blessings are indispensable for a seed to mature into something, evolving and becoming, other than itself. These blessings, we are taught, take the form of the ten aspects of the complete

providence of God the Parent. In the example of the germinating seed above, fire (warmth and sunlight), water, wind, the rise and fall of moisture, cutting and joining, and other indirect causes are indispensable for seeds to develop and grow.¹¹

God the Parent is the only one who can respond freely and unlimitedly to the way we handle the mind, and though we may anticipate strong roots will anchor of itself through a seed we believe to be good, such a seed remains only a seed if it is rejected by God. That is, a seed without a proper seedplot for it to mature and grow will remain only a seed. Ultimately, then, the path of the mind implies that we use the mind to connect with God the Parent so as to understand the will of God the Parent and, most importantly, to implement divine objectives in our daily lives so as to have those efforts acknowledged by God the Parent as proper seeds thereby securing a seedplot for them to sprout.

Since the workings of the mind entail a strong behavior component, individual *innen* may also manifest itself as what has been labeled “bad causation.”¹² So-called “good” seeds bear “good” fruits and the so-called “bad” seeds will produce “bad” ones. What deserves mentioning are distressing situations—the yielding of bad ones—precisely as a manifestation of negative causality. Tenrikyo’s individual *innen* is usually encapsulated as “bad causation.” This is carried over from previous lives as by-products of those self-serving seeds that have been planted by way of the mind’s path and anchored firmly to our souls, manifesting themselves in the form of unwanted or unexpected problems in the course of a lifetime. *Innen* may reveal as an uncontrollable circumstance with regard to where we are born and situated: family members, interpersonal bonds, and the local community. In other words, we cannot choose nor dictate beforehand to whom we are born to, nor can we determine what social, psychological, or bodily circumstances we might find ourselves in at birth. After emerging into this world, *innen* is the reoccurring trope that explains unwelcome illnesses and troubles as “bad causation,” addressing in very explicit terms that the path of the mind—the handling of the mind—is the key to becoming aware of the problem as *innen*, confronting

it, and doing something about it.

We do not know with certainty the way in which we handled our minds in our previous lives. However, and as mentioned above, that which displays itself as unwanted or something undeserving is a by-product of one's *innen* (Osashizu, August 16, 1890). What we see is *innen*, what we hear is *innen*, and who we meet is also based on *innen* (Osashizu, September 27, 1890). Husband and wife (Osashizu, November 21, 1891), parent and children (Osashizu, March 11, 1901), and brother and sister all derive from *innen* (Osashizu, February 15, 1888). What we try to accomplish but cannot achieve is *innen* (Osashizu, August 26, 1890; May 31, 1894; February 27, 1898; March 23, September 3, 1899). *innen* is reflected in the world around us as a mirror (February 15, 1888). Finally, *innen* not only manifests as what we might consider a disorder of the body (Osashizu, June 27, 1890), but also has a lot to do with objectionable attitudes—the path of the mind—toward a body that is lent in a very befitting condition (Osashizu, June 3, 1890). As such, then, everything appearing before us as reality just might be *innen*. In a supplement volume of the Osashizu, we find a short passage identifying the interconnection between *innen*, path of the mind, and the borrowed body: “The body is a thing lent. The mind alone is yours. God did not lend you a body that has any insufficiency. You would be mistaken to think that the body had any insufficiency. *It is all the mind's feeling of insufficiency that is manifested in the body.* If only the mind is cleared, the body is free of all insufficiency” (Osashizu, September 1888, supplement volume; italics mine).

Tanno

The Osashizu suggests that the key to *innen* lies in the path of the mind. And as hinted above, however, the handling of the mind does not necessarily point only to its management in previous lives; rather, it also emphasizes the here and now and the way in which we assume the path of the mind in the present moment. If the body, which is perfectly

on loan to us by God, may not seem that way to its users, it is due only to the insufficiencies of the mind which perceives the body as less than complete. In line with the metaphor, seeds planted in past lives may result in a broken body in this life, but it just may be that the existing broken body is just a direct reflection of its accompanying state of the mind. In this way, in order to counter the effects of seeds planted in a past life, better seeds need to be planted in this life, not only to uproot the development of unwanted consequences, but to induce desirable fruitions for the future as well.

