

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: In Preparation for the “Hyper-Death Society?”

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare reported that the decrease in population in 2017, subtracting the number of infant births from the number of deaths, came to 394,373, which was the largest drop in history. The decrease in the previous year amounted to 330,770, and there is an acceleration of the drop in population. From this fact, it is predicted that a “hyper-death society” will soon come to be, following in the footsteps of the ultra-aged society. This is a social conditions in which the number of deaths rises due to increase in the aged, and as a result, population dwindles. With the rapid rise annually of the number of deaths of the elderly living alone, there are few people to bear the responsibilities for the funerals; the mourning process can no longer be burdened by the dead or their families. Recently, there is a change in the manner of the funerals, with fewer family members in attendance and an increase in number of “jiki-so” (direct funeral), which involves cremation. Hyper-death society is not simply a matter of numbers. It greatly influences our views of human beings, human life, and way of life. As followers of the faith and as ones connected by faith to those around us, we need to offer our services with sincerity and assist in the performance of the funerals so that we may move towards a society that treasures such human ties.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (30) In Regard to the “Great Dragon” [1]

Among the gods of the “ten providences,” the “two providences” of *Izanagi-no-Mikoto* and *Izanami-no-Mikoto* are the “model” of husband and wife while the “six providences” of *Tsukiyomi-no-Mikoto*, *Kunisazuchi-no-Mikoto*, *Otonobe-no-Mikoto*, *Kumoyomi-no-Mikoto*, *Kashikone-no-Mikoto*, and *Taishokuten-no-Mikoto* are important “instruments” that play a role in the functioning of the human body. Among them, the gods of the “two providences” can be specified as the fish (*sansho-uo*) and serpent (*sumayatsume*), and the “six providences” can be specified as the orc (*matsukawa-uo*), turtle, black snake, eel, flatfish, and globefish. On the other hand, the gods of the remaining “two providences”—that is, *Kunitokotachi-no-Mikoto* and *Omotari-no-Mikoto*—have the appearances of the great dragon and great snake, and are regarded to directly express the manifestation of God the Parent; for their appearance, we can only depict the appearance of these imaginary animals. Given this, in this article, I would like to reflect on why it is the great dragon, and not dragon, and why it is the great snake, and not snake.

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (19) Prewar Mission in Canada and the Japanese-Canadian Immigrant Society [2]

Among the religions in the Japanese immigrant society in the province of British Columbia, Japanese Christian churches and Buddhist churches formed the two dominant groups. Both provided spiritual support to the residing Japanese immigrants and played a big role in various aspects of Japanese immigrant life, including politics, economics, societal, and culture. Also, although the scale and content of its activities were much smaller, Konkokyo, among the new religions, established a church and engaged in missionary work. As Japanese-Canadian relations deteriorated and anti-Japanese sentiment rose, Buddhist churches contributed to the uplifting of Japanese spirits but the “assimilation” into Canadian society became a large issue for Japanese immigrants and Japanese immigrant religions.

Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (35) In Regard to “Illness”

What is “illness”? It has been expressed as “anger of God” (I: 25, 32), “hastening of God” (II: 7, 11, III: 103), “guidance of God” (II: 7), “road sign from God” (III: 138), “admonition from God” (III: 138), “God’s call for your service” (IV: 25), “the work of God” (VI: 22, XIV: 20), “care of God” (X: 68, XIV: 21), “regret of [God] the Parent” (XIV: 77). Also, “any illness is from the mind” (I: 24), and it arises from the “path of the mistaken mind” (III: 95). However, “nothing is incurable. It depends on your mind” (V: 13), and God

says that God can “save you by the truth of the Breath” (VI: 108, XII: 50); it is also noted that “you will all be saved by the Service done single-heartedly” (IV: 94, X: 20). And no matter what the “illness” may be, God the Parent will assure salvation in every case (IX: 9, 34).

Jiro Sawai — Reflections on the Words of the Osashizu (30) “Shinbashira and Family” and “Path” in Volume 3

I will categorize the references to “path” as found in Divine Directions given in response to inquiries about the first Shinbashira, Shinnosuke Nakayama, and his wife, Tamae Nakayama, within Volume 3 of *Osashizu kaishu-ban* (Revised edition of the Divine Directions). In Volume 3, there are 25 references to the first Shinbashira and his wife in the *Osashizu*, and among them, 11 also uses the term “path”; in eight of these, it appears more than three times. In these passages, the term “path” is never used in Divine Directions related to construction of buildings and appears many times in Divine Directions in response to inquiries about illnesses. And with the idea that the management of the church during these years would serve as a model for later years, the passages call for the internal affairs of the church be managed in accord with the path of single-heartedness to God.

Masato Fujiwara — Laïcité and Tenrikyo’s Mission in France (15) History of Laïcité [12]

The Association Law of 1901 and the French Law on the Separation of the Churches and the State of 1905 decisively removed the Catholic Church from the public stage and drove matters of faith to the private sphere of life. In the 1901 law, the monastic order was removed from educational spheres, and in the 1905 law, religion no longer became publicly recognized; and therefore, it lost its subsidies and salaries. The long-sought wishes of the Republic came to fruition in the 1905 law, and the battle for supremacy between the Republicans and the Catholics concluded, for the moment, with the victory by the Republicans. However, the anti-church conflict was never able to completely remove the Catholic Church’s influence upon the daily life of the citizens, and although the 1905 law marked the end of one chapter, it was not the end point. Yet, history from this point on was to be written from an entirely different perspective.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from the Ruins (36) Making Cultural Heritage Meaningful Today [4] The Beginning of the Joint Research “Cultural Heritage and the University Campus”

“Cultural Heritage and the University Campus,” a new joint research begun in spring of this year between Tenri University and the city of Tenri, carries out research on the value and preservation methods of the cultural heritage located throughout the area near the Somanouchi campus of Tenri University. It seeks to think about how new spaces should be designed and how to shape the foundation to imagine its possibilities. A campus fused together to these cultural heritages will open the university to its neighbor, enable a place of learning, repose, and exchange among residents and tourists, and heighten the university’s appeal.

Juri Kaneko — Contemporary Religion and Woman (19) On the Sidelines of the Measure to Support Gender Equality among Political Candidates

The “woman’s prohibition” incident that occurred in April of 2018 in the city of Maizuru in Kyoto Prefecture, during Sumo’s spring tour exemplified an intersection of three spheres of “sports,” “gender,” and “religion (religious discourse).” It was not simply a case that a woman could not enter the sumo stage; rather, because she was involved in providing medical attention, the incident also cast question on the priority of “life” or “tradition.” The women’s group that demands women’s access to Nara Prefecture’s Omine Mountain, known for its ban on women, saw the common issues that overlapped the issue at Omine Mountain and the sumo stage; thus, it quickly sent a letter of protest and a public questionnaire to the Japan Sumo Association. There is first a need to reexamine the historicity of the “tradition,” which serves as a basis for the ban. At the least, recent historical research has clearly shown that the idea of “women’s impurity” did not become established that far away in the past.