

Akio Inoue — Opening Words: An Encounter with a Shaman in Kitala Village

Courtesy of an invitation from Paulo Wangoola, an activist for “Pan-Africanism” and founder and president of Mpambo Afrikan Multiversity, a school currently under construction, I had an opportunity to participate in a shaman’s ritual in Kitala Village in Uganda.

Under the dull glow of a lamp, the ritual took place within a traditional thatched roof shrine, in a circular space on the ground, and accompanied by a chorus. The shaman was the spiritual leader of the clan and a man in his forties. I was able to exchange many interesting questions and answer with him. His clan’s totem belonged to the Grasshopper.

There are sixty-five clan totems in Uganda. The animals and plants regarded as totems are connected to the ancestral spirits of the clan, and thus, there is a rule that states that these cannot be killed or harmed. In the African continent having undergone modernization, the spiritual practice involving the totem continues to fulfill the social function of uniting individuals and clans. The traditional philosophy of the totem plays the role of mediating a harmony between spiritual practice and the living environment, and thus provides a supporting mechanism to the frail base of the modernizing nation-state.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (50) Umemura Manuscripts [3]

In “Origins of Tenrikyo,” the “Outline of the Doctrines” provides a thorough summary of the basic teachings. It is thought to be a transcription of a sermon. It touches upon “the Providence of God the Parent.” Human beings, through both birth and death, reside within the bosom of God. Second, it states the “Truth of a Thing Lent, a Thing Borrowed,” that human bodies are things lent from God. Third, it emphasizes the importance of sweeping away, using the metaphor of dust to refer to misguided human thoughts. Fourth, it develops the teaching on causality. All seeds sown (the use of mind) will sprout, and the accumulation of this will become one’s causality. This causality dictates our lives, and thus, it is important to cut off bad causality that has resulted from the accumulation of dust.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (2) Historical Resources of the Shanghai Mission [2]

Through an instruction issued by the second Shinbashira on November 27, 1927, there was a renewed call for overseas missionary work; and as result, there were amendments in the bylaws regarding overseas mission and the establishment of an overseas mission department. Moreover, mission headquarters were established in Manchuria, Tianjin, and Shanghai. In this article, I will unravel parts of the records during the time of Yoshikazu Takai, who served as the first bishop of Shanghai from 1928 to 1936.

Takanori Sato — The Environmental Study of “Oneness in Two” (29) Japan’s Forests Are in Danger Today! [2] Learning from the History of Mistakes in Forestry Administration

It would not be farfetched to argue that history of postwar Japanese forestry administration was one left to the mercy of the high economic growth. As population began to concentrate in urban and newly industrialized areas, residential and apartment construction became commonplace, and the demand for building material subsequently grew. Thus, the Forestry Agency hatched a plan to cut down the trees in national forest and sell the lumber to private companies, and thus meet the demands for the ever-increasing residential construction. However, the supply from national forest could not keep pace with the demand, and thus, cheaper lumber from Southeast Asia, such as Indonesia, was imported. This, in turn, caused a collapse in the domestic materials, and thus led to the growth in disrepair found in Japan’s forests and woods.

Akira Kaneko — A Study on Overcoming a Critical View of Religion, as Found in Today’s Society (14) A Thought on Church Member and Faithful (Cont.)

Religionist exists as a social being in relation to church members and people in general. The term “faithful” does not assume a relationship with other people. Any person who possesses an awareness of faith can become a faithful. Lingering skepticism humanizes our faith. When a faithful professes faith while holding doubt, a religion comes into being as such. To such extent, faithful as an existent principle “precedes” religionist who is a relationship principle.

Akihiro Inoue — Hawaiians and Christianity: An Ethnography of Culture and Faith (11) Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement [5]

The April 1, 1990, issue of *The Sunday Star-Bulletin and Advertiser* published readers’ opinions regarding Hawaiian sovereignty. Two thirds of the opinions were sympathetic towards restoration of sovereignty, and many among them expressed support for Ka Lahui Hawai’i. However, one reader’s response caught the attention of many; it was a lengthy opposition statement written by a native researcher who taught Hawaiian culture at the University of Hawaii.

She wrote that democracy and guarantee of land ownership were more critical for the sake of sovereignty restoration, rather than “the fierce rebellious spirit that would eat stone,” as sung in Mele ‘Ai Pohaku. She argued that the goal should be the establishment of a sovereign Hawaiian citizenship rather than a creation of an “ethnic” nation.

Today, when the term “sovereignty” has begun to lose some of its luster, I reread her statement and felt a need to rethink the concept of “sovereignty.” We need to unravel the two critical issues of creation of Hawaiian nation and establishment of Hawaiian sovereignty, and take a moment to discuss the direction in which Hawaiians need to proceed under the banner of “sovereignty.”

Hideo Yamaguchi — A Dialogue Among Religions for World Peace (18) The Difficulty of Protecting An Individual

In December, as the year 2009 came to an end, a series of incidents occurred that shook the foundation of Italian society. The first was the injury to the Italian Prime Minister when an object was thrown at his face, and the second was when the Roman Catholic Pope was shoved to the ground.

The first incident occurred on December 13. After the Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi delivered a speech at the Duomo Square in Milan, an assailant from the crowd threw an object at Berlusconi from close range. The latter incident took place on December 24, on Christmas Eve, within the Vatican’s St. Peter’s Basilica. As the Pope entered the church, a woman rushed towards the Pope and knocked him to the ground.

There have been three attacks upon the Pope in the last three years. There have been various suggestions to protect the Pope, but these have been turned down on the grounds that it would create a huge separation between the Pope and faithful. Security methods are now under scrutiny.

Yomei Mori — Varieties of Tenrikyo Intercultural Mission (67) Intercultural Contact, As Seen in the Congo Mission [33]

In the half-century of the history of the Congo Mission, the most critical individual can be said to be Nsonga. In 1960, when the second Shinbashira touched down on Congo during a plane journey to South Africa, Nsonga happened to serve as his taxi driver; and thus began Tenrikyo mission in Congo. The second Shinbashira was impressed by Nsonga’s character, and invited him two years later, in 1962, to Jiba. Nsonga stayed in Japan for five months, and during that time, he encountered the Tenrikyo faith, learned its teachings, and received the Grant of the Sazuke. He made a determination to continue in the faith and asked for a *kanzane* (shrine) to take back to Congo. This development led to the opening of the path in Congo as well as the beginning of various issues regarding overseas mission that this faith has not experienced before.