Being grateful for the borrowed body and praising God the Parent for its protection are important attitudes to settle in the mind. That is why the mind of *tanno*—joyous contentment—is taught as one way to rid ourselves of bad causation: “Joyously accepting a situation that is hard to accept is sincerity” (Osashizu, October 8, 1897). *Tanno* is the mind’s attitude that everything in the world—including the manifestation of one’s *innen*—is Godsent as a prepackaged individualized form of parental love for everyone in the entire universe. Settling *tanno* in the mind signifies being satisfied not only at those things we make efforts to actualize, but to heartwarmingly accept those things that are not so desirable as the illnesses or troubles that may befall on us: all phenomena whether good or bad transpire because of God the Parent. If we realize that the seeds we plant through handling the mind—past and present—evolve into what we confront through the workings of God the Parent, and that those workings stem from God’s loving concern for us, we would do well to *tanno* it out, as it were, accepting wholeheartedly that those concerns are rooted in the desire to revert back to our original state.

A natural repercussion of practicing *tanno* will lead to a replacement of the mind—from a mind that is attached to self-centered imaginations to one that is other-centered and in accord with God the Parent. We find insight in the following words: “Past usages of the mind conditions one’s present use of mind, thereby shaping what is happening now, and which may go back generations. God provides people with blessings according to their causality and state of mind in order to encourage them to awaken

to their causality, so that they may draw on their realization of causality to replace their mind.”¹³

One way of clarifying *tanno* would be to go the other way, that is, explain its opposite state of mind. If *tanno* is the attitude of “true satisfaction” as it once used to be translated, then its antithesis would be the mindset of “dissatisfaction,” “insufficiency,” or “discontent.” As mentioned above, there is nothing unsatisfying about the borrowed body as it is lent to human beings in its culminating predetermined form. The problem is that the insufficiency of the mind arises from not knowing, or being ignorant of, the truth that human beings are alive and are being kept alive by the blessings of God the Parent, and if the mind finds a way to accept this truth, a subtle but sure path toward joyousness will follow. Again in the *Osashizu*: “If you entertain a feeling of insufficiency, everything becomes insufficient. Nothing is acceptable save joyous acceptance. *Only when there is sincerity will the mind settle into joyous acceptance*” (May 13, 1890, supplement volume, *italic mine*).

By Way of Closing

The mind of sincerity is something to be sought, and by achieving such a mind, *tanno* will naturally come of itself. The term “sincerity” is used in different ways in the *Ofudesaki* and *Osashizu* and there is no “one size fits all” definition to such an important ideal. Allow me to conclude this essay with the way in which the mind of sincerity might help settle *tanno* in the mind and irradiate individual *innen*. Being sincere has the implication of being genuine and authentic whereby what a person thinks, says, and does do not contradict each other. In the *Ofudesaki* we find: “This fertilizer: do not wonder what is effective. The mind’s true sincerity is its effectiveness” (IV:51); “Do not think that incantations and magical arts are great. The mind’s sincerity is the true art” (V:44); “Words of flattery are unwanted. Tsukihi looks for the sincerity of mind” (XI:8).

We ought to be careful of outward appearances since what is effective lies in the mind and cannot be readily seen. It is taught that “sincerity

is the truth of heaven.” Being the truth of heaven, therefore, a mind of sincerity genuinely connects with God the Parent, and by moving closer to God the Parent, we revert back to original *innen* as the pendulum on the path of the mind swings. Sincerity refers to “a proactive, other-centered use of the mind that cannot resist doing things for others regardless of what sacrifices it entails on our part.”¹⁴ Self-centered imaginations are the exact opposite of the mind of sincerity. By become a mind of sincerity, *tanno* comes to the fore: “Joyous acceptance emanates from true sincerity. *True sincerity is joyous acceptance*. I accept joyous acceptance at once” (Osashizu, December 30, 1891; italics mine).

Endnotes

- 1 Notes: In this essay, the term *innen* is used interchangeably with “causality” or “causation,” its prevailing English translation. *Innen* is acknowledged by non-Tenrikyo followers as karma or the principle of cause and effect as recognized in other religious traditions. Tenrikyo’s *innen*, however, is different from those other perspectives and carries a particular nuance as this essay hopes to demonstrate.
- 2 Ozaki (2013), 184.
- 3 Ibid., 184.
- 4 A glance at Tenrikyo historical practice shows that becoming aware of *innen* and doing something about it have purportedly provided a means toward “salvation.” A well-known study by Shozen Nakayama, the second Shinbashira, makes this point clear by analyzing a comprehensive survey sent to head ministers and missionaries at the beginning of the twentieth century. One of the results of that study was that, out of the 11,685 respondents, the number one motive for engaging in missionary work was “redemption” with 4,026 missionaries recognizing this to be so. See Okada (2010), 9.
The meaning of *innen* when that survey was carried out and what it might mean for followers today is quite different. It is an estimated guess that followers in those days were more practice-centered than being teachings-centered, and that the solid framework of Tenrikyo doctrine and the number of publications on Tenrikyo teachings were not as fortified and as complete as one finds it today. Another influencing historical factor on Tenrikyo’s understanding of *innen* was Buddhism’s negative portrayal of it, spawning a rather pessimistic Tenrikyo interpretation of it. See Hashimoto (2007), 11–12.
- 5 See Kisala (1994) and Lyons (2021) for works by non-Tenrikyo scholars on

