

Chuichi Fukaya — Opening Words: Human “Seeds” Were Loaches

Chapter Three of the Doctrine of Tenrikyo states, “God consumed all the loaches in the muddy ocean, tested the flavors of their nature, and made them the seeds for human beings.” When God the Parent created human beings, God used loaches for “seeds” of human beings. The fact that loaches, which contain high levels of nutrition, were used as “seeds” for human beings would indicate the high level of potential skills within the human body as well as the possibility for all human beings to possess the skills to be in service for other people, providing them with nutrition.

Now, we have a politician nicknamed “the loach minister” who recently became the new leader of Japan. It remains to be seen as to the extent of his familiarity with this fish, but our hopes are that he, as a member of the first graduating class of the Seikeijyuku School, founded by an entrepreneur strongly influenced by our faith, will learn the reasoning behind why God the Parent choose loaches to become the “seeds” of human beings and thus become capable of serving as a true “loach” minister.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (70) Other Manuscripts [13]

This is one of the foundress biographies in circulation during the Meiji period. There are many simple errors, such as years, place, and names. While lacking in historical accuracy, it provides a glimpse of how Oyasama’s life story was conveyed. Thus, I introduce this manuscript here.

Yomei Mori — Varieties of Tenrikyo Intercultural Mission (Final) Intercultural Contact, As Seen in the Congo Mission [49]

This series began with the title of “Intercultural Contact As Seen in the Congo Mission,” and it developed by providing a narrative drawing on the perspective of intercultural contact, based on first-hand accounts of people who worked in the Congo mission as well as my own experiences. Until now, I reflected upon various elements of the Congo mission, including language, culture, values, economic gap, and social and political landscape. Also, in the second half, I examined the history of the Congo Brazzaville Center, established upon the installment of the fourth head minister, and the various incidents and problems that occurred within it, as a way to address the various issues that arise in the context of Tenrikyo’s overseas mission.

In the history of any single mission, there are instances of both success and failure. It may be a repetition of experimenting in order to find the working formula. This pattern will likely be repeated in the present and in the future. It is critical to examine every single case as a way to reflect upon future missionary endeavors. Thus, introspection is not intended to be a criticism of any single individual. Rather, what needs to be criticized is the repetition of failures, caused by unwillingness to examine the past in order to learn from those experiences.

Harumichi Fukagawa — Historical Resources of Tenrikyo Overseas Mission (20) Historical Resources of the Manchurian Mission [4]

In April of 1911, a “saving circle” that was established in the previous year came to a fruition, and the two hundred yen was lent to the church in order to repay loans for the sanctuary construction. Then, a second “saving circle” was began. Hiroshi Udono, the head minister, suffered from illness for two months beginning in the autumn of that year. In the following year, his son also became sick and with the addition of issues arising from the savings circle, the year proved to be one full of “large knots.” However, one of the followers moved to Harbin, and later established the Harbin Church; thus, the year was also one of budding promise. In 1913, out of considerations arising from his son’s illness, he disbanded the saving circle in April. Also, in May, when Honbuin Kichitaro Matsumura visited Changshun, Ugai was urged by Rev. Matsumura to establish a church. Thus, he began preparation for this cause, and in autumn of that year, he received permission from Church Headquarters to establish the Changshun Branch Church. Also, in the same year, The Tenrikyo Manchuria Mission Administrative Office was established in Mukden, with the installment ceremonies held in November.

Akira Kaneko — A Study on Overcoming a Critical View of Religion, as Found in Today’s Society (34) The Significance of Reading Uchimura Kanzo Today

All religions undergo a cycle of spiritual revivalist movements, and in a sense, this is something that must happen. This movement

is necessary for the faithful to live spiritedly as a human being. And, when the followers have high spirits, the religion’s energy is also rejuvenated. For such reason, I believe that there is significance for any modern faithful in reading the writings of Uchimura Kanzo (1861-1930) regardless of whether one is a Christian. His Mu-kyokai movement (non-church movement) was an attempt to thoroughly apply the principles of Protestantism and represented a Christianity freed spiritually from the church organization. In his various writings, we can begin an effort to discover the spirited faith that is oriented for others, freed from organizational dependence, and seeks to find faith once more within oneself.

Akihiro Inoue — Hawaiians and Christianity: An Ethnography of Culture and Faith (31) Syncretism Reconsidered

Syncretism is a form of mixed religion and/or multilayered faith. It was often regarded in a negative way, as “an impure form lacking in authenticity.” Also, when indigenized Christianity is regarded as a syncretism, such perspective betrays the view of a Christian. When such term is used, we need to understand these underlying issues.

Contemporary Hawaiian Christians have created a “Christianity for Hawaiians” by appropriating various forms of Hawaiian culture. For them, the missionary’s narrative to regard Hawaiian Christianity as an impure form of Christianity is a view that they need to overcome, and the issue of whether their Christianity is syncretic is a mute point. Syncretism and similar concepts such as hybridity and creole focus attention on the process of cultures intermixing, but it also treats culture and religion as a “willful living entity” separate from human beings. We need to depict the faith of people in their daily lives and thus rethink the concept of syncretism and clarify the ways in which culture and religion intermix.

Hideo Yamaguchi — A Dialogue Among Religions for World Peace (28) Catholic World Youth Congress

The Catholic World Youth Congress is held once every two years, and its twenty-sixth meeting was held this year in Madrid, Spain, between August 18 and 21. The reigning pope’s visit to Spain was his third since assuming the position in 2005, and there were high hopes for the pope in his discussions with people from various quarters. However, on August 17, a serious incident occurred. Among them was the tension in the conflict between progressive lay members groups and the Catholic Church, which can be traced to the civil war between 1936 and 1939. In an interview taking place in the plane from Rome, the pope answered, “Human beings must be in the center of the economy. Towards other countries and towards humanity, Europe has a serious obligation. It must create jobs. I ask the youth to search for truth.” These words were aimed Spain, which continues to suffer from an economic crisis. After his arrival, he made rounds of the downtown area, which was teeming with the youth. After handling a four-day schedule, he was quite exhausted. This may be natural, given that the pope is eighty-four years old. On the other hand, an unexpected two million people from five continent and 193 countries assembled for the event. This was the first time in the life time of the current pope, and was the first time that such large number of people assembled in Madrid. Videos of this event circulated through the world, and the Catholic Church was able to boast its strength.

Mari Namba — Tenri and Sports (17) Tenri Sports Symposium [7]

We had Kazunori Hashimoto, the vice director of the Japan Archery Federation for the Disabled, give a lecture based on his thoughts as an instructor and experiences in the field.

After graduating from college, he began to work in Asuka Village, at a training center for rehabilitation of physically disabled people. The head of the center at the time told him, “from now on, rehabilitation should not only seek to restore individual functions, but also to heighten the totality of the person’s mobile skills through the use of sports.” Thus, he was put in charge of sports training.

Having just finished college, he thought of trying many different things. First, in his mind, he felt that those in his charge could not perform ordinary routines because of their disability, and thus, he needed to think of different routines in order to answer their needs. This was assumption that he would later correct. But at the time, he experimented with various programs. However, nothing went well. One day, he assembled everyone on a baseball field with the intent to have them play softball, no matter what. However, he ran into many problems. Through brainstorming together with the trainees, he changed the rules for hitting, running, and pitching; they also adjusted the equipment and the rules to the level of the disability. Thus, they were able to enjoy playing the game among thirty people with different levels of disability.