

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: Looking Back Upon “Heisei”

“Heisei” was an era fraught with major natural disasters, such as the Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake. There were numerous catastrophes that shook the foundation of our nation. However, the “disasters” have etched a memory as events in which the citizens as a whole sought to overcome the disasters.

When I listen to the thoughts of the young people who welcomed their rite of adult passage in the various disaster-struck areas, I am convinced that there will be a new generation from these areas who will shoulder the future of our country and share the pains for those who have suffered, united in heart and with their feet firmly planted on the ground. Dr. Iokibe, who served as chairman of the Reconstruction Design Council in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake, has stated, “Heisei Japan has not only withstood the repetition of natural disasters but through overcoming these crisis, it has matured both socially and emotionally.”

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (38) Progression towards the “Identification” of the Animals [2]

Why was the “instrument of bone and support” inserted into the “fish”? Amphibians inherited the “breeding system” of fishes, and thus lay their eggs in the water. For such reason, larvae (tadpoles) that hatched from the eggs live in the water, like fishes. As a result, in order for these larvae to move onto land, they are forced to undergo massive physical transformation, from aquatic life, in which power of flotation is at work, to life on land in which the force of gravity is fully felt. That is, to push off with its legs to work against the forces of gravity. Unless it does so, it cannot stand and walk. Thus, the “instrument for bones and support” becomes necessary. As noted in Chapter Three of the *Doctrine of Tenrikyo*, the God of Origin, God in Truth, of this world is Tsukihi, God the Parent, and all others aside from Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto and Omotari-no-Mikoto are models and instruments. It has been proven in this series that God the Parent used appropriate animals to describe these models and instruments.

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (27) The Pacific War and the North American Mission [5]

After the Bishop Hashimoto and other church head ministers were arrested and incarcerated, the remaining families living in deep uncertainty were forcefully ordered to leave their homes with the announcement of the Executive Order 9066. After staying briefly at designated roundup locations, they were detained in ten hastily built “relocation camps,” located in desert regions and arid areas. In Poston, where the wife of Secretary Yoshida was detained, a temporary office for the Mission Headquarters was established and regular meetings were held, including the monthly service.

Yasuo Ouchi — Japanese Language Education and the Overseas Mission (8) Japanese Language Education in Japan and in Overseas [3]

I will comment on Japanese language education conducted by Tenrikyo in overseas locations. I will outline programs carried out in various locations and introduce the Japanese language education conducted by Tenrikyo in overseas area. Tenrikyo’s Japanese language education is a Japanese language education as a cultural activity, and I will comment on the motives for the Japanese language education. Also, based on the case of Tenri Japanese-French Cultural Association, where the author was

previously assigned, I will comment on the conditions during the opening of the school as well as on missionary efforts in France, which is a Christian society. I will also comment on the cultural activities, based on my experience in France.

Akira Kaneko — Interpreting the Twenty-first Century through Kierkegaard (6) Faith as “Sample” Experience or Individual Faith as Spiritual Leap: A Question on the Paradox of Faith

In Genesis:22, there is a story of Abraham offering his son, Isaac, to God. Kierkegaard wrote in detail about this episode in *Fear and Trembling* (1843). In this article, I will introduce this discussion and inject questions towards religions that become obstacles for attaining wisdom. Abraham acted as an individual irreplaceable by others. The paradox of faith can be found when an individual transcends the universal. The story touches our hearts precisely for such reason. This is because we are all individuals before God.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from the Ruins (43) Making Cultural Heritage Meaningful Today [10] Japan Heritage and Maintenance of Ruins in the Village of Asuka

In 2015, the Agency for Cultural Affairs recognized *The Dawn of Japan: Women in the Asuka Period*, a story of Japan Heritage as submitted by Asuka Village. As noted in this story, footprints of the female emperors who played key roles in the seventh century can be found in the ruins found in Asuka Village. In particular, the “Asuka palace ruins,” in which the palace ruins of several generations of emperors can be found overlapping each other, is currently reduced to remnants found underneath rice fields; yet, in the villages and at the prefectural level, labeling of the ruins as well as restoration efforts are now underway.

Yomei Mori —Preliminary Thoughts on African-European Relations as Found in Congolese Society (24) Independence of Belgian Congo [1]

Brazzaville, the capital of the Republic of Congo, and Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, are adjacent to each other, with the Congo River in between. The width of the river stands at four kilometers. With the exception of the Vatican, these are the capitals in closest proximity to each other. There have been several discussions to plan a bridge that would connect the two capitals, but it has not yet come to fruition. Various reasons account for this, but one of them is the divergent paths that the two countries took upon achieving independence. I will examine the history of the independence movement in Belgian Congo to highlight its difference with French Congo.

Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Religion and Woman (23) “Productivity” Questioned from the Perspective of Care

Last year, 2018, among public statements by politicians, the opinion that LGBT couples have no “productivity” (Diet Member Mizuta) and the encouragements for childbirth and marriages at wedding ceremonies (Diet Member Kato) are interrelated as two sides of the same coin. Marginalizing those who are “useless” in terms of reproduction as well as excessively exhorting it upon those who are capable is a position that is deeply disconnected from a view that respects reproductive health/rights. Today, when the low birthrate policy, which began in 1990s, has morphed into an explicit population policy, is it not the role of religion—based on its humanistic views of care, that human existence is inherently vulnerable—to counter the trend advocated by perspectives drawn on “productivity,” that reduces human beings to their “usefulness” and “efficiency.”