- how the understanding of *innen* unfolds and acted upon by members of the Tenrikyo community.
- 6 Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (1993), 20–28.
 - 7 Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (1993), 3.
 - 8 Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (1993), 20.
 - 9 Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (1993), 30–31.
 - 10 Moroi (1990), 25.
 - 11 As human beings borrow the human body, and have done so for the entire duration of human history, the mind has perpetually sown and planted a countless number and kinds of seeds. If the workings of the mind correspond to sowing a seed, the providence of God the Parent just might correspond to what is required for the seed to grow, that is, the seedplot. Providence in this example may also implicate to the rather all-embracing reference to the universe being the “body of God.” In short, God the Parent responds according to the workings of the mind (the seed, the direct cause), endowing God’s protection and showcasing God the Parent’s presence (the seedplot, the indirect cause) with things and events (the effects) that arise before us.
 - 12 “When our deeds are good, the truth of good will appear. When our deeds are bad, the truth of bad will appear.” Tenrikyo Church Headquarters (1993), 55.
 - 13 Tenrikyo Overseas Department (2010), 178.
 - 14 Nakayama and Shiba (2007), 34.

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ON THE MEANING OF REVELATION IN TENRIKYO

Ikuo HIGASJIBABA

Introduction

Revelation is an act of a transcendental being, such as a God, engaged in the enlightening, telling, and revealing of what was previously unknown to humans as well as the content disclosed thereby. It can also refer to the manifestation of a transcendental existence or place to human beings, who exist in a world that is subject to the limits of time and space. The word “*keiji* 啓示 (revelation)” used in modern Japanese is of Western origin and is the translation of a word that is equivalent to “revelation” in English. There is also another word that carries the same meaning, namely, “*tenkei* 天啓 (revelation from Heaven),” which clearly refers to a god / heaven as the purveyor of the revelation. In an English-Japanese bilingual dictionary of philosophical and religious terms published in 1881 entitled, *Tokyo daigaku sangakubu inko tetsugaku jii zen tsuki seikoku onpu* (in Yoshifumi Tobita ed., *Tetsugaku jii yakugo so sakuin*, 1979), the English word “revelation” is translated into Japanese as “*tenkeigenji* 天啓現示 (revelation-manifestation).” This is suggestive in understanding the meaning of the Japanese word “*keiji* 啓示 (revelation).”

The word “*keiji*” does not appear in Tenrikyo scriptures, and it is only used in Tenrikyo publications on the core teachings in a very limited way. “Revelation” is an analytical and descriptive term generally used in theology and religious studies and in that sense can be adapted to many other religions. Using revelation as a common conceptual framework enables comparison and dialogue with other religions. Thus, strictly speaking, in order to speak of Tenrikyo in terms of revelation, we must work on a conceptual adaptation of what is understood as revelation in Tenrikyo. It may be that different narrators may have different opinions about what to include in the revelation and what is at stake in talking about the revelation.

To note at the outset, however, the concept of “revelation” is relatively clear. In Tenrikyo teachings, it has been argued that Tenrikyo is based on divine revelation, and its significance has been previously discussed.⁽¹⁾ Therefore, in this article, I would like to begin by discussing revelation by God the Parent in the sense of the “revelation” mentioned above. By viewing our teachings as the disclosure and manifestation of the absolute truth from God the Parent to human beings, we can not only gain a broader and deeper understanding of our faith itself, but also find clues to clarify the uniqueness of Tenrikyo in relation to other religions.

In what follows, I consider the meaning of revelation, especially in relation to Oyasama (the Foundress of Tenrikyo). First, the revelation of God the Parent is examined as articulated in the form of language. In Section IV of one of the three sacred Tenrikyo scriptures Mikagura-uta, which seems to be a clear declaration of revelation, it reads, “This time I, God, revealing Myself to the fore, / Teach you all the truth in detail.” These verses are almost the same in meaning with the beginning of the Ofudesaki, another one of the sacred Tenrikyo scriptures. God’s revelation to the world and instruction of all truths can be understood as God’s intention being expressed through words and language. This can be seen in the Tenrikyo writings on the teachings, which are based on the Scriptures. In the Japanese original of *The Life of Oyasama, Foundress of Tenrikyo* (hereafter, *The Life of Oyasama*), all occurrences of the word “*keiji* 啓示 (revelation)” are given Japanese syllabaries “otsuge,” referring to the words of God the Parent spoken through Oyasama.

