

Chuichi Fukaya — Opening Words: As the Driving Force for Overseas Missionary Work

In regard to the founding of the Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion, the second Shinbashira of Tenrikyo stated, “it must not function as merely a research institute; rather, it draws its life as a planning staff for the overseas mission and must act as the driving force for overseas missionary work.” As for myself, when my father was appointed as the bishop of the Mission Headquarters in America, I went with him to the United States and spent my high school and college days in California; since then, after a few years as a missionary in America, I spent my life engaged in the overseas mission either actively or indirectly. Therefore, while I am lacking in background and accomplishments as a scholar and researcher, I am telling myself that my direct experiences in overseas missionary work should be helpful in accomplishing the goals of this research institute. With these thoughts in mind, I am contemplating the ways in which I could fulfill the responsibilities as the head of the Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion. And I wish to work towards a research institute that the Overseas Department will rely upon, an institute that can contribute to a proactive overseas mission. And for such cause, I hope that the Glocal Tenri will become a bulletin that serves as a driving force for the proactive mission.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (53) Shiro’s Manuscripts [3]

Tokumatsu Matsui, the author of these manuscripts, is said to have had exchanges with Yoshimatsu Matsunaga, who later became the founder of Minami Grand Church. However, a comparison between Matsunaga’s writings and this “Discussion on the Mind” reveals no similarity in content or expression. Thus, in regard to the manuscripts, there is no evidence of any influence.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (5) Historical Resources of the Shanghai Mission [5]

I will continue in my description of “The Memories of the Days Surrounding the End of the War,” written by Masataro Kaneko, the head minister of Hiwa Church. At the end of the war, Japanese nationals in Shanghai were assembled in three areas. As a result, seven families came to live in Hiwa Church, which happened to be located in one of the designated areas. They were able to secure necessary foods, but price inflation continued. The mission headquarters was relocated, but it was forced to move from its new location, and was placed within the property of the Shanghai Church. With no communication with Church Headquarters since the end of the war, the followers came across a newspaper article about the Oyasama Sixtieth Anniversary; thus, they were able to confirm that Church Headquarters were still intact, and this news heightened their spirits. Rev. Kaneko received his orders to return to Japan in April of 1946, and he left behind Shanghai, where he had engaged in missionary work for over thirty years.

Yomei Mori — Varieties of Tenrikyo Intercultural Mission (69) Intercultural Contact, As Seen in the Congo Mission [35]

Within the church, he was the “chief” (head minister) and towards the Congolese society, he was the “representative” of Tenrikyo in Congo. Nsonga was the representative for the permit to establish a church (an official recognition of religious activities) issued by the state in 1964. On the other hand, the center’s role was to serve as an outpost for the Church Headquarters; thus, its function was to convey the Church Headquarter’s intentions. In terms of perspective of those within the faith, its role was to

“disseminate the truth.” Also, from the perspective of the locals, the center was the window to Church Headquarters, and its function was to listen to the opinions of the head minister, church staff, and members. Of course, these functions necessitated that it maintain an accurate grasp of the various matters within the church. The Congolese mission was carried out with these two entities co-existing within the limited confines of the church with daily routine encounters.

Akira Kaneko — A Study on Overcoming a Critical View of Religion, as Found in Today’s Society (17) Thoughts on Managing a Religious Organization

The unit for a religion’s activities to contribute to society should not be on the level of the religious organization as a whole but on that of the individual religious facility. This point is critical in reflecting upon the survival of religion in the future. In the case of new religion, the religion’s headquarters should loosen its grip in order to encourage the initiative of the individual religious facilities. Also, small religious facilities should make full use of their smaller size to carry out activities suited to their scale. It is appropriate for the management of religious facilities to be versatile and flexible. Religious workers should let go of their concerns for the continuity of their religious organization and rather devote their thoughts to how to carry out activities here and now. Such a lifestyle is more suitable for those in religion and will open up possibilities from it as well.

Akihiro Inoue — Hawaiians and Christianity: An Ethnography of Culture and Faith (14) Representation and Discourse

“Representation” is an expression of “some thing (object),” using visual and aural images as well as linguistic mediums. The use of the term, “representation,” in contrast to symbol or sign, raises the issue of “who” is representing “what”? The image of Hawaiians geared for the tourists is one example.

“Discourse” is the process of explaining an object through the use of words, but it is not limited to mere linguistic expression. “Discourse” is linked to institution and power and not only associates meaning to its object but also creates its object and also seeks to control it. For example, definitions regarding Hawaiian “blood”—such as the “one-drop rule” and “blood quantum”—are based on colonial discourse.

“Representation” and “discourse” are critical concepts for studies on cultural identity. A clear understanding of both concepts will further clarify any discussion on Hawaiian identity.

Shigeru Noguchi — Religion, International Cooperation, NGO (19) The History of SVA (Shanti Volunteer Association) [6]

The Shanti Volunteer Association (SVA) is a religious NGO that grew out of Japan Sotoshu Relief Committee (JSRC), founded in 1980 during relief activities for Cambodian refugees. After 1991, it became a full-fledged operation that shifted its activities from refugee camps to various places throughout Cambodia. It devoted its efforts to publication and library activities as a way to foster education and cultural rebirth in the wake of the crushing damages caused by the persecution under Pol Pot rule. Further, it began projects to promote libraries in Thai, Laos, Myanmar’s refugee camps, and Afghanistan. While responding to the particular needs and environments of each locale, it has always sought to maintain a relief effort aimed at “nurturing people.” In this issue, I will examine, as a specific example of the various educational support activities carried out by the SVA, the “Dream School Project” (school construction project that also extends beyond the infrastructure) being carried out in Cambodia.