

Chuchi Fukaya — Opening Words: Muddy Ocean . . . ?

Chapter Three of the Doctrine of Tenrikyo states “God consumed all the loaches in the muddy ocean, tested the flavors of their nature, and made them the seeds for human beings.” There are many theories on how to interpret the “muddy ocean.” I do hope that we can continue to further our understanding of the “muddy ocean,” but I believe that a lab report announced jointly by the Tohoku University and National Institute for Material Sciences can contribute to this discussion.

Until now, in the world of the life sciences, the origin was life was thought to be within the ocean. However, this experiment showed that peptide, a complex organic compound that forms the source of protein comprising a life form, cannot be easily created in the ocean waters. That is, “chemical evolution” that leads to the origin of life took place within the seabed.

Theological viewpoint argues that “God’s words are truth regardless of whether it is recognized to have scientific validity.” Therefore, I do not think that that is any need to prove the scientific underpinning for the source of life as noted in the “muddy ocean.” However, it is important to approach God’s words through many angles, and I want to focus on what we can learn through the conclusion of this experiment.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (71) Other Manuscripts [14]

I have reprinted and introduced the “Kamisama no ohanashi” (Teachings about God) contained in the Hinai manuscripts. In this source, there are some historical inaccuracies in regard to time and date. However, its content is a detailed exposition of the key elements of the teachings. There are places where the entry is based on the Akita dialect and thus may cause initial hesitation; however, as a whole, it is easy to understand.

There must be many other manuscripts, like this, that are stored in the outlying areas. I have purposely avoided manuscripts stored in Church Headquarters and in directly affiliated churches because I sought to detail the ways in which the teachings and its written forms disseminated into the outlying areas. In the next installment, I will examine “Mi no uchi hanashi” (Teachings about the body) stored in Takadai Branch Church (affiliated with Hokuriku Grand Church and located in Numata of Uryu County, Hokkaido). It is written in *kana* form.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (21) Historical Resources of the Manchurian Mission [5]

On January of 1914, receiving a permit to establish the Changshun Church from the police, the church opened its doors to the public. While in the process of relocating and constructing the church facility, Sumi Araki, who laid the foundation for the Manchurian mission and invited Udono to join her in Manchuria, passed away for rebirth in August of that year. In the following year of 1915, in May, the location for the new building was decided, and while there were some issues with work stoppage caused by lack of funding, the beam-raising ceremony took place in July and the completion ceremony in August. In 1916, a fellowship was established in Harbin through the efforts of the followers living in that area, and this movement led to the establishment of the Harbin Church. However, this was also a period of hardship characterized by the criticism of the church minister by some of the leading members within the Changshun Church as well as the passing away of rebirth of the minister’s right-hand man.

Akira Kaneko — A Study on Overcoming a Critical View of Religion, as Found in Today’s Society (35) Contemporary Possibilities for a Spiritual Community

Organizational logic in religion often functions as a “rule” that binds the individual faithful in order to protect itself (the organization). A community of the spirit transcends such church organization as well as the religion itself. Berdyaev called this the “sobornost.” This is a free and conscientious exchange between individuals who have awakened to the spirit. Not limited to inter-religious dialogue or inter-religious cooperation, whenever there is an awakening to the spirit (spirituality) and a free exchange between individuals, a spiritual community—a sobornost—is established.

The manner of its existence is not prescribed; rather it is something that human beings continuously re-create through their actions.

Akihiro Inoue — Hawaiians and Christianity: An Ethnography of Culture and Faith (32) Hawaiian Church

There are three definitions for a Hawaiian Church: 1) a church founded by nineteenth century missionary for the sake of the Hawaiians; 2) a Hawaiian church whose members are Hawaiian, employs the Hawaiian language in its activities, and is culturally and ethnically Hawaiian; 3) a church belonging to the State Council of Hawaiian Churches.

The Congregational Church, which began missionary activities in 1820, defined their missionary object to be the immigrants who came as laborers for the sugar cane industry, and transformed into a multi-ethnic organization comprised of various ethnic churches in the late twentieth century. The current Hawaiian Church is only one among other ethnic churches in the Congregational Church, but it undoubtedly occupied a central place in the history of the Hawaiian mission. There are churches that possess both history and tradition and are currently active; there are also those that are seeking to become active by defining their identity as Hawaiian.

On the other hand, there is the Ho’omana Na’uao, which became independent from the Congregational Church in the end of the twentieth century. This church was led by Hawaiians and promoted an active evangelical mission based on faith healing. It attracted a large following among the Hawaiians after the fall of the dynasty. Ho’omana o Ke Akua Ola split from this church in the beginning of the twentieth century. This church, under the strong leadership of John H. Wise, expanded its following and became the largest among the independent Hawaiian churches. Several Hawaiian churches splintered from this church during the 1930s and 1940s.

The doctrines and rituals of the independent Hawaiian churches have, over time, taken their own individual courses among the different churches. Also, most of the churches are so-called family-oriented churches. The ties binding the churches are minimal, and there is very little awareness that the churches inherit the tradition of independent churches following the Ho’omana Na’uao. Questions still abound as to the cause of the splintering and branching, whether it is by the emphasis on autonomy found in the tradition of the Congregational Church, or by particularities within the Hawaiian culture.

Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Gender Theories (17) Lessons Today from Eco-Feminism

Eco-feminism has consistently expressed a cautionary attitude towards technology. It regards not only nuclear energy but fertilization technology, used for impregnation and childbirth, to be an “assault” on women and on life. According to eco-feminist Carolyn Merchant, a “mechanized worldview” forms the foundation for these technologies. Environmental movements and eco-feminism led by women have been dismissed under the label of eco-maternalism, but we seem to be at a point in time when we must reconsider such viewpoint.

Mari Namba — Tenri and Sports (18) Tenri Sports Symposium [8]

As I began to reflect upon sports for people with a disability together with those people with a disability, I began to realize the mistakes in my thinking. Even with a disability, people can basically do anything. Things that cannot be done will let us know on their own, so when that happens, we can search for a way to do such things by asking ourselves, “Can we do that?” “Can we do this?” and “How can we do such things?” Professor Guttman stated, “Don’t count the things that you lost; make maximum use of the functions that remain.” In other words, it is important to take the approach of “Don’t look for things that you lost; make efforts to find the things that you can do.”

Among sports for people with a disability, there is tendency to favor competitive sports. However, competition is not the only merit for those people with a disability. There are many varying levels of disabilities, including those who are in bed most of the time and those who are barely able to get outdoors. I believe that sports instructors must pour attention to sports activities that improve the health of such people with the aims that they become more a part of society.