

Chuichi Fukaya — Opening Words: Hydroelectricity

Hydroelectric power was considered a method of power generation suitable to Japan, which had many rivers and streams; thus, it constituted the main power source for Japan during the Taisho and Showa eras. However, currently, its share has dropped to 8.5%. Given the many problematic issues related to dam construction, there is very little chance for a construction of a new large scale hydroelectric power generator. Given this situation, there is a call for development of “mid-to small scale hydroelectric power” that makes use of smaller rivers and streams as well as agricultural canals. Yet, despite its small scale, the process for its placement is troublesome and the operation and maintenance are costly. Thus, the reality is that the number of implemented cases has not increased at all. Given its output, cost, safety, and environmental burden, I do not believe that it can fulfill the role as a basic supplier of stable energy source for Japan’s electricity needs.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (92) Kin’ai Manuscripts [13]

Continued from previous issue.

Chuichi Fukaya — Deep Reflections on the Life of Oyasama (11) The Dusts of Jealousy and Envy

This path does not reject a pursuit of an affluent life, in the manner that Oyasama saved impoverished people. Undergoing the path with seriousness may not hinder one from attaining a better living standard and those who were impoverished when one began faith may become unable to be poor even should one so desire.

When one becomes affluent as a result, one may become object of opposition from society and jealousy and envy from those close by. This is because there is such “model,” and as such, faithful of any era will experience such opposition. However, there is no need to flinch in face of such opposition. One should use such opposition as a mirror for oneself in order to reflect upon one’s own feelings of jealousy and envy, and proceed undaunted in missionary and salvation work with the attitude of “proceeding while avoiding dust.”

Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (13) Chapter Two: Motoori Norinaga’s Kojiki-den [1]

Motoori Norinaga, a scholar of National Learning during the Edo period, criticized foreign Confucian teaching (Chinese thought) as something that ran counter to nature. He is known to have advocated that mono no aware, which was unique to Japan, constituted the essence of literature. He began to lecture on the Tale of Genji while beginning his own medical practice at the age of twenty-eight. He labored on studies of the Kojiki and language while authoring many commentaries. Many disciples came to his doorsteps. The theme that he advocated throughout his life was to remove “Chinese thought,” which many people based their thoughts upon a borrowed Chinese method of thinking without awareness, and to return to the “Yamato soul.” Towards such ends, he completed his main work, Kojiki-den, comprised of forty-four volumes, over a period of thirty-five years. This took place in 1797, when Norinaga was sixty-nine, the same year when Miki Nakayama, the foundress of Tenrikyo, was born.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (2) In Regard to the “Fish” [2]

Among the eighteen versions of the Koki sources, I was able to confirm twenty-three spelling variations of the “fish” and fifty-four occurrences. Furthermore, I was able to differentiate the twenty-three variations into six categories. As a result, these variations converged upon the term, “geigyō” [literally, salamander fish]. This kanji character of gei appears in Wakan sansei zu e, a biology illustrated reference that was popular in mid-Edo period (1713), as well as in Hon zo zu setsu, illustrated by Takagi Shunzan in 1852, near the end of the Edo period (1852), and it is explained as a sansho-uo (salamander). That is, the “fish” that appears in the Koki sources refers not to a fish but to a salamander, an amphibian creature.

Koji Fukaya — A Growth of Faith through Ofudesaki (37) Part VI:80-103

In Ofudesaki, “kiki-wakeru” (understand) often appears. In Part IV, it can be found in verses 96 and 103. Its dictionary definition is “to understand by ear” and “to accept and obey.” It is one of the attitudes that God the Parent encourages people to have. On the other hand, it is for God the Parent to “mi-wakeru” (discern). In Ofudesaki, human beings are also described as an agent to “see” or “look,” but the agent to discern is God. That is to say, in terms of relationship between God and human beings, it stands to reason that “God discerns, human beings understand.” More exactly, “God discerns human being’s mind, and human beings understand what God says.”

Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (5) “Path” as Found in The Doctrine of Tenrikyo [3]

In regard to the latter half of The Doctrine of Tenrikyo, Shozen Nakayama, the second Shinbashira, notes that it was written to provide a “pathway for our faith” as well as “path to the Joyous Life.” That is, “pathway to faith” and “path to the Joyous Life” is regarded as having the same meaning. In order to delve further into the word, “faith,” and its relationship to “path,” in this article, I would like to examine the meaning of the words “shinjin” (faith) as found in Chapters Six and Seven of The Doctrine of Tenrikyo as well as the words “shinko” (faith) as found in Chapter Eight.

Masanobu Yamada — New Religion’s Missions in Brazil (25) Organizational Development of Japan’s New Religions [9]

In Brazil, there is a religion called Perfect Liberty, a new religion that began in Japan. Like Seicho-no-Ie, its percentage of native followers outnumbers those who are of Japanese descent. It can be regarded as one of the religions that took root in the Brazilian religious landscape. A summary view of PL’s overseas mission shows that its first steps were directed at Brazil, and then spread to neighboring countries and Europe. Thus, this is a unique feature. For example, the missions in North America (Canada) and Europe (Portugal, Spain) were developed not only by Japanese missionaries but also by those who entered the faith in Brazil. To such extent, Brazil served a key role as a strategic base for expanding its mission.

Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (5) Framework of Donation and Community Chests

Donation profits the person in concern through the services and activities provided by the organization or by organizations and frameworks that mediate the donation. Donation’s meaningfulness can be said to derive from mediating process of the many people and organization and the way in which their discussions are implemented. A representative example of an organization and framework that mediate donation is community chests. In Japan, it began in 1947 and is a fundraising activity that drives local community welfare. This community chest began in Cleveland, in United States, as a idea for “the third person collection” raised by industrialists who were the “givers of donations,” and not from the facilities and organizations that receive the donations. Japan’s community chests are modeled after the one in Cleveland, but it is now time to re-examine its “third person” nature.

Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Religion and Woman (3) Inclusive Bible and Metaphors of God

In the 1980s, Christianity in America began to problematize discriminatory terms in the Bible. Taking the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) as its point of departure, the Inclusive Bible was published in 1995 in a project independent from the NCC. This publication took note of discriminatory languages beyond gender-related discriminations, but in this article, I will point to the gender-related example of “Heavenly Father” and reflect upon the power of metaphor as found in the inclusive phrase, “Father-Mother.”