Next, I would like to examine the revelation of the Foundress (Oyasama) and God the Parent from a broader perspective. Since the Oyasama’s mind was the mind of God the Parent, it would make sense to the followers that, in a broader sense, all of Oyasama’s words and deeds were the revelation of God the Parent. If so, I would like to consider how revelation is related to each manifestation of Oyasama, namely, “the Shrine of Tsukihi,” “the Parent of the Divine Model,” and “the truth of the everliving Oyasama.”

The Revelation and the Words of God the Parent

(1) Section IV of the Mikagura-uta and the revelation

Section IV of the Mikagura-uta is almost identical to the first eight verses of the Ofudesaki. Although there are slight differences in expression between the two, for example, “the truth that this place is the origin of any and everything” in the sixth verse is “the original cause of all things” in the Ofudesaki, it must be pointed out that there is no semantic difference.⁽²⁾ With this in mind, let us first look at the words of God’s revelation as presented in the eight verses of Section IV of the Mikagura-uta. To make it easier to understand, the eight verses are divided into three parts.

Looking all over the world and through all ages,
I find no one who has understood My heart.

So should it be, for I have never taught it before,
It is natural that you know nothing.

This time I, God, revealing Myself to the fore,
Teach you all the truth in detail.

Mikagura-uta, “Yorozuyo” 1-3

The first verse says that no one in the world has ever understood God’s heart, or God’s intention, and it explicitly states that what God is about to teach is unknown to humans in any time and place. The second verse goes on to explain that this is because God has never taught God’s heart. It must be noted that God has never taught God’s intention before, that is, God’s intention has never been expressed in words. It is clear from this, that first of all, revelation refers to God’s intention expressed in language.

This is reaffirmed in the declaration of revelation expressed in the third verse “This time I, God, revealing Myself to the fore, / Teach you all the truth in detail.” This time, God revealed the nature of God to the human world, and taught God’s heart, that is, all the truth, which may well be

regarded as the content of the revelation. According to the *Ofudesaki chushaku* (*Annotations to the Ofudesaki*), “The phrase ‘I, God, revealing Myself to the fore’ means that Oyasama, as the Shrine of God the Parent, tells people in the world the intentions of God through Her mouth.” Thus, God revealing the nature of God to the world refers to Oyasama conveying God’s heart and intentions through words, and this is what revelation means in the context of Tenrikyo.

In the next three verses, the content of the revelation—that is, “God’s heart” and “the complete truth”—are made clear.

You are calling this place the Jiba, the home of God, in Yamato;
But you do not know of its origin.

If you are told of this origin in full,
Great yearning will come over you, whoever you may be.

If you wish to hear and will come to Me,
I will tell you the truth that this place is the origin of any
and everything.

Mikagura-uta, “Yorozuyo” 4-6

These verses indicate that, even though people talk about Jiba, no one knows its fundamental meaning because God’s intentions and all the truths have hitherto never been taught. But now, if humanity was told in detail about its own origin, everyone would come to appreciate the truths. Then, if humans wish to learn and ask, God will teach them the origin of all truths. In this way, it is made clear that Jiba is the core of all truths about which God speaks.

Finally, the purpose of revelation is presented in two stages.

When I, God, reveal Myself and teach you everything in detail,
All people in the world will become cheerful.

As I hasten to save all of you equally,

I will set out to cheer up all the minds of the world.

Mikagura-uta, “Yorozuyo” 7-8

The reason why God reveals the nature of God and teaches people everything in detail is to vitalize the minds of all people in the world. Moreover, God vitalizes the minds of all people in the world because God “hasten[s] to save all [people in the world] equally,” and to promote world salvation.

Based on the above, the revelation by God the Parent is to express and teach in words all of God’s intention and the truth of all things in the world, which have been unknown to humankind until now. And the revelation’s purpose is to vitalize the minds of human beings around the world, thereby contributing to world salvation.

According to the *Ofudesaki chushaku*, “this time” in the verse where God declares God’s revelation by saying “This time I, God, revealing Myself to the fore” refers to the time when “God began the teaching on October 26, 1838, through Oyasama as the Shrine upon the arrival of the Promised Time.” However, in another sense, it can be understood as referring to Oyasama’s fifty-year Divine Model or even the period of time since the founding of the teaching up until today.⁽³⁾

The scope of revelation may vary depending on how one understands the “time of revelation.” In the strictest sense of the word, the revelation refers specifically to the events that took place when the teaching was founded. In that case, God the Parent’s revelation consists of God’s first appearance in the world, the manifestation of the causality of the Residence as the basis for revelation, world salvation as the purpose of God’s revelation, and the expression of God’s intention to receive Miki Nakayama as the Shrine of God. Next, if we define the revelation of God the Parent as the entire fifty-year path the Foundress, Oyasama, went through as the Shrine of Tsukihi and as the Parent of the Divine Model, then the revelation of God the Parent includes not only the expression of God’s intention through Oyasama’s spoken and written words (expressed through language), but also through physical actions (expressed through

actions).

