

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: “In God’s Embrace”

Last month, a head minister who I knew well passed away, and his passing prompted me to rethink my views on Tenrikyo’s perspective on life and death. In Chapter 7 “A Thing Lent, A Thing Borrowed” of the Doctrine of Tenrikyo, we are taught that it is like “taking off our old clothes to put on new ones. The mind alone having been taught as ours, we borrow new bodies and return to this world.”

From the human perspective, we are returning our bodies. God the Parent has said that “God will take us back and embrace our spirit, upon which God will return us to this world.” God takes us back through God’s care, and the soul is embraced by God the Parent for some time. Given that we direct our worship of God to Jiba and Kanrodai, the spirit will transcend all time and space to return to the Jiba and receive God the Parent’s commendation for this lifetime. And then, through God the Parents working, we are returned to this world. Here, we are able to see the infinite process of life in this world. I was able to accept these truths with much gratitude. We are able to accept these with thankfulness.

Mikio Yasui — Short History of Tenrikyo Theology (115) Seizan Manuscripts [6] 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-Seizen 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 (34) Shuji Nakayama [3]

When we speak of the Divine Model, we look at how Oyasama said and acted in a given context, and reflect, speak, and record the divine intention found therein. However, for Her words and action to become a Divine Model, there is a need for an interlocutor to whom She speaks and acts. Such is the role of Shuji, who spent sixty-four years with Miki Nakayama. Without the presence of Shuji, who spent forty-three years at Oyasama’s side after the Original Revelation, a good portion of the Divine Model would not have come to be. A suit would require both the outer fabric and the inner fabric; and in a similar vein, only with the presence of Shuji, who stood by Oyasama, was the Divine Model passed down.

Akio Inoue — A Preliminary Study of Tenri Linguistic Theology: The Future Image of “Koto” Worldview (36) Chapter Five: Kazumi Takahashi and *Jashumon* [2]

In Tenrikyo, the second Shinbashira, Shozen Nakayama, called for Restoration in the immediate postwar; however, it is still in doubt whether a break was truly achieved from the perversion of the prewar “communal illusion” as suggested by Kazumi Takahashi. Although genuine “discussion” and dialogue” would imply the wisdom and courage to democratically discuss a way to clarify and properly distinguish between the realms of accomplished “restoration” and incomplete “restoration,” there is criticism that, in actuality, the church is not heading towards a renewal and reform that systematically seeks to return to the “spirit of the day of origin.” Here, I would like to summarize Kazumi Takahashi’s background and personality and a synopsis of *Jashumon*.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (20) “Black Snake” as an “Instrument of Pulling Forth” [2]

From long ago in the Kansai region, snakes were often referred to as *kuchinawa*. The etymology of this word traces to *kuchita nawa* (rotten rope). When snakes cross the road, they pause to bask in the sun in order to raise their body temperature. At such times, they look like “rotting ropes.” However, they were not named *kuchinawa* only because of the similarity in shape and color. Rather, there was a recognition from ancient times that “snakes = poisonous snakes = object of fear.” It is possible that people in the past were fearful not only of Nihon mamushi but also of all snakes. Thus, we can surmise that snakes came to be called “rotten ropes” as a result of a spoken taboo of something that cannot be mentioned by mouth. Today, given that their whole body is black colored, it is called *karasu hebi* (crow snake) because the “snake is black colored like a crow.” Researchers also use this expression. That is, *kurukutsuna* refers to the *karasu hebi*.

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (4) Prewar American

Mission and the Japanese-American Immigrant Society [3]

Among the Japanese immigration to the American mainland, which increased dramatically in the latter half of the nineteenth century, there were Tenrikyo missionaries and followers who engaged steadfastly in missionary and salvation work while facing harsh working conditions. In the 1920s, there was a heightening call for overseas mission within the church, and through various reasons related to Japanese immigrant society, missionaries were dispatched to America. Acquiring visas as a missionary was troublesome, yet, many missionaries left for America with qualifications as a missionary after 1927.

Koji Fukaya — Milepost Usage of the Ofudesaki (20) Regarding “Verbs” [5]

In “Truly be spirited and ponder. Then lean on God and do the Joyous Service” (IV:49), “be spirited” can be interpreted to apply to both “ponder” and “lean on God.” Or, it can be interpreted to apply to another verb that had been abbreviated (such as “hasten”) which follows “do the Joyous Service.” From such reason, in the process of leading to the “Joyous Service,” in each stage of to “ponder,” to “lean” on God, and to “do the Joyous Service,” such act can be expressed with the adverb of “sincerely” as well as “be spirited.”

Michihiro Narita — Mission and Translation: In the Space between Reception and Transformation (4) What is Translation [3]

Through language, we are able to clearly elaborate, one by one, the unknown elements of this world and decide and recognize its meaning. There is no notion that precedes language and no clear recognition prior to the appearance of language. Through use of language, meaning is decided and the recognition of this world is accumulated. One form of this accumulation is translation. Benjamin argued that various existing languages contain a tendency to mutually supplement each other, and through translation, the recognition of this world can be completed.

Masato Fujiwara — Laïcité and Tenrikyo’s Mission in France (10) History of Laïcité? [7]

In the American Declaration of Independence, God exists as a creator of rights; but in the French Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizens, the National Assembly “recognizes and proclaims, in the presence and under the auspices of the Supreme Being” (Preamble to the Declaration), the natural rights of the citizens who are regarded as sovereign. To such extent, God’s role is eliminated. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy, of 1790, rejected Catholic tradition and church law and implied that the clergy would lose their religious status and become a normal citizen. The church was renamed as Temple of Reason, and in the ritual at the worship hall dedicated to philosophy, there was a message implied that the church was no longer necessary. In 1794, Robespierre argued for the “Cult of the Supreme Being” as part of public education. He argued that, instead of *Dieu*, which is a masculine noun, *Raison*, *Liberté*, and *Patrie*, which are feminine nouns, should be respected as female deity that expresses republican values, and he sought to establish moral education based on such ideals.

Kazukuni Watanabe — Paving the Way Towards Local Community Welfare: Creation of a New Culture of Philanthropy (28) CSR and Donations

The Omi merchants’ motto of “three goods”—“good for seller, good for buyer, good for society”—is now attracting attention as the beginnings of today’s corporate social responsibility (CSR). Corporation’s activities in social contribution became more widespread in 1990s, and many corporations established departments and hired coordinators in charge of social contribution; personnel exchanges with third sector non-profit organizations, with which they often collaborated, increased. In today’s CSR, through collaboration between corporations and NPO, there is greater expectations for invigorated human networking, skill improvement and increased awareness among corporate and NPO staff, and regional revitalization.

Hisao Kuwabara — Messages from Ruins (22) Survey of Ruins in Israel [8] Fiftieth Anniversary of the Tel Zeror Ruins Survey and Its Legacy

In Israel immediately following the birth of the nation, archaeology played a role as means to confirm the connection between those who “repatriated” and the land; state-level excavations and surveys of ruins were carried out feverishly. In comparison, the Tel Zeror ruins survey, carried out in a small-scale over an unknown ruin, was scientific, and thus liberated from national and religious concerns; it became a point of origin for one strand of Israeli archaeology. On the other hand, in Japan, in order to standardize an excavation survey system for the high growth period, survey methods from the Tel Zeror was partially adopted. The excavation and survey from fifty years ago influenced both Israeli and Japanese archaeology and also paved the path for the history of many surveys enabled by sustained exchanges between researchers following the excavation and survey.