

Chuchi Fukaya — Opening Words: Utilizing Korean Energy for Overseas Mission

In the 1950s, Japanese industrial products were ridiculed as “plated toys.” But by the 1990s, “Made in Japan” became synonymous with high quality products as it swept across the American market. Also today, Korean companies are producing televisions that match Japanese products for design and picture clarity, and these are dominating American and Brazilian markets. However, in today’s globalized society where a product, made in an American factory with parts assembled from around the world, can still be branded as “Made in USA,” there is a trend towards buying a product regardless of its origin as long as quality and value are favorably judged. Can we not say the same thing about religion? For example, until now, we thought about how to convey a religion born in Japan to the people of America and Brazil. That is, it was necessary to apply the same effort as selling an industrial product made in Japan to the Western market. However, now, in the same way that a product of any country can be sold as long as it matches the sensitivities and needs of the people, a religion regardless of its origin can be accepted without hesitation by people as long as its teaching and faith can relate to the hearts of the people. The situation is changing where we can engage in missionary work without much thought to whether it comes from Japan. The issue is how to relate to the sensitivities and needs of the people, and who will carry this out.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (27) Historical Resources of the Manchurian Mission [11]

In January of 1838, as he entered his second year as missionary in Dalian, Sakae Yoshihara wished to begin from scratch in his missionary life and thus left his residence in the Nakamura family house. He chose to live as a homeless while engaging in missionary work, as he had hoped to do from the outset. After three months passed, he received a letter from children of a mission house in his hometown of Matsumoto, asking for reference for work in Manchuria. Although he lived as a homeless, he managed to find a job for them through his connections. Later, when he discovered that they were having trouble find a place to live, through his acquaintances, he found a place large enough for them and Yoshihara himself to live. Thus, he ended his homeless life and shared living quarters in which he established a fellowship.

Ichiro Soda — Histories of the Tenrikyo Mission (5) Tenrikyo in Hokkaido and Okinawa: Its Environment and History

An examination of number of churches in the prefectural diocese reveals that Hokkaido has 960 while Okinawa has 21. Both dioceses are far removed from Church Headquarters. There is no difference in the distance factor. But what accounts for this difference in the number of churches?

In comparison with other areas of Japan, Hokkaido and Okinawa have a unique environment and custom. Also, they have taken different historical paths from other parts of Japan. Both areas are viewed, to a certain extent, as a foreign culture.

I am not talking about the reasons for lack of growth in Okinawa. Rather, I am trying to write about how the path took root in Okinawa through the valiant efforts of the pioneers despite the difficult conditions of Okinawa as a foreign culture.

Tenrikyo missionary in Hokkaido is not unrelated to the massive development of Hokkaido that began in the early years of Meiji. In fact, it is very closely related. There were Tenrikyo faithful among the pioneers and there were missionaries who sought assistance among their friends in the pioneer villages as they sought to expand their mission. Also, while we may speak of it as a foreign culture, the people had all immigrated from various parts of Japan, and thus, there had shared ties as pioneers. They did not experience a sense of alienation. On the other hand, Okinawa possessed a long history with a unique cultural environment and custom. Ancestral worship and folk beliefs were strongly rooted. It was difficult for a new religion as Tenrikyo to find an opening.

It had to demonstrate its superiority over the existing religions in Okinawa. Only because a number of missionaries overcame this difficult situation are there churches now in Okinawa, despite its few numbers.

Koji Fukaya — A Growth of Faith through Ofudesaki (1) Introduction

This essay will examine Ofudesaki, one of the three scriptures in Tenrikyo. The questions that we keep in mind are: What kind of significance Ofudesaki has for us today, whether or not “us” includes Tenrikyo followers? How can we read Ofudesaki as the words of God the Parent in the recent pluralistic society, which is filled with various positions, values and religions and makes it hard to insist on the universality of a religion?

