

Uzo Takami — Opening Words: On Hosting the “Theology and the Present”

On the coming February 26, the Oyasato Institute for the Study of Religion will host its annual “Theology and Present.” Its purpose is to “Aim for a Reference to Comprehend All of Tenrikyo: On the Publication of the Tenrikyo Jiten Dai-san-ban.” On March 26 of last year, the Institute published this reference, but immediately, it began the “Tenrikyo Jiten Study Group” to scrutinize the Jiten. This is, as noted in the opening remarks to this year’s “Theology and Present,” an expression of a sustained commitment on the part of the Institute to aim for a more “perfect” edition. And, this is the role that the Jiten accomplished. In particular, misinterpretations from non-Tenrikyo researchers, such, as “Tenrikyo’s founder is a shaman” or “Tenrikyo is polytheistic,” has been swept away. At this year’s “Theology and Present,” we hope to build a place for robust exchange of views: we await your visit.

Takanori Sato — Creatures That Appear in the “Story of the Origin” (37) Progression towards the “Identification” of the Animals [1]

The “Story of Origin” is a story about the creation of human beings and the world, but it is also a story of truth revealed for the purpose of human salvation. In this “story,” many aquatic animals make their appearance metaphorically. Some of these animals exist in reality, while others are imaginary; but that is not a critical manner. In this series of articles, I have offered my reflections, from various perspectives, upon the aquatic animals that appear metaphorically in this “story” and its relationship with the “Complete Providence.” In particular, during the teaching of the “Complete Providence,” why did God the Parent assemble the aquatic animals, and why were these animals chosen? I have provided my thoughts in regard to such inquiries. For example, to which animal did “fish” refer? Through a comprehensive inquiry spanning the Wakan sansai zu-e and the Yamada Ihachiro manuscripts, as well as from an ecological perspective, I concluded that it referred to the sansho-uo.

Takayuki Onoue — Varieties of North American Tenrikyo Missions Seen Through the History of Japanese Immigration (26) The Pacific War and the North American Mission [4]

Church head ministers and missionaries arrested as enemy aliens did not actively engage in missionary efforts in the internment camps. They did assemble periodically and held monthly services as well as doctrinal study sessions. They also assisted others in the spirit of hinokishin and some achieved a form of spiritual awakening through their extreme living conditions. For the Tenrikyo people detained in the internment camps, the role that the Masaharu Hashimoto, second bishop of the Mission Headquarters in America, played was large, and his diaries and writings serve as valuable resources to understand the life of not only Tenrikyo members but also all detained Americans of Japanese descent.

Michihiro Narita — Mission and Translation: In the Space between Reception and Transformation (15) Varieties of “Words” in Early Buddhism [4]

Even in the ancient Buddhist texts written in Pali, in the Dhammapada, Sutta Nipāta, and Therīgāthā, which belong to the Khuddaka Nikāya, when Shakyamuni preaches, he

is thoughtful of his listeners’ situation and preaches in a manner as appropriate to the situation, sometimes speaking directly and sometimes in form of questions. There is a sense of authority as an enlightened one as well as a personality devoid of pretense in Shakyamuni’s “words” as found in the ancient Buddhist texts. Here, we can see the raw landscape of Shakyamuni’s teachings before Buddhism attains its later success.

Yasuo Ouchi — Japanese Language Education and the Overseas Mission (7) Japanese Language Education in Japan and in Overseas [2]

Japanese language education in Japan, carried out continuously since the Tenri University Elective Course Japanese Language Course, remains today through the cooperative efforts of those involved. The author has been active in the nurturing of overseas youth and of the staff, but if there is one phrase to express all of this, it would be “nurturing of human resources.” In other words, the purpose of Japanese language education carried out in Japan is “to nurture people who can help realize a world of Joyous Life.” I wish to write about the nature of this goal, Joyous Life.

Akira Kaneko — Interpreting the Twenty-first Century through Kierkegaard (5) Read Kierkegaard for Your Own Sake, Then, Engage in a Dialogue with Kierkegaard

The significance in engaging in humanity studies is to be able to indirectly serve society through being directly useful for oneself. The significance for us to read Kierkegaard lies precisely in this matter. His sincere thought process and lifestyle provide a huge existential vibration upon all of us, one by one, as solitary travelers. Kierkegaard as philosopher demands that each reader become an autonomous philosopher. As such text, I will introduce Atarashi Kierkegaard (A New Kierkegaard, 1986) by Manabu Murase.

Naotaro Shimizu — Latin American Values and the Transmission of the Faith (2) On Crime and Safety

Tenrikyo Columbia Center, which is a religious center, hired a security guard about twenty years ago as part of its security safeguards. This was prompted by an attack upon a neighboring church. This region of Latin America gives an impression as one of the world’s dangerous place in terms of crime, but there have been changes in the region in the last decade or so. I will summarize the world’s dangerous regions before examining safety issues in today’s Latin America Both in terms of the capital and of the country as a whole, Latin American ranks as the worst in the world, but Columbia’s crime level has slowly improved. There are instances where we are swayed by the “murder rate” figure. In terms of statistics, Japan’s crime rate is very low, but it is a country in which very strange crimes take place.

Mari Hatakama — From the Sankokan Museum (16) From Resources Related to Heisei’s Final Year of the Boar

The year 2019 is Heisei’s final year of the boar. Among the cultural artifacts through the country, there is very little variation for the boar. Among them, there are many that feature a pairing with Kintaro. I will write about the relationship between the courageous Kintaro figure, which became very popular during the Edo period, and the headlong and impulsive boar figure.