

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: Thoughts on the Sagami-hara Stabbings

This summer, there was an incident in which a former employee of Tsukui Yamayuri-en, a care facility for the mentally disabled, killed and wounded nineteen patients at the facility. The stabbing attracted attention even from the foreign press for its particularly gruesome nature. The suspect had made previous comments such as “the disabled needs to be eliminated” and “I stabbed people who couldn’t communicate.” It is true that people with severe cases of mental disability have a difficulty in communication. Did these people appear to him as an enigmatic existence? As one commentator noted, the suspect came to seriously think about mentally disabled people and the means to support them only after he first began to work at the care facility. If the stabbings are the answer to his question, then, it is an extremely disappointing one. I felt that there is a greater need to think seriously about how we can learn, at homes and school and in the community, about disabilities, about welfare, and about diversity of human experience and way of life.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (109) Kitano Manuscripts [11] 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 (28) Goal for Number of Yoboku

On page 109 of the Life of Oyasama, Foundress of Tenrikyo: Manuscript Edition, it states, “I see many useful timbers ahead, appearing in the low valleys step by step.” (XV-59) Foreseeing how many people from around the wide world would come to see the Parent, God waited and hoped for the spiritual maturity of the Yoboku. What is the number of people that God desires to assemble, with no regard for their social status and gender? In the Ofudesaki, it states the desire for fifty to sixty people, and in the Divine Directions, it states that the people who received the “Divine Grant”—the circle of Yoboku—will bridge the hearts of people throughout the world. If Yoboku is regarded as the service performers of the churches, the goal for each church would be to assemble fifty to sixty people. If we focus on the calling to unite the hearts of the people of the world, then, given that a thousand individuals can receive the Divine Grant in one day, our goal would be to have thirty million Yoboku over a course of a century. We should not vaguely accept the phrase “many people from around the wide world would come to see the Parent” but rather determine specific numerical goals for each church and individual and make every effort to nurture Yoboku: this is the way to answer the intentions of the Parent who hastens world salvation.

Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (30) Chapter Four: Minakata Kumagusu’s “The Philosophy of *Suiten*” and “Study of Things” [5]

Perhaps I am not alone in feeling that we have emphasized the altruistic act of Miki Nakayama, who displays overflowing compassion in giving to the poor in the years prior to the Original Revelation, to the point of overlooking the study and practice of the “hidden providence” of the symbolic “Ultimate Teaching” that follows Her “Truth of Origin,” carried out by the demanding “training in wisdom.” After Her initiation into the mysteries of the Jodo sect, there were twenty-two years in which She underwent the Path of the “hidden Providence.” Upon grappling with Minakata Kumagusu’s mandala, I came to believe that this neglect of Oyasama’s intellectual dimension became an important cause for the lack of intersection between Tenri theology, which has “world salvation” as its goal, and the universal world of global philosophies.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (16) “Turtle” as an “Instrument of Joining” [2]

The human skin can be differentiated into three strata. “Epidermis” has the role of protecting against ultraviolet light, to guard against the damage of the cell nucleus’s DNA. Also, melanocyte has the function of suppressing skin cancer. “Dermis” is equipped with sensory receptors that respond to external sensation, and these sensory receptors are regulated by category; it also maintains bodily temperature. “Subcutaneous tissue” serves as the role of cushion against external physical shock. In this way, the skin fulfills a vital role of protecting against external stimulation such as warmth, cold, and pain. That is, the meaning of the teachings of “the providence of the female organ, of skin and joining” is that woman are to protect the church and the family, and have the important role of finding solutions, based on the teachings, to internal illnesses and troubles, in the manner of a turtle’s hard shell, so as to protect sensitive internal structure and organs.

Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (14) Regarding “Cleaning” [5]

Book XVI and XVII encourages the “sweeping of the mind” to everyone throughout the world without discrimination. The salvation that will be realized in accordance with the progress made in the “sweeping of the mind”

will be a truly extraordinary one to which God the Parent looks forward. God the Parent will discern the mind of a person no matter where they are in the world and return the appropriate workings. At times, difficult and sad events may occur to the person, but such events contain God the Parent’s intentions to encourage the “sweeping of the minds.” It contains the parent’s love for the child and the happy anticipation of the salvation, as it extends from “within” to “the world.”

Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (20) Types of “Divine Directions” in Volume 2 and the Occurrences of the “Path”

From this article, I will begin to reflect upon the “Path” as it appears in Volume 2 of the Divine Directions. In this article, prior to looking at specific examples of the “Path,” I will confirm the general contexts in which the “Path” is used. For such purpose, similar to what I did for Volume 1, I will distinguish between six categories, of “Timely Talks,” “Issues regarding Church Headquarters,” “Shinbashira and family,” “Honseki and family,” “church affairs,” “individual illnesses and troubles.” I will examine the quantity of Divine Directions which use the “Path” in each of these categories.

Masato Fujiwara — Laïcité and Tenrikyo’s Mission in France (8) History of Laïcité? [5]

Gallicanism is a movement that sought to minimize Roman influence and maintain the religious style that existed since the ancient period in France. In 1682, four articles that summarized Gallicanism were adopted. 1) The Pope is given only spiritual authority by God. In regard to temporal matters, kings and crown princes do not need to submit to church authority at all. 2) The authority of the Holy See is limited by the Decrees of Constance adopted by the ecumenical council. 3) The exercise of papal authority must be determined in accordance with church law. Moreover, the customs of the French church must be continued. 4) In regard to issues pertaining to faith, the judgment of the Pope is not irreformable.

This philosophy was strongly rooted within France until the 1905 French law on the Separation of the Churches and the State.

Masanobu Yamada — New Religion’s Missions in Brazil (42) Plurality of Salvation: Church of Perfect Liberty [1]

Even those followers who have experienced life-saving moments thanks to the teachings and practice of the Church of Perfect Liberty have deemed it as life philosophy and not as religion. However, she has steadily internalized the teachings. In methodology of propagation, there is a concern not so much to “properly” convey the orthodox teachings, but first to convey the “organization (facility)” and “experience (miracle)” to its recipients in a manner that can be readily accepted.

Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (22) “Joint Finances” of Community Organizations [1]

While the public and private sectors view finance as a key component, the non-profit sector has been unable to develop its unique finance system, and in the realm of social welfare, finance has been lightly regarded. However, there have been attempts to theorize fundraising in discussions concerning methodologies for local social welfare. That is what joint finances in community organization (CO) is. Survey and planning as well communication moderation count as social functions of CO, but joint finances is regarded highly along with communication moderation.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from Ruins (16) Survey of Ruins in Israel [2] Discovery of Architectural Ruins of Earliest Synagogues

The ruins of Israel’s Tel Rehesh where the Japanese excavation survey has been conducting its study has a long history of human habitation, stretching for over 3000 years between the early Bronze Age to the Roman period. This survey, which focused upon the ruin’s acropolis, set about to investigate the large-scale complex buildings of the late Iron Age (sixth to seventh century) and the village ruins of the Roman period; but, in an unexpected manner, the team discovered the architectural ruins of an ancient synagogue constructed in the first century BC. Cases of ancient synagogues are rare, and this finding will become an extremely vital case for both regional and religious history.

Mari Hatakama — From the Sankokan Museum (7) The 78th Feature Exhibition: “Folk Toys of the Tohoku District: Remember the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011”

To expand upon the “Michinoku Folk Toys and Excavated Articles”—an exhibit to support the restoration following the Great East Japan Earthquake—which our museum has been conducting since 2011, and to direct our attention to the Tohoku area given the five years that have passed since the earthquake, the museum will open an exhibit that presents the folk toys of Tohoku together in one setting. Roughly two hundred items of folk toys, differentiated by its material, of wood, clay, and paper, and from all six prefectures of the Tohoku area will be put in display, and will include two live performances of the making of the kokeshi.