

Chuichi Fukaya — Opening Words: Approach of the Near-Earth Object

In the evening hours of February 16 of this year, an asteroid given the name of “2012 DA14” passed through in close proximity of earth, merely 27,000 km in distance (1/14 of the distance to the moon, inside the orbit of a stationary satellite). Until now, roughly 400,000 asteroids have been discovered, but there are over 5000 asteroids, called Near-Earth Asteroid (NEA), that has the potential to pass in close proximity to earth. Furthermore, among them, there are roughly 700 that are larger than 1 kilometer in diameter, large enough to cause catastrophic damage if it collides with earth. There is also speculation that there are 70 to 80 NEA of such size that have not been discovered yet. The odds of a single death from falling meteorites is said to be one in 250,000,000 at most. This is roughly the same chance of winning a lottery. Therefore, (while I would like to express my condolences to those in Russia who were hurt by the recent meteor) there is no need to be worried when we spent time gazing at the stars. However, the fact that we can spend each day with no falling objects from the sky is indeed a blessing to be thankful for.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (Final) Historical Resources of the Manchurian Mission [22]

In the following year of 1946, when Yoshihara returned to Dairen, his wife, Yasuko, became ill from the fatigue building up from the end of the war and the sadness of the death of her second daughter; and in May, she passed away for rebirth. Yoshihara sought to become a support for others precisely in such times, and thus, he took his daughter and made rounds of people leading difficult lives and engaged in salvation work. In the beginning of the following year, he was finally assigned a spot on an evacuation ships. On February 22, Yoshihara landed safely in Sasebo. He left his elder daughter with Tokiji Maruyama, the head minister of Rinomi Branch Church and a brother-in-law, and, on his own, he devoted himself to work for the Nikko Grand Church. However, in autumn of that year, his elder daughter also passed away. In midst of deep sorrow, he felt that he could not allow such a knot, of losing all his family members, go to waste, and he became ever more fervent in his devotional work.

Ichiro Soda — Histories of the Tenrikyo Mission (16) Tenrikyo in Kyushu (Overview)

I will provide an overview of the Tenrikyo mission in Kyushu. Kyushu is located on the western edge of Japan and is located far away from where Tenrikyo began. And yet, the Tenrikyo mission in Kyushu did not begin much later than those in Shikoku and Chugoku regions.

Most of the mission originated in Kansai, Shikoku, and Chugoku regions. The very first believers were in Kumamoto Prefecture, and there is one person who actually met Oyasama in person. This led to the founding of today’s Kumamoto Grand Church and Tohi Grand Church. The earliest church was founded in Oita Prefecture. Tokichi Izumita, a missionary from Osaka, began missionary work in Nakatsu in 1890, which led to the founding of today’s Usa Grand Church in 1892, and other developments led to the founding of Nakatsu Grand Church.

Also, in 1891, Omi merchants from Shiga Prefecture carried the faith to Fukuoka Prefecture, which led to the founding of Chikushi, Saikai, Asakura, Chinzei, and other churches.

Within Kyushu, church numbers are highest by far in Fukuoka Prefecture. This may be natural, given that the population is also much higher than in the other prefectures. The number of churches in ratio to the population is highest among Saga and Oita Prefectures. Also, there are quite a number of churches in the smaller islands surrounding Kyushu, such as Amami Islands, Gojima Islands, Iki, and Tsushima. There is a reason for the churches in many of these islands. This can be readily discerned when comparing similar islands that have no churches.

Koji Fukaya — A Growth of Faith through Ofudesaki (12)

Part 3 starts with a specific topic, of the construction, in the Residence, of the *Nakaminami-no-mon’ya* (South Gatehouse). It is safe to say that the word “sweeping” in the third verse has two meanings: sweeping the old structure in the Residence and sweeping dusts in human’s heart. These verses show that God the Parent urges people to sweep “dusts” physically and spiritually.

