

## Chuichi Fukaya — In Regard to Same-Sex Marriage II

For doctrinal “criteria” to think about same-sex marriage, we can raise the following points: (1) God the Parent created the world to see human beings live a Joyous Life and to share in it. (2) God the Parent gave human beings the free use of mind. (3) God the Parent used earth and heaven as a model to create husband and wife. (4) God the Parent descended upon this earth to save all people of the world. (5) God the Parent desires a marriage in which the two involved, the parents of both sides, and families and friends can all find joy.

In the Divine Directions, the third scripture of our teaching, God the Parent responds with “Yes” or “No” to inquiries made by human beings, but I believe that these “Yes” and “No” are nuanced by stronger and weaker distinctions.

Then, what are the conditions that would lead to a “Yes” to the question of same-sex marriage. It would be one in which the marriage is necessary in order to bring about Joyous Life to the two involved and to those around them and where the fifth criterion is completely fulfilled. That is, through this same-sex marriage, a place of belonging for the two is created in a way that is not possible in a heterogeneous marriage. Furthermore, if both sets of parents as well as relatives, friends, acquaintances, and the people around them believe that this bond is necessary for the Joyous Life for the two and the people around them and if there is a sincere desire to have the bond recognized at a church (by God the Parent and Oyasama), then, I believe that there is a parental love that would permit same-sex marriage as “one form of plurality towards the realization of the world of Joyous Life.”

## Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (87) Kin’ai Manuscripts [8]

These transcriptions of the Divine Directions did not reference the original version preserved at the Jiba. It is worth noting with caution that these were conveyed to the transcriber through various routes and in various mediums. Also, among them, there are many instances of copying errors and omissions. It is important to examine these transcriptions while keeping these issues in mind. What these transcripts provide is a window into how the faith was conveyed to distant areas.

## Chuichi Fukaya — Deep Reflections on the Life of Oyasama (6) Wealth

People who rejected faith in the path upon learning the Divine Model where Oyasama sunk to the depths of poverty say that “one becomes poor when one becomes Tenrikyo.” Or, inversely, people of the faith say that “we are doing well because we were able to escape poverty thanks to taking up the faith.” Both statements are claims that have no relevance. Human happiness is not decided by the presence or absence of wealth or whether one foregoes it. Instead, Oyasama’s Divine Model and faith in the Path teach us that there are other elements and values that we could seek.

Oyasama’s words, that “when we drink water, it tastes of water. God the Parent has blessed us with exquisite gifts,” do not seek to take pride in poverty nor to encourage it. Also, it does not teach us to feel superior over people who are sick, unable to even swallow water, or over people who have no access to drinking water. If that was the case, the story would not end with water, but also find happiness in being able to drink tea or eat meals and meat as things that would bring greater happiness. The words of the above are not superficial teachings that tell us to find joy for yourself when you see others who are not as blessed; rather, it is teaching us the way to savor God the Parent’s blessings. We need to deeply savor the words that follow: “God the Parent has blessed us with exquisite gifts.”

## Ichiro Soda — Histories of the Tenrikyo Mission (36) Extra Tidbit 3: Villages That Converted En Masse

In the history of the Tenrikyo mission, there were several instances when the all villagers converted to the faith en masse. This took place in Shimogamo Village in Kyoto, Yanokawa Village in Mie, Yaazami Village in Tochigi, Tatenobori Village in Saitama, and Musubu Village in Hyogo, among others.

With today’s common sense, it is hard to imagine an entire village converting to Tenrikyo. It is unnatural for all the villagers to share the same faith. However, conditions were different in the past. There were actual cases when the entire village entered the faith. The common pattern is that the number of followers in the village increased dramatically in a short span of time and eventually came to include everyone in the village. As a result of a particularly unforgettable event, everyone in the village converted. If the process took more time and the number of followers increased gradually, the faith would not have taken hold upon all members of the village.

Villages that converted to Tenrikyo en masse did so as a result of witnessing a dramatic miracle following a service of rain or a conversion of an influential figure in the village. I reflected upon this phenomenon as a fact that occurred in history.

## Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (8) A Semantic Theory of “Mono” and “Koto” [6]

In comparison to “mono” as idealistic, “koto” is refers to specific “mono”: this interpretation provided by the dictionary Jikun, by Shizuka Shirakawa, is the most succinct definition of these two words. However, the problem is that historical perspectives on Yamato dialect words such as “mono” and “koto,” as used in the definition, as well as

the task of unearthing the Japanese spirit from within the vocabulary of the Japanese languages through its historical changes and its uniqueness, are attempted through a framework taken from Western philosophy and translation of modern terminology for culture. In regard to this issue, before I introduce the meaning of “koto” as found in Watsuji’s “Nihongo to tetsugaku no mondai” (Issues in Japanese language and philosophy), I confirmed the ways in which Japanese-English dictionaries and Japanese dictionaries at my disposal had categorized and interpreted the meaning of “koto.”

## Koji Fukaya — A Growth of Faith through Ofudesaki (32) Part V:33-55

What Ofudesaki teaches us now is that God the Parent, indicating a criterion of right and wrong, or a principle of things, attempts to show God’s humanly impossible acts on human’s responsibility. We, human beings, have experienced the miracles beyond our capabilities so far. We have called the power to cause such miracles “magic.”

However, it is time for us to know the purpose of such God’s blessing, with which we need to live in accordance. As Ofudesaki states, “I have not spoken yet about the truth of those things that came after I began this world” (33), we should learn what God intends in our life and how much God has loved us as the parent since the creation.

## Masanobu Yamada — New Religion’s Missions in Brazil (20) Organizational Development of Japan’s New Religions[4]

Among Japanese new religions in Brazil, Seicho-No-Ie is the most well-known. Currently, it has over 3.5 million members. This number is based on the volume of printing of its three principal publications, and even in the event that all the journals are indeed read, there is still room for judgment to equate the number of readership with “followers.” However, this religious organization has placed great weight on evangelicalism through print, and its mission utilizing broadcast media such as radio and television is also active. It is also worth noting that, in recent years, it has begun to disseminate lectures through the Youtube on the Internet. The very first followers of the religion in Brazil entered the faith, in the prewar years, upon reading books written by its founder. The organization places great weight upon its evangelicalism through print, but here is a good example. At first, the followers were all Japanese, but from the late 1960s, its mission to Brazilian became more pronounced. Currently, there are regions where the number of Japanese descent followers pale in comparison to the non-Japanese followers. To such extent, Seicho-No-Ie has become a Brazilian religion.

## Midori Horiuchi — Connecting “Life”: The Phenomenon of Life and Death (36) In Closing

Futaro Yamada’s *Ningen rinju zukan* (Illustrated encyclopedia of the human deathbed) summarizes in an encyclopedia format the life and death of nine hundred figures, arranged by their age of passing. The book provides the author’s views on life and death, noted sporadically through the book, as well as the meaning of “death” to the readers, and the opportunity to confront “life” as we live it while being cognizant of death and also of “one’s own death.”

Shigeta Saito argues that “chronicles of our battles with illness and recovery from it are valuable sources for us to ‘learn about death’ and to ‘learn about life.’” It enables a transformation of our values from “life based on quality” to “life based on quality.”

## Saburo Yagi — The Path Towards Normalization (33) In Their Own Voice (Denmark) [2]

I conducted interviews of users of wheelchairs, in regard to the support structure in Denmark of those with disabilities. In their daily life, they use the personal assistance system three times each week. Each use allows for 45 minutes of assistance, and these are usually utilized for help in household chores (cleaning of rooms), baths, assistance in toilet use. Shopping and cooking are done by themselves. Personal assistance is, by rule, based on request made by the applicant. The commune then decides upon the level of support based on this application.

There is no cost for use, thanks to aid from the commune. Annual pension is provided by the commune, and is based on a sliding scale tied to the inflation of costs for basic goods. There is no uniformity for the annual pension, and but rather a system of calculation that adds to the basic annual pension based on level of disability. Denmark has instituted the personal assistance system that provides irreplaceable service to enable an independent lifestyle for those with disabilities, and this system has greatly influenced countries around the world.

## Jiro Sawai — Great East Japan Earthquake and Religion (6) To Be a Religionist

This article is the final one for this series. Until now, I have introduced the “Spiritual Counseling Room” that is active in Sendai. Its aim was to provide spiritual care to victims of the Eastern Japan Earthquake through the cooperation of religionists transcending their denominational ties and of medical personnel and scholars of religious studies. Given its uniqueness, it was referred to as “an innovative and large-scale experiment regarding ‘spiritual care’ and ‘the power of religion.’” In summarizing quotes from its participants, we can see that it sought to fulfill a function that only religionists can provide, in treating lost lives, lost things, and things that cannot be seen. In pursuit of the potentials therein, the “innovative and large-scale experiment regarding ‘spiritual care’ and ‘the power of religion’” continues.