In the broadest sense, if we understand that God the Parent's revelation includes all of Oyasama's fifty-year path since the founding of the teaching and is continuing to this day, then the revelation of God the Parent encompasses not only what has been revealed by God the Parent and Oyasama in words and actions, but everything that occurs in the world, which is the body of God. This is called natural revelation or general revelation and can be conceptually distinguished from revelation through Oyasama, which is considered direct revelation, fundamental revelation, or special revelation.

In the following, I would like to continue some discussion in relation to Oyasama, limiting myself to the first two of the three different scopes of the meaning as listed above.

(2) The Life of Oyasama and the revelation as “otsuge”

In the Japanese original of *The Life of Oyasama*, the word *keiji* (revelation) is used when God the Parent conveyed the intention to human beings. It occurs seven times in the following six paragraphs. When it is used as a noun (four occurrences), it is accompanied by the Japanese syllabary “*otsuge*.” When it is used as a verb (three times), it is similarly accompanied by the syllabary “*tsu*” (as in “*tsuge-rareta*”). By reading the word in a specific way (“*otsuge*”), the term *keiji* is limited to a verbalized form of revelation, expressed in language. In this sense, Section IV of the *Mikagura-uta* and *The Life of Oyasama* concur in their understanding of what is God's revelation.

- (a) “I am God of Origin, God in Truth. There is causality in this Residence. At this time I have descended here to save all humankind. I wish to receive Miki as the Shrine of God.” . . . Indeed it was a god they had never heard of and a strange revelation they had never dreamed of. Zenbei did not understand the revelation at first, but upon reflection he realized that this

revelation was truly a serious matter for the Nakayama family and was most unlikely to be accepted by them. (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter One: The Shrine of Tsukihi, p. 1)

- (b) Having no alternative, Ichibei requested that Miki take her place and hold the gohei as medium. Suddenly, in the midst of intent prayer, came the revelation through Her mouth, “I wish to receive Miki as the Shrine of God.” (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter One: The Shrine of Tsukihi, p. 4)
- (c) She would solemnly reveal the intention of the God of Origin in a resounding voice, Her hands trembling and wavering so violently that the paper fringes of the gohei were torn to shreds. (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter One: The Shrine of Tsukihi, p. 6)
- (d) One day, God the Parent suddenly gave Zenbei another order, “Tomorrow pull down the high walls.” (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter Three: On the Way, p. 22)
- (e) God the Parent pitied us in this sad plight. Taking Oyasama as the Shrine, God appeared in this world at the advent of the promised time and taught the Salvation Service as the way to purify the minds of all humankind and thus lead us to the Joyous Life. (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter Five: The Salvation Service, p. 55)
- (f) Because of the Parent’s desire to save all humankind, the creation of human beings and the world is revealed. (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter Eight: Parental Love, p. 158) (emphasis added)

Among the seven occurrences, the first four that appear in (a), (b), and (c)—three nouns and one verb—come up in the words that God the Parent uttered in the series of events that took place during the period between the first manifestation of God and the time when Miki Nakayama was settled as the Shrine of Tsukihi. In addition, God’s first revelation at the beginning of *The Life of Oyasama* and the following paragraph is given the subheading “啓示” (only in the Japanese text). Although it is not given a Japanese syllabary, this word “啓示” can be read as both “*keiji*”

(revelation) and “*otsuge*” (oracle) (*The Sixteenth Doctrinal Seminar, Excerpts from the First Session [in Japanese, Dai jurokkai kyōgi kōshūkai daiichiji kōshū shōroku]*, [Tenrikyo Doyusha, 1956], p. 93.). Moreover, in the Japanese original of *The Doctrine of Tenrikyo*, it only comes up once, as in: “Miki’s family was greatly startled by the unexpected revelation. Using every possible argument, they refused God’s request” (Chapter One: Oyasama). In Tenrikyo, “revelation” can be understood to refer first and foremost to the words of God the Parent delivered in the series of historical events that led to the founding of the teaching. However, as presented above, God the Parent’s “revelation” is not limited to the revelation at the time of the founding of the teaching, but is understood more broadly to be the disclosure of truths and teachings from God the Parent, and the series of events culminated in the founding of the teaching is understood to be only the beginning. In fact, this is also presented in *The Life of Oyasama*. The expanded meaning of the word in the Tenrikyo context can be seen in the three cases besides those relating to the founding of the teachings.