The verses 4 and 5 are very similar to verses 114 and 115 in Part 3. To sum up these verses, *Nihon* is not yet in peace, which comes from the fact that people in *Nihon* do not make people in the world spirited enough because they pay too much attention to what they do now. From this, we can think that God the Parent, considering such human’s tendency to wallow the surface layer of life, encourages people to sweep dust by giving physical changes and new meanings to Miki’s house. Moreover, in the verses 7-14, God gives advice that it is instructions and realizations to sweep dust in heart by using a metaphor of filtration of muddy water.

Hisayo Tanaka — Japanese Language Education for Japanese Children Growing Up in France (4) Approach to Japanese Language Classes for Children at the Tenri Franco-Japanese Cultural Association [4]

The school’s educational principles—“the three promises”—for children learning the Japanese language are derived from the hope of adhering to a moral education based on the Tenrikyo teachings and aspiring to develop a well-rounded human being through Japanese language education. The wording, drawing from the three keywords of the Joyous Life—“Gratitude, Humility, and Helping One Another”—and the spiritual goals of the Boys and Girls Association, use plain and common expressions that are easy for children to understand. Furthermore, for the parents, there are parent seminars and resources for enrollment that include not only administrative information such as enrollment and fees but also specific and concrete list of rules that seek their support on behalf of the children’s education. Based on a traditional French thinking that a children’s discipline is the responsibility of the parent, responses to disciplinary issues are carried out with the parent’s involvement, and in the future, the duties of the homeroom teachers will be lessened.

Midori Horiuchi — Connecting “Life”: The Phenomenon of Life and Death (16) How Did We Reflect on Death [7]

In Buddhism, which holds to the tenet of ahimsa, the taking of life, including suicide, is considered an immoral action. The 14th Dalai Lama, as an exception, pointed to a Lama high priest who was arrested by Chinese authorities in the 1960s and sentenced to a public whipping by the people’s court. The high priest, in an instantaneous moment, used meditation to separate his soul from the body (and thus died). This is a unique case. To kill regardless of the means is fundamentally immoral.

The high incidence of suicide in contemporary Japan can be taken as a cry for help from the individuals living in society known as Japan. In order to improve its condition, not only Buddhism but many religions and sects have begun to cooperate in order to address the problem of suicide. There are also individual efforts towards such ends. Also, suicide is a query existing since the ancient times that probes for a way of life in pursuit of the universality of life.

Kensaburo Matsuda — Regarding “Delving Deep Into the Gap of the Folds” (8) “Into the Gap of the Folds . . .” [8]

I will seek to correct some issues from the previous article. In particular, I am referring to the point that Maugham interpreted the white whale as the symbol of good and Captain Ahab as the symbol of evil. I had neglected to refer to the primary source (Maugham, *Ten Novels and Their Authors*). This interpretation is only meant to contrast another interpretation, of the whale as the symbol of evil and the captain as symbol of good. For Maugham, both are nothing more than allegories and are not adequate to define its own stance. His true intentions can be found in the “enigmatic” strength of *Moby Dick* but also in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. In this article, I want to go beyond this correction to take another step forward.

The enigma that Maugham perceived in this work can be traced to the person and character of the author, Herman Melville, and is codified within the work itself, in a symbolic structure, over and beyond the other references that may form the background of the work. Confirmation of this fact will serve as the function of the link between the previous article and the next article.

Saburo Yagi — The Path Towards Normalization (14) Urban Design for Social Welfare

Our country’s welfare urban design, which took the movement in the 1970s led by the people with disabilities as its catalyst, began with the Ministry of Welfare (currently the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare) initiating physical disability welfare model projects, which designated cities with population of over 200,000 for such projects of welfare urban design. At the same time, the Ministry of Construction (currently, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) released a directive containing standards for pedestrian sidewalk’s level difference, and thus eliminating steps, between the roadways and sidewalks, that had become barriers, and enabling barrier-free environment in which people who use wheelchairs could freely move about.

In 1994, in line with the aging of the country’s population, as the standard for today’s welfare urban design, the “Law to Encourage the Construction of Specified Buildings with Easy Access for the Elderly and Persons with Disabilities” (known as Heartbuild Law) was enacted and barrier-free architecture became a requirement. The 1970s movement borne out of the initiative led by users of wheelchairs became the birth cry for this country’s welfare urban design, and has now led to various laws that require barrier-free access.