

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: Relief and Support as “Brothers and Sisters”

The Kumamoto Earthquake triggered numerous tremors exceeding magnitude 7 over a large area of Kyushu. Our condolences to the many people who have passed away and to the many people who suffered from the earthquake. In the “Life of Oyasama, Foundress of Tenrikyo: Manuscript Edition,” there is an episode about Oyasama’s third daughter, Oharu, who received the Grand of Safe Childbirth on November 5, 1854, and was subsequently able to give birth safely. Actually, on this same day, there was a major earthquake, known as Ansei Nankai Earthquake. The walls of the birthing room came falling down as she gave birth safely. I believe that this sends a powerful message to the faithful in regard to earthquakes. Regarding the teachings of “a thing lent, a thing borrowed,” as seen in the Ofudesaki verse “This universe is the body of God. Ponder this in all matters” (III:40), we, as human beings, live in the bosom of God the Parent. This implies that we believe that even the saddest things and difficult things all take place within the bosom of God the Parent. From there, we are led to the act of helping one another as “universally brother and sisters.” I wish that we, Yoboku and followers alike, can all contribute our support to the victims of this disaster so that they may recover from it a day sooner.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (105) Kitano Manuscripts [7] Transcriptions of Copies of the “Osashizu”

I will examine a volume from the Kitano manuscripts, a source that I have introduced in parts previously. Early missionaries from the Kitano Branch Church were already engaged in salvation work and expanding the church, carrying copies of the Divine Directions and the Ofudesaki.

Chuichi Fukaya — Deep Reflections on the Life of Oyasama (24) A Faith That Transcends Opposition Attacks

With more and more occurrences of Oyasama’s miraculous salvation, why did social opposition and police persecution become more severe? This was because as the people were deeply touched upon being saved, they began to prioritize service to God before anything else. Countless people became so involved in missionary and salvation work that they did not look back upon their families. Relatives who could not accept such impact upon the family began to oppose the faith. Further, villagers, who feared disruption of social order caused by those who became involved in unproductive work at the expense of family business, mounted an opposition. Also, fearing that their social status would diminish if more people refused to conform to social hierarchy, state authorities began to persecute the followers aggressively in order to protect their own face.

However, the pioneers of the path during those days possessed a fervent spiritual experience that could transform such oppositions and attacks into a source of spiritual energy for themselves. The unreasonable suppression directed at Oyasama and society’s opposition attacks became a source of energy, and the path grew exponentially after Oyasama passed the age of eighty. How can we recreate this condition—of the path after Oyasama reached a high age, of energy that created many pioneers who shouldered the path’s immense growth without concern for themselves, of the unbridled enthusiasm of all Yoboku, both young and old, men and women—in our contemporary world? This is the question that we must ask ourselves in the aftermath of the Oyasama 130th Anniversary.

Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (26) Chapter Four: Minakata Kumagusu’s “The Philosophy of *Suiten*” and “Study of Things” [1]

I first introduced Minakata’s “mandala,” as quoted in the introduction of Tsurumi Kazuko’s *Minakata Kumagusu Suiten no shiso* (Minakata Kumagusu’s philosophy of the point of convergence), and a transcript of a letter written to Toki Horyu in which Minakata’s philosophy on *suiten* first appears. Mandala is “a three-dimensional or two-dimensional representation of the universe’s true appearance, as based on one’s philosophy,” and the Shingon mandala is explained as “a diagrammed expression of the various buddhas, bodhisattva, wisdom kings, and guardian deities, with the Vairocana, the primordial Buddha in Shingon teachings, at its center.” What is quoted here is the basic diagram of Namikata Kumagusu’s mandala and its explanatory phrases. Kurauchi Kazuta’s structural interpretation, which read the shape of the “Jiba” Kanrodai, which I regard as the symbol (point of convergence) of the “Truth of Origin,” as a “standard,” found convincing the argument that “Truth of Origin” is the mandala of “Nihon” (Matsunaga Yukei); I am confident that, through an interpretation that the “Service” is a polyphony that vibrates through the entire existence of the universe, Tenri theology can demonstrate a philosophical progression that is at once global and academic, as a way towards a future paradigm shift.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (13) In Regard to the Relationship Between “Shachihoko” and “Uo” [2]