Let us first look at the phrase “God the Parent gave Zenbei another order, ‘Tomorrow pull down the high walls’” as seen in (d) above. These words were delivered after the series of events that led to the founding of the teaching. In *The Life of Oyasama*, similar words of God the Parent come up right before them, namely: “Dismantle the mansion” and “Take down the tiles at the northeast corner of the house.” These two cases have the verbs, respectively, “demanded” and “said.” I believe it is fair to say that God’s revealing something means the same as God’s saying something. Yet, it is not that obvious as to why the word “啓示” is used here [in (d)] to refer to God’s revelation.

The other two cases—namely, (e) “God taught the Salvation Service as the way to purify the minds of all humankind and thus lead us to the Joyous Life” and (f) “Because of the Parent's desire to save all humankind, the creation of human beings and the world is revealed”—indicate that the content of “revelation” includes the truth about the Salvation Service and the creation of the human world. They are related

to the salvation of humankind. God's declaration at the founding of the teaching was "At this time I have descended here to save all humankind," expressing that God's purpose is the salvation of humankind. Taking what we have discussed about the Mikagura-uta's Section IV, we can see "revelation" in the Tenrikyo context is used in a consistent way by which God aims at saving humankind by "revealing" the truth of all things. Specifically, it is God the Parent's revealing the truth about the Service, which is the fundamental means of salvation, and its basis—the creation of humankind and the world. Thus, from the specific usage of "revelation" in *The Life of Oyasama*, we can understand the meaning of "revelation" in the Tenrikyo context.

As the early expression of revelation, "天啓現示 (revelation-manifestation)," suggests, God the Parent's revelation took a form that can be understood by human beings living in this world, such as through the words and deeds of Oyasama, the earthly manifestation of God the Parent. Although when seen from God's perspective the revelation was delivered through Oyasama by God, it was at the same time a proactive act of Oyasama, whose mind was that of God. The fundamental truth about human salvation was revealed to us as the words of the Shrine of Tsukihi, as the deeds shown through Her physical life on the path that She took as the Parent of the Divine Model of the Joyous Life, and furthermore, as the Divine Directions, which were given through the mouth of the Honseki (a later spiritual leader). The revelation of each truth was presented with a specific purpose and in a concrete historical context, so that it could be most easily understood by people of a "particular time and place," and eventually it would be regarded as universal truth that transcends time and space.

Thus, "revelation" in the Tenrikyo faith can be defined as the disclosure of the truth from God the Parent and Oyasama to human beings concerning the salvation of humankind. The content of that truth is nothing other than what was taught to humans, by and through Oyasama, in other words, what is taught today as the Tenrikyo teachings.

In the foregoing, I have established the meaning of the revelation in

the Mikagura-uta's Section IV and *The Life of Oyasama* by loosely using the concept of revelation as a guide. Next, let me return to the concept of revelation and deepen the understanding of Tenrikyo faith and revelation based on the understanding that Tenrikyo is grounded in revelation. To this end, I would like to further examine the relationship between revelation and Oyasama's manifestation. I would like to clarify how Oyasama's roles shape Tenrikyo's view of revelation.

The Revelation and the Positions of Oyasama

The revelation by God the Parent was the first direct revelation by God through Oyasama, as taught in the Ofudesaki, which reads, "So should it be, for this is the first time that Tsukihi has entered a body and speaks" (Ofudesaki VIII:50). Regarding God the Parent's revelation, Hideo Nakajima states, "If eternity is manifested in finite time, and the absolute is manifested in a relative place, then we need to suppose and consider a peculiar mediation between the infinite and the finite, where this relative, finite dimension somehow leads to an absolute, infinite boundary that cannot be measured." He goes on to say that "Miki Nakayama, the Foundress of Tenrikyo, realized this in Her own existence," and that "the manifestation and revelation of God the Parent in Oyasama lays the basis of the structure of revelation in Tenrikyo context."⁽⁴⁾

According to Nakajima, Oyasama's position as a "medium" is not temporary, but consistent throughout her existence, "and yet Her being is elevated to an eternal dimension." As a result, in the case of Oyasama, "the existential nature of mere mediation is overcome . . . [and] is sublated to the horizon of the divine."⁽⁵⁾ Oyasama is the one who mediates but not the mediator *per se*, meaning that her existence and position are of the same as those of God. Nakajima sums this up in the phrase "mystery in which the revelation of God the Parent through Oyasama is in fact nothing other than the direct self-revelation of God the Parent to human beings, even though it is only indirect insofar as it is 'through' Her,

theoretically speaking.”⁽⁶⁾ It is understood that the truth and fundamental nature of God the Parent’s revelation is based on the directness of revelation and, further, that this directness of revelation depends on the particularity of Oyasama.⁽⁷⁾

