

## Uzo Takami — Opening Words: “Saved by the Story of the Loaches”

This summer, the government will make a Cabinet decision upon a “Comprehensive Measure for Suicide Prevention” that includes numerical goals to limit suicides to the “14,000 to 15,000” range in ten years. As members of the faith, we need to think seriously as to what we can do.

Previously, at a seminar sponsored by Church Headquarters, I made reference to the Chapter 3 “Truth of Origin” of *The Doctrine of Tenrikyo* and said “Why did God the Parent teach that loaches were the seeds of human beings? Seed refers to its core attribute. Loaches live in mud but it is covered in special mucus so that the mud does not adhere to its body. We are clean, in the same way that loaches are. We can start anew in all things. This is the message taken from the Truth of Origin.” Someone from the audience reflected, “I will return home, saved by the lecturer’s story of the loaches. I do not need to die.” The loaches from the “Truth of Origin” have saved, for sure, one precious life.

## Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (116) Seizan Manuscripts [7] 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 (35) Construction of the Stone Kanrodai [1]

Construction of the stone Kanrodai began in 1881 with complete commitment from the path. But it came to an abrupt halt halfway through the project. The immediate cause was the disappearance of the stone cutter. This knot was said to be “an expression of the serious impatience of the parental heart, urging the children, far too slow in their spiritual growth, to attain spiritual maturity rapidly.” However, specifically, to whom was God urging “spiritual maturity rapidly”? Was it referring to those close to Her, to the church as a whole, or to the authorities? The key is what are we to learn from the halting of the construction of the stone Kanrodai?

## Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (37) Chapter Five: Kazumi Takahashi and *Jashumon* [3]

The “Prologue” at the beginning of the *Jashumon* begins with a depiction similar to Tenrikyo’s pilgrimage to the Jiba (a metaphor for a return to the home of one’s soul), in which Kiyoshi Chiba, a chief protagonist who would become the third church leader but commit suicide when political authorities thoroughly dismantles the church headquarters, appears alone, shabbily dressed at the Kanbe station platform, dangling his mother’s urn on his neck, “feeling a sense of returning home in this otherwise unfamiliar station and unfamiliar town.” Kiyoshi’s mother states: “We have completely dug up the cicada larvae and yams. We have eaten all sprouts and brackens. Mother cannot move any more. You seem unable to move. But when I die, you should eat the little flesh left on my bones before it rots. Mother is telling you to do so, so, mother does not mind. You and I are of the same blood and same flesh anyways. God will forgive you of this. Do you understand? At the least, you should remain alive.”

## Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (21) “Black Snake” as an “Instrument of Pulling Forth” [3]

Throughout the Nara Prefecture, there remains the “Yamato Nogami (field god) rite,” which is regarded as an Intangible Folk Cultural Asset. This is a rite to honor the Nogami, a benefactor for the rice harvest, and is often held in early May. The ritual is performed mostly by children. The appearance of the copulating snake has the shape of a tying rope, where the male and female are intertwined in a spiral shape. This resembles the spiral structure of a DNA. The *ja* figure of the Nogami-san is clearly modeled after a snake. While praying for prosperity of the descendents and full harvest, the relationship between rice farming and snakes was deepened. The striped snake, in particular, prefers the small birds that are attracted to the rice plants right about when the grains blossom. Thus, it is no wonder that snakes were thought to have been sent by the gods, or were gods themselves. In the manner of the *ja* where male and female intertwine, the *nogami* festival, carried out to pray for prosperity of the descendents and rich harvest, may have a connection with the “instrument for pulling forth.”

## Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (5) Prewar American Mission and the Japanese-American Immigrant Society [4]

The missionaries who immigrated to America as religious practitioners carried out robust missionary activities within the Japanese immigrant society, with the assistance of local Yoboku and followers. Among them, Honjima Grand Church and Meikyo Grand Church sent many missionaries during these years, and churches, one after another, were established following 1927. In either case, the grand church head minister’s passionate vision for the North American mission became the basis for well-planned missionary endeavors anchored by veteran missionaries. Also, because missionaries were not allowed to work, their stay and activities required financial support from the immigrant church members living in the United States.

## Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (21) Regarding “Verbs” [6]

In relation to organizing the preparation for the “Service,” God the Parent enables the people’s minds to “become spirited.” Therefore, the process of moving forward towards the “Service” and “Salvation” is, in itself, also “raises the spirits of the mind.” And eventually, God the Parent and human beings are mutually “spirited.” This is related to the way in which the life based on the intransitive verb of “raising the spirits of the mind” is expressed as to “be spirited and full of joy” (III:54) and the mind based on the transitive verb of “to be spirited” by God the Parent is expressed in parallel ways with the idea of “teaching” the life “full of joy” (X:61).

## Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (23) Osashizu and “Path” in Volume 2 Regarding “Church Headquarters Issues”

In this article, I will sort out the examples of “path” as found in Divine Directions regarding “Church Headquarters issues” in the Volume 2 of the *Osashizu kaishu* ban. In the divine directions regarding “Timely Directions” and “illness of the Honseki” that I have examined previously, the “path of God” and “path of the world” are used in opposition, and the prescribed way and mindset are taught. This may be the way for Church Headquarters to carry itself, but, on closer look, there is no such example in divine directions regarding “Church Headquarters issues.” However, within the directions, there is mention that it “has been taught” within the “Timely Directions,” and the teachings are taught on the basis of the “path” as taught in the Timely Directions.

## Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (29) CSR and Donations [2]

It was “ISO26000” that clearly delineated social responsibilities of organizations; it defines social responsibility of organizations, including corporations, as “a responsibility that an organization shoulders to conduct activities that are transparent and ethical, in regard to organization’s decisions and activities that influence society and the environment.” More specifically, these are not simply activities contributing to society, but corporations engaging in “activities undertaken through their regular business,” and utilizing their managerial resources, with strategic planning and continuity, carrying out activities that are 1) undertaken through their regular business; 2) undertaken in relation to their regular business; 3) using the skills of their regular business.

## Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from Ruins (23) Survey of Ruins in Israel [9] Ein Gev, the fortress city of the Galilee coastline

The Ein Gev ruins, where the Japanese party began excavation in 1990s, are located along the coast of the Sea of Galilee, in northern Israel. In the excavation studies, castle walls and public structure of the Iron Age were discovered, but in terms of its dates, there is a difference of opinion as to whether they belong to tenth century BC or ninth century BC. In the Book of Kings of the Old Testament, there is an account of battles fought over the town of Aphek, situated along the boundary of the Aramaic Kingdom and the Kingdom of Israel, during the era of the divided kingdoms. There is a scholarly theory that ties the Ein Gev ruins to Aphek. The Ein Gev ruins provide important resources to reflect upon the history of ancient Israel.

## Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Religion and Woman (14) Narrating of the Female Pope

Did Pope Joan, who became pope after lying about her gender and even gave birth, actually exist? Today, her existence is rejected, but there is another reality that emerges when we trace the biography of the Joan chronicles and examine the reception of her story. The chronicles of Joan functioned, both in the past and even today, as an “alternative to the establishment.” The line separating history and myth (oral accounts) becomes blurred, and myths are no longer “just another myth” but achieve a certain kind of historicity. Whether or not these individuals existed, as long as the narratives about them are “open,” it would not be specific to a feminist reception of narrative.