The *sansho-uo* (salamander), the original model of “uo” (fish), required two habitats—“habitat in the water” and “habitat above ground”—during its stages of evolution from fish specie to reptilian specie. For such purpose, it had to undergo a major transformation in

reproductive strategy, from “in-vitro fertilization,” as found in fishes which lay their eggs in water and fertilize them, to “in-vivo fertilization,” as a more reliable method of fertilization within the female body. And eventually, it was successful in the transition from “in-vitro fertilization” to “in-vivo fertilization.” On the other hand, *sansho-uo*, which carries out “in-vitro fertilization,” splintered into the greatest number of subspecies in East Asia and Japan in particular. From this, I believe that the “uo,” as the “model of man” in which the “shachihoko” as “instrument of bones and support,” emerged in the Jiba, the Parental Home, which lies in the center of the island of Honshu. I have not certified any scientific proof, but I am convinced that its possibility is very high.

Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (10) Regarding “Cleaning” [1]

How can we clean away “dusts of the mind,” which cannot be seen by the naked eye? To begin with, what was being taught by the use of terms such as “dusts” and “cleaning”? The term “cleaning” appears widely throughout the Ofudesaki, from Part I to Part XVII. In Parts I to IV, God the Parent points to concrete things which can be seen, as a way to encourage the “cleaning of the mind” which cannot be seen. That is, “cleaning of the mind” is encouraged through the “cleaning of the Residence,” achieved through sending away people to other families and demolishing buildings, or, in reverse, through welcoming people to the “Residence” those who would become its core. In such situations, God the Parent shows miraculous workings or sends illnesses.

Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (16) “Path” in Osashizu, Volume 1, Entries Regarding “Individual Illnesses and Personal Issues”

In Divine Directions regarding personal illnesses and personal issues as found in Volume One of the “Osashizu: Revised Edition,” there are fewer occurrences of the word, “path,” in comparison to the “Timely Talks” and “Church Headquarters issues.” However, Divine Directions regarding personal illnesses and personal issues make up more than one half of Volume One, and thus contains the most usage of the term. Since these directions concern individual issues, it is difficult to tease out the common contexts and characteristics. In this issue, I will make a broad overview of its trends.

Masanobu Yamada — New Religion’s Missions in Brazil (38) Seicho-no-Ie [2]

Followers of Seicho-no-Ie hold a two-fold identity as faithful, of both Catholic and Seicho-no-Ie; they seek to become a better Catholic follower. They can be regarded as syncretic religious practitioners who regard Seicho-no-Ie as a place to carry out their religious practice. Seicho-no-Ie values mystic communication among the gods and buddhas, and has a tendency, like Tenrikyo and PL Church, to confront daily personal issues that arise from interaction with others through focusing upon its moral implications.

Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (18) Crowdfunding [3]

When reflecting upon the relationship between crowdfunding and local social welfare, four issues come to mind. First, local social welfare should learn more from crowdfunding’s design; second, local social welfare should learn from the effects of activities made possible by fundraising and the “transparency” of its process; third, to utilize social resources developed by local social welfare and connect its supporters to actual activities, as a way to supplement the physical presence that is lacking in crowdfunding; fourth, development of new activities and procedures utilizing the commonalities between local social welfare and crowdfunding.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from Ruins (12) Journal of Travels in England [8] Revisiting the Stonehenge

Last autumn, I visited the Stonehenge in Great Britain. Along the pedestrian pathway connecting the newly constructed visitor center to the ruins, a unique landscape appears. The collection of earth mounds, known as the “Stonehenge cursus,” indicates that this area was a special place from the very early years. The Stonehenge itself was built in the Neolithic Age, and the only thing that can be guessed is that it served some kind of religious purpose. During the Middle Ages, it was associated with witches, and in the eighteen century, it was regarded as a Druid shrine. In the nineteenth century, archaeologists attempted a scientific study, but they were not able to unravel the mystery of the Stonehenge.

Mari Hatakama — From the Sankokan Museum (6) Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Support Exhibit and Eastern Japan Disaster Relief Support Exhibit “Local Toys and Unearthed Objects in Michinoku”

Parallel to the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake Relief Support Exhibit: “Local Toys and Unearthed Objects in Michinoku,” an exhibit carried out at the museum since 2011, the museum opened, on May 11, an exhibit to support the relief efforts in the Kumamoto Earthquake, which occurred in the Kyushu area on April 14, 2016. It occupies a portion of the second floor, permanent display room. I will introduce a number of displayed items.