It is here that the structural characteristics of Tenrikyo’s revelation become clear. When God appeared in the world and taught all truths, there was no mediatorial position, as is generally assumed, but rather, Oyasama, as the direct manifestation of God, proactively delivered the message to human beings as a being of the same level and status as God. Here we have a revelation of God the Parent that cannot be captured by the ordinary concept of revelation but can only be understood as a revelation that transcends time and space, so to speak.

As the Shrine of Tsukihi, Oyasama taught and guided people by speaking through Her mouth, writing with Her brush, and even by demonstrating through Her own actions, all in accordance with the mind of God the Parent. Among them, the position of Oyasama who taught and guided by example is referred to as the Parent of the Divine Model.⁽⁸⁾ Strictly speaking, Oyasama’s work as the Parent of the Divine Model does not always overlap with Her acts and deeds as the “Shrine of Tsukihi,” but is understood in reference to Her actions in which She “showed” people how to lead the Joyous Life.⁽⁹⁾ However, the doctrines of the “Shrine of Tsukihi” and the “Parent of the Divine Model” were not thoroughly understood by the followers of the time yet. People worshiped Oyasama, and through Oyasama, they revered God the Parent in Oyasama. And they saw and experienced the workings of God through their own eyes. In the process, they became convinced that Oyasama was God the Parent who appeared on earth.⁽¹⁰⁾ If we look at the image of Oyasama from the perspective of the people at that time, each word and action of Oyasama emanated from the mind of God and was performed by God. This is the revelation we witness in Oyasama.

The revelation of God the Parent continued even after Oyasama withdrew from Her physical life on January 26, 1887. The revelation

was taught through the mouth of the Honseki, a spiritual leader who succeeded the Foundress. At that time, God did not simply transfer from the mouth of Oyasama to the mouth of the Honseki. Since Oyasama was the subject of revelation, united with God the Parent, after God's manifestation in the world, there was no change in Oyasama's position vis-à-vis the revelation of God the Parent even after Her withdrawal. The subject of the words conveyed by the Honseki remains the revelation of God the Parent and Oyasama. It is none other than the "truth of Her eternal life" that makes this understanding possible.

On January 26, 1887, the portals of the Shrine were opened. The "Shrine" here refers to the "Shrine of Tsukihi," or Oyasama. If we are to distinguish it from Tsukihi, i.e., God the Parent, who resided inside, would the "Shrine" in this case be, strictly speaking, Oyasama's body? As a result of opening the portals of the Shrine, Oyasama's physical presence is no longer visible, but this does not mean that Her work has come to an end. She is still working in the same way as before. In other words, she is still guiding us today, "as ever before and by the truth of Her eternal life." This is what is taught as "the truth of the everliving Oyasama."

The truth of Oyasama's eternal life is explained from two perspectives so that we can easily understand. One is the explanation that is described in *The Life of Oyasama*, which reads, "The heart of Tsukihi remains alive now and forever at the Residence of Origin, providing for the growth of all humankind to spiritual maturity," (*The Life of Oyasama*, Chapter Ten: The Portals Opened, p. 242). This explanation is based on the understanding that Oyasama was the Shrine of Tsukihi. Since it was the "mind of Tsukihi" that resided inside the Shrine, it was the mind of Tsukihi that opened the portals of the Shrine and emerged. (Also see, "But now God has opened the portals and stepped out" [Osashizu, February 18, 1887].) Therefore, the "truth of eternal life" pertains to the mind of Tsukihi, i.e., the mind of Oyasama who is God the Parent on earth.

Another explanation for the "truth of eternal life" can be found in *The Doctrine of Tenrikyo*, which reads: "Oyasama shortened the natural term of Her physical life by twenty-five years. Her presence cannot be

seen, but Her soul remains at the Residence of Origin forever. Oyasama, everliving, watches over the spiritual growth of all humankind, Her children” (*The Doctrine of Tenrikyo*, p. 42). This explanation is given from a perspective that Oyasama cannot be physically seen. Oyasama, who is invisible, is referred to as “[Her] soul” here. We can therefore say that it is the soul of Oyasama that lives eternally.

