

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: Social Contributions of Religious Organizations

Happy New Years. Last December, I took part in a reporting session of the third “Survey on Social Contributions of Religious Organizations,” sponsored by the Niwano Peace Foundation. “Recognition of social contributions by religious organization” was at the highest level yet, at 42.5%, and surpassing 40% for the first time. “Preferred activities for social contribution by religious organization” included “activities to promote peace” and “volunteer activities during natural disasters.” On the other hand, for “activities for social contributions by religious organizations that I would want to participate,” 41.2% answered “there is no activity that I would want to participate.” The heightening of “recognition” and positive appraisal was unmatched by “participation.” This is an issue that all religious organizations carry, and an issue that must be addressed.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (112) Seizan Manuscripts [3] Transcriptions of Copies of the “Osashizu”

Next, I will examine the copies of the “Osashizu” preserved at Seizan Branch Church, located in Ise City of Mie Prefecture. Seizan Branch Church is a Shidokai affiliate, linked through the Kawaramachi-Koga-Gamo-Seizan lineage. Kin’ai Branch Church, whose transcripts I examined previously, is an affiliate of Koga; thus, there may be transcripts of the “Osashizu” that may overlap. But, in the case of Seizan, there are many instances where two or three Osashizu directions were stitched together with a cover page. Were these stitched together as it was being made? Or, were these stitched together following the model of the master copy? The answer is not clear. Moreover, the dates for the transcriptions are not unknown. To such extent, it may be more possible to date back on the transcripts at Kin’ai. With such issues in mind, I will attempt a reading of these transcripts of the “Osashizu.”

Chuichi Fukaya — Deep Reflections on the Life of Oyasama (31) Idle Talk: US Presidential Election

Keywords that point to the issues of contention in this year’s presidential election are globalism and political correctness. In a word, will America accept any newcomer equally, without restriction? However, people in the Midwest are unhappy that the coastal cultures created by these newcomers are regarded as representative of America. Such feelings expressed itself in the swing states of the Midwest, which resulted in victory for the Republican candidate, Donald Trump. It is not the case that the American electorate as a whole decided upon a major shift in the country’s direction. America is a mature democracy, and I believe that a dictator cannot carry out a revolution of madness.

Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (33) Chapter Four: Minakata Kumagusu’s “The Philosophy of *Suiten*” and “Study of Things” [8]

I read Oyasama’s words that “Houses will line the street for seven ri between Nara and Hase. One ri square will be filled with inns. The divine Residence will become eight cho square” (*Anecdotes of Oyasama, Foundress of Tenrikyo*, 93) from the perspective of the “standard” theory, as configuration of the six pillar providences of the “Truth of Origin,” and attempted a design of the “Tenri Yamato Uto-eco-topia” vision, which has Jiba as its center and the area surrounding the entire Yamato valley—“five ri square” and “seven ri circle”—as its metropolitan surroundings. As one who professes in this faith, I have believed that the hand movements for the first verse of Song Eleven (“Hinomoto” symbolizes heavenly circle, “yakata” the local place) is an apt expression of this “square.” I want to unequivocally state that this thought was encouraged by the imagery expressed and symbolized in the “circularity” of Iburi Izo’s head as it appears in the commemorative photograph taken on January 27, 1887, of the lunar calendar, a day after Oyasama hid Her physical being, as well as in the carpenter’s square, which Izo holds with his left hand (the intent of quadrature construction).

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (1) Introduction

For long-term visitors and permanent residents who live in foreign countries, adapting to their new environment is a critical issue. There are many studies in regard to adaption by immigrants to their host country, and in recent years, there have been discussions drawn from a widening perspective. As a missionary religion, Tenrikyo has been actively involved in missionary work in America and Canada, which has had intimate ties with the immigrant Japanese and Japanese-descent population from the very beginning. In this article, I will focus upon the history of the Japanese-descent immigrant society to reflect upon the varieties of Tenrikyo missions in North America, from the prewar to the present.

Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (17) Regarding Verbs [2]

For the intransitive verb, its motion/function is expressed within itself; thus, by the single term, of “to appear,” the totality of its meaning is completed. Further, if we focus upon the particle “ga,” its subject is, first, “God,” “Tsukihhi,” “Parent,” second, “Mind,” and third, its figurative meaning can be interpreted through the emphasized “ne.” Also, the subject that “appears” is the subject that

speaks (I:3, XIII:92), and simultaneously, the subject that “cleanses” (III:53). If we focus upon the postpositional phrase of “yori” that expresses the origin of the action, the term “Tsukihhi” appears as an active subject that “appears” carrying the postpositional phrase “ga,” but also simultaneously posited as the origin of such action. Finally, temporal expressions such as “this time” and “henceforth,” which are accompanied by the postpositional phrase “wa,” function to emphasize the certainty (VI:60) of the situations that will “appear.”

Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (21) Timely Directions and “Path” in Volume 2

In this month’s article, I will take stock of “path” as it appears in the “Timely Directions” of Volume Two of the *Divine Directions, Revised Edition*. There are twenty-eight Timely Directions in the Divine Directions of Volume Two. Among them, eleven occur between January and February of 1891 and ten from June to beginning of December of 1892. Most Timely Directions are concentrated in these two time spans. The first correspond to the time of preceding the Fifth Anniversary of Oyasama, and the latter to the time between the beginning of construction for Oyasama’s Cemetery and the reburial. I will confirm the uses of “path” mostly in relation to these two events.

Masanobu Yamada — New Religion’s Missions in Brazil (45) Plurality of Salvation: Church of Perfect Liberty [4]

In Kaldecism, the cause of personal disasters can be traced to one’s past as the manifestation of the laws of cause and effect. Only through paying for one’s debts (cause of disasters) through works of charity can such disasters be averted. To such extent, a mind that desires for salvation is a mind that is looking backwards in time. However, through coming to know PL’s teachings, one’s attention is turned to the present. This shares an axis with a trend among New Age groups which focus upon the salvation of the “here and now.”

Masato Fujiwara — Laïcité and Tenrikyo’s Mission in France (9) History of Laïcité? [6]

In 1766, the Chevalier de la Barre Incident, which appears prominently in Laïcité, occurred. This was the last example of the death penalty for reason of lese majesty. The accused was charged for possessing Voltaire’s *Philosophical Dictionary*; philosophical issues were intertwined in this age of the Enlightenment thinkers. Prior to the French Revolution in 1789, there were kings who were called enlightened despots. Kings of Russia and of Prussia emphasized traditional governance through divine authority while seeking to establish a more utilitarian and rational relationship with their subjects based on philosophical foundations. And yet, in France, with its absolutism, there were no signs of Enlightenment, and Louis XVI did not recognize any form of freedom of belief. From such reason, we can understand the strong reactionary force within the French Revolution’s stance towards authority.

Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (25) Multiple Sources of Activity Funds

Among the funds for NPO’s activities, there are donations, association fees, grants, subsidies, contract business income, business income, and others. On December 2, 2016, Japan’s parliament approved the “Law on Public Use of Dormant Bank Accounts,” which aims to make use of money in dormant deposits, with more than ten years of inactivity, to be used for public charity. In such way, there are many sources of funds, but all NPO are expected to use such funds in a balanced way. For such ends, there is a need for synergistic effect between management seeking stability and capital.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from Ruins (19) Survey of Ruins in Israel [5] Battlefield of Memory: Jerusalem, the Holy City

After the completion of the excavation survey at Tel Rekhesh, volunteer students participated in excursions to the Dead Sea and Jerusalem. At Qumran, they observed the remains of the town in which Jewish sectarian lived communally, and at the Dead Sea, they enjoyed floating on its water. Afterwards, they raced up the stairway leading to the Jerusalem, located at 800 meters elevation. After gazing at the city of Jerusalem from atop Mount Olive, they walked through the four regions of Judaic, Christian, Armenian, and Islamic faiths, to experience the layers of history embedded within the townscape.

Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Religion and Woman (12) Faith and Life of the Pastor’s Wife

Among the issues regarding the pastor’s wife, there is the issue of privacy in addition to the issue regarding unpaid work. The improvement of the rectory, which serves as a place of residence, is a key theme that would lead to a resolution of the conflict of the roles for a pastor’s wife. In regard to the faith and life of a pastor’s wife, in recent years, there have been studies done not only from sociological studies but also from gender history studies. Yamamuro Gunpei, the first Japanese officer of the Salvation Army, was renowned as a pioneer for Christian social charity, but there is a re-evaluation of his legacy as seen through the women (wife and daughter) involved in his life.