

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: Embracing Those With Grief

As followers of the faith, we need to stand together with those people who are suffering from grief caused by parting with a loved one. In a Divine Direction responding to an inquiry by a mother who lost her child seven months into pregnancy, it reads, “the mind’s whereabouts and the truth of its settling: it is troublesome with no joy. From there, the world has become settled” (July 23, 1898). The meaning of these words is as follows: “your mind may be completely in disarray. While you are in such state, the world goes on as if nothing had happened. That must be the most difficult matter.” The Divine Direction accurately assesses the mother’s mindset, but we are once again surprised in how it teaches us the important mindset to have for those who seek to stand with the grief-stricken. All “life” is “welcomed” by God the Parent and “embraced” and eventually “returned” to this world. To be “embraced” by God the Parent: to feel such warmth leads to a way out of the grief. We must stand with them with such faith.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (33) In Regard to the “Great Dragon” [4]

In 1887, the first waterline in Japan was installed in Yokohama. It was an installation of a “public faucet,” intended as a public water faucet along a road. It was an epoch-making experiment, to have fresh drinking water made available through a “public faucet.” This “public faucet” was a “lion-shaped public faucet,” taking the form of a lion’s head, imported from England. In Europe, the lion was regarded as a “god of water.” Given that the “god of water” in Japan was the dragon, public faucet in the later years of the Meiji period began to take the shape of dragons, and was renamed as “dragon mouth public faucet.” Later, this “dragon mouth public faucet” was renamed as “jya (snake) shaped metallic public faucet.” This implied that the “public faucet” changed its name from “ryukichi” (dragon head) to “jyaguchi” (snake head). It is thought that the fear towards poisonous snakes overlapped with the appearance of the dragon, and the “great dragon” enlarged its existence to something even larger.

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (22) Prewar Mission in Canada and the Japanese-Canadian Immigrant Society [5]

In 1934, Tenrikyo Canada Church was established as a church directly affiliated with the Church Headquarters, and Toru Suzuki, together with his family, journeyed to Canada to assume the post of first head minister. Suzuki and the second head minister, Tashiho, were very active in missionary work in British Columbia and had ties with the leaders of the Japanese immigrant society. Also, the education of children of Japanese descent was a key issue among the contemporary Japanese immigrant society, and Tashiho taught Japanese language and Japanese culture. In this way, the foundation for missionary work in Canada was slowly put into place; however, the opening of the war in 1941 forced a sudden disruption in such activities.

Michihiro Narita — Mission and Translation: In the Space between Reception and Transformation (13) Varieties of “Words” in Early Buddhism [2]

Shakyamuni, rather than a founder of a specific religion known as Buddhism, was a person who taught the right way for human beings to live and the “words” to practice such life for any religion and philosophy, under any condition. Such “words” were always accessible to all people of society. His “words” contained a “flexibility” that accommodated unrestricted change. However, when Shakyamuni’s teachings were codified into Pali-language based Buddhist scriptures so that they may be properly conveyed over time, the “words,” ironically, became owned by the monks and separated from the plain faith of the populace: as a result, Buddhism in India became ossified.

Yasuo Ouchi — Japanese Language Education and the Overseas Mission (3) DTextbooks Used for Japanese Language Education [1]

I want to speak about the textbooks used for Japanese language education. The textbooks used at Tenri University during the time of the Elective Course and Special Course years were the Hyojun Nihongo dokuhon and Nihongo dokuhon, widely used for Japanese language education during World War Two. I want to also introduce the Naganuma school and the Kokusai Gakuyukai, and Naoe Naganuma, who was the author of the textbooks. Also, I will introduce an article by Professor Kawaji of Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, who is well-versed in issues related to prewar and postwar Japanese language education. Thus, I would like to speak about the textbook used in the early years of Tenri’s Japanese language education.

Masato Fujiwara — Laïcité and Tenrikyo’s Mission in France (16) Laïcité and Medicine [1]

In society’s steps toward secularization, it is natural that the relationship between medicine and religion becomes an issue. More and more people began to believe that science, replacing religion, would guarantee the future. Doctors became to be perceived as authorities who would care for life from cradle to the grave, and people’s interest shifted from salvation of the soul in heaven to the means to live a longer life. Doctors were engaged not only in medical activities but also commanded societal significance by offering medical perspectives on issues such as alcohol addiction, sexually-transmitted diseases, and prostitution. Similar to the education field, the medical field did not see the sudden disappearance of traditional Catholic faith. However, the secularization made steady progress.

Akira Kaneko — Interpreting the Twenty-first Century through Kierkegaard (1) Iteration Involving Personal and Phantom Mentors

Mitsuhiro Muroi, the Akutagawa Award-winning writer, is my senior during my college years. In Kierkegaard to Andersen (2000, Kierkegaard and Andersen), he writes about the words and episodes related to my professor, Hidehito Otani. Professor Otani passed away in February of this year (2018). Professor Otani was a renowned Kierkegaard scholar, and all of his collection of books was donated to the Tenri University Library. During his younger years, Professor Otani served as a librarian at the Keio University Library. Muroi also served for many years as a librarian at a university library. I find it a wondrous coincidence that, similar to the two of them, I am in the midst of categorizing and maintaining the collection of books of my mentor.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from the Ruins (39) Making Cultural Heritage Meaningful Today [7] Heijo Palace Ruins Transformed into a National Government Park

The Heijo Palace Ruins, located in the city of Nara, was among the first designated by the Agency for Cultural Affairs as a special historical ruin, given that it was the location for the center of political power during the Nara Period. In 1998, Heijo Palace was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, thanks to recognition of the years of surveys and studies as well as efforts towards conservation and public viewing. However, when the jurisdiction over National Government Parks shifted, in 2010, from the Agency for Cultural Affairs to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, facilities benefitting tourists were built in large scales, and the focus shifted towards regional development and tourism.

Yomei Mori—Preliminary Thoughts on African-European Relations as Found in Congolese Society (20) Two World Wars and the “Blood Tax” of the Africans

The two World Wars fought during the first half of the twentieth century were wars that entangled Africa and Asia that were under European colonial rule. During the two World Wars, France, whose dropping birthrate heralded the trend for other European countries, actively welcomed soldiers and laborers from its colonies to serve in the home country. The number of soldiers mobilized from the French colonies during World War One totaled over 600,000. However, for the Africans, their entry in the global stage, although it took the form of conscription, became a catalyst to unravel the “absolute existence” of the Europeans who presided over the colonized lands.