In this essay, instead of claiming the rightfulness of Tenrikyo lightly, I will describe a process of how my faith grows and deepens

by interpreting Ofudesaki. Hopefully that attempt will show a spiritual interaction between a young follower and God the Parent via Ofudesaki.

Midori Horiuchi — Connecting “Life”: The Phenomenon of Life and Death (5) How Can We Come to Terms with Death [3]

Hideo Kishimoto, a professor of the study of religion at Tokyo University, examined view of life and death by dividing it into four parts. The first perspective idealized an eternal life in the material sense. The second perspective viewed life as something that continues beyond physical death, and that there was something there that allowed for continuity beyond physical death. This other was considered as the “soul.” The third view imagined an existence of something other than oneself, and sought to tie together oneself with the eternal quality possessed by this something else; thus, the eternal quality of oneself was assured. An example of this perspective is the “self” that enables human race to continue. The fourth perspective sought to obtain eternity as an experience. These are similar to conditions of religions experience and spiritual experience.

Takanori Sato — The Unexpected Effects the Radiation Leak Accident at the Fukushima No. 1 Plant (3) Radiation Contamination Among Livestock and Wild Animals and the Issues Regarding Cleansing

There are three ways of thinking about the “half-life” of a radioactive element: first, “physiological half-life” that indicates a duration for the radioactive nuclide to lose half its number due to radioactive decay; second, “biological half-life” that indicates a duration to lower by half the radioactive level through biological means, such as metabolism and excretion, and thus eliminating radioactive level from the body by discharge and sweat; third, “actual half-life” that measures the actual half-life duration, as indicated by the mutual influence of physiological half-life and biological half-life. This actual half-life duration has the greatest meaning. For the elimination of radioactive cesium in the bodies of livestock and wild animals, it is important to take advantage of this actual half-life duration in order to eliminate the radioactive elements from their body and reduce it to an acceptable level. Just because they have been exposed to radioactivity should not lead automatically to shortcut solutions such as slaughter. Rather, we should think of ways to rebuild safety and trust by providing accurate measures of consumed meats, honoring a through application of regulations, and allowing for complete transparency in information availability.

Masahiko Okada — “Human Being” and “Religion” in the Contemporary World (3) To What Extent are Humans Animals? [2]

For most animals, their habitat in which they are to live are basically already decided. However, the instinctual mode of action, predetermined in order to co-exist with natural environment, is drastically declining among human beings. The reason for this decline is the way in which human infants, born in extremely incomplete condition, are not born into this world from the inception as “humans” in the natural world; rather, they become “humans (or perhaps, the self)” in the context of the cultural and social world in which they were born.

The world as a web of meaning, created by the unique mode of being of human beings as an animal. While human beings become free (of course, not completely free) from the mode of action that is predetermined by their natural instincts directly tied to the natural world, they become captivated within the world of the web of meaning of their own creation.

Norihito Nakao — Han Resources in Tenri University Sankokan Museum Collection (1) Introduction

In the Tenri University Sankokan Museum, there are over several hundreds of thousands of artifacts in its collections. Among them, there are 9300 that pertain to cultural resources related to life of the Han people. The collection of these resources was conducted by Tenrikyo missionaries and school faculty during the early 1920s. In 1925, materials brought back during a tour of the Korean peninsula and Chinese mainland were displayed in a “Korean-Manchuria-China Souvenir Exhibit” held for three days from October 27. This was the first public display for Han resources. Later, more tours of China were conducted in 1930, resulting in collection of more resources. These were displayed in the “Chinese Folk Practice Exhibit,” held for three days from April 25 at the Tenri Junior High School’s east lobby. This exhibit led to the founding of this museum.

The above outlines the key role of Han resources within the museum. Also, many of the materials collected prior to the war were extremely valuable and cannot be found in other museums. But this fact is not widely known. Thus, I will introduce the resources in this series of articles and thus seek to make widely known the value of the Han resources held at the museum.