We may realize that “the mind of Tsukihi” refers to the volitional aspect of the work of the eternal Oyasama, and “the soul of Oyasama” refers to the existence of Oyasama, who is invisible and thus not limited by time and space. The two explanations both describe that Oyasama’s mind, soul, and workings remain the same as before the portals were opened, which is to say, Oyasama’s withdrawal from physical life is crucial to understanding the “truth of Her eternal life.”

To understand this more deeply, we need to reconfirm the meaning of the words of revelation that emanated from the mind of the eternal Oyasama after the portals were opened. In the Divine Directions, we are taught: “It is only My figure which cannot be seen. All is the same. It is only My figure which does not exist.” Here, we are told in clear language that the “truth of eternal life” refers only to the fact that we cannot see the body. Guided by these words, we must thoroughly realize that Oyasama after Her withdrawal is no different from Oyasama before, the only difference being that Her physical form is not visible.

That “Her physical form is not visible” is an understanding based on faith, which transcends common rationality and shines brightly in the world of faith. Therefore, it is an understanding of Oyasama that we should thoroughly understand now. Oyasama, as the subject of God the Parent’s revelation, as the Tsukihi on earth, and as our Parent, has watched over us and guided us toward the Joyous Life. Oyasama is and will forever remain unchanged and at work. It is only that we cannot see Her physical form.

In the Tenrikyo faith, the term “revelation” is divided into two categories: revelation in doctrinal texts and revelation in Tenrikyo theology. Concerning the former, what God the Parent has taught us is

revealed directly in a limited language. The latter does not only consider limiting the scope of consideration to the “revealed” words themselves, but also elucidates the content of the revealed truths by relating them to what Oyasama demonstrated through Her own example and in Her manifestations. In either case, the aim of revelation is the entire truth revealed by God the Parent for the salvation of humankind. Now, it is up to us to cultivate the mind that is as thorough as those of our predecessors, who were able to hear God’s words while feeling the physical presence of Oyasama and relying wholeheartedly on the eternal Oyasama. With that frame of mind, let us take the revelations of God the Parent and Oyasama into our hearts and spread them in wider circles.

Notes:

(1) In particular, the essays on Tenrikyo theology written with attention to the concept of “revelation” includes Hideo Nakajima, *Introduction to Tenrikyo Theology* [in Japanese, *Sōsetsu tenrikyōgaku*, in *Kyōyō bukkusu* 7], (Tenri Yamato Cultural Congress, 1992); *Tenrikyō-Christian Dialogue: Symposium and Exhibition Co-sponsored by Tenri University and Pontifical Gregorian University*, (Tenri University Press, 1999); *Arakitōryō* 137 [in Japanese] (Tenrikyo seinenkai); and *Introduction to Tenrikyo* [in Japanese, *Tenrikyo gaisetsu*], (Tenri University Oyasato Research Institute, 1981).

(2) Looking all over the world and through all ages, I find no one who has understood My heart.

So should it be, for I have never taught it to you. It is natural that you know nothing.

At this time, I, God, reveal Myself and teach the truth of all things in detail.

You are calling this place the Jiba, the Residence of God, in Yamato, but you may not know the origin.

When you learn of this origin in full, a great yearning will come over you, whoever you may be.

If you wish to know and will come to Me, I shall teach you the original cause of all things.

As God is revealed and teaches the truth of all things in detail, the minds of all in the world will become spirited.

As I am in haste to save all of you quickly, I set out to make all minds in the world spirited.

(Ofudesaki I:1-8)

- (3) For example, see *Visiting the World of the Mikagura-uta*, [in Japanese, *Mikagura-uta no sekai o tazunete*], (Tenrikyo Doyusha, 2001), pp. 79-80.
- (4) Hideo Nakajima, *Introduction to Tenrikyo Theology* [in Japanese, *Sōsetsu tenrikyōgaku*, in *Kyōyō bukkusu* 7], (Tenri Yamato Cultural Congress, 1992), p. 134.
- (5) *Ibid.*, 138.
- (6) *Ibid.*, 139.
- (7) Ikuo Higashibaba, “Tentative Approach to Constructing Tenrikyo Theology of Other Religions [in Japanese, Tenrikyo no ‘shoshūkyō no kyōgaku’ e no kokoromi] in *Tenri daigaku gakuho* 56-1 (2004), p. 93.
- (8) Tenri University Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion, ed., “Parent of the Divine Model” in *A Glossary of Tenrikyo Terms*, (Tenrikyo Doyusha, 2010), pp. 276-7.
- (9) Ikuo Higashibaba, “God’s Words and the Divine Model: Going Beyond the Otherness [in Japanese, *Kami no kotoba to hinagata: tashasei o koete*] in *Tenri kyōgaku kenkyū* 42 (2006), p. 200.
- (10) *Ibid.*, 207.

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