

# TENRI-KYŌ :

## SOME MISCONCEPTIONS CORRECTED

— After reading *The Religion of Divine Wisdom*  
by Dr. Henry Van Straelen, S. V. D. —

*Dr. Yoshinori Moroi*

*The Religion of Divine Wisdom* by Dr. Henry Van Straelen is a very good presentation of Tenri-kyō — a fact which is especially significant because the author is not an adherent of the faith but views it as an outsider. It is a comprehensive exposition and has been the means of introducing Tenri-kyō to many foreigners, not a few of whom have visited the sect headquarters in Tenri City. Moreover, it is a matter of considerable satisfaction that the author notes that there are many religious movements in present-day Japan besides Buddhism and Shinto, and that he recognizes Tenri-kyō as one of the most influential of these. Thus, by calling attention to the uniqueness of Tenri-kyō, he differs from many Japanese commentators with their prejudices and preconceptions; and it was this attitude that created the impression that the book would be completely objective. Unfortunately this is not the case. Although it purports to be an objective, impartial introduction to the faith, the book is not entirely accurate; it frequently reflects the special viewpoint of the author who is a Catholic

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priest ; and as a result people who learn about Tenri-kyō from this book only will be misinformed on a number of matters. Consequently it has seemed necessary, as one who is a member of Tenri-kyō, without intending to detract in the least from the book's essential value, to correct some of the principal misconceptions which may arise from reading it.

### **Tenri-kyō is not a Shinto Sect**

Before considering Dr. Van Straelen's work, however, it seems necessary to discuss a rather general misconception regarding the fundamental nature of Tenri-kyō. Usually it is regarded as a sect of Shinto, but this is incorrect. It is an original religion, unique in its own right. There should be no misunderstanding on this point.

There are, of course, good historical reasons why Tenri-kyō has been regarded as belonging to Shinto. For example, when Tenri-kyō was coming into existence, it was attacked by Shinto priests because the God of Tenri-kyō, Tenri-Ō-no-Mikoto, was not in the Shinto pantheon as recorded in the historical classics, the *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki*. Therefore, to avoid confrontation with Shinto, a license was secured from the Yoshida Shinto authorities in 1867 (Keiō 3) which enabled the sect to enjoy a degree of freedom ; but this did not last long. In 1870 the Yoshida Shinto authority was abolished and subsequently the sect was again subjected to persecution by the administrative authorities.

In the early years of Meiji the government officially recognized only two groups of religious sects : Buddhist and Shinto. (Christianity was in a separate legal category.) Sects

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which had some buddha as their object of worship were regarded as belonging to Buddhism. Those that worshipped one or more of the indigenous kami (a Shinto term roughly equivalent to deity, Ed.) were considered to belong to Shinto. Hence, in order to secure an independent status and freedom for propaganda, Tenri-kyō allowed itself to be classified as Shintō and was placed under the administration of the Shinto Main Office (Shintō Honkyoku). Then in 1908 it was finally accorded recognition as a completely independent Shinto sect. However, acceptance of government recognition and classification as Shinto did not in any way constitute an acknowledgment by the sect's leaders that Tenri-kyō did in fact belong to Shinto. On the contrary this classification and official recognition was a temporary expedient for the purpose of gaining specific privileges advantageous to the organization. (Government recognition ended in 1945, Ed.)

There are, however, other reasons — mainly doctrinal, and particularly its God-concept — for arguing that Tenri-kyō belongs to the Shinto tradition. For example, some of the names of its kami are found in the Shinto pantheon as given in the ancient records; but, in spite of this apparent identity, the meaning, that is, the nature of the kami, is quite different, and it is this that is important. In the history of world religions, when the reality behind the names of deities is different, a distinction is made even though the names themselves are the same.

In respect to other Tenri-kyō doctrines it should be noted that, even though some of them have a Shinto coloring, the original teachings are quite unique, that is, they are very different from traditional Shinto teaching. It is not unusual in

Japan for a new teaching to be regarded as Shinto simply because the founder is a Shinto priest or a fervent believer in Shinto; but in the case of Tenri-kyō the Foundress was not a Shinto believer. To be sure on one occasion at least She prayed to the kami for the life of a child, and thus it is known that She had faith in the kami; but this does not constitute a sound reason for calling Her a Shintoist. At any rate it is important to recognize at the outset that, in spite of certain historical evidence, Tenri-kyō is not a Shinto sect but is in reality an original, unique religion.

### Is Tenri-kyō an Eclectic Religion?

A second misconception concerns eclecticism, and here we turn to a consideration of *The Religion of Divine Wisdom*. Although the author recognizes the unique character of Tenri-kyō, he nonetheless states in several places that it is a kind of religious eclecticism. Presumably this is because Tenri-kyō has some elements in common with other religions. For example, in the beginning of his book the author argues that, because some of the teachings are like those of Christianity and other religions, Tenri-kyō borrowed these and therefore it is eclectic.

However, even though it may appear this way to an outsider, this is not sound scholarship. Generally speaking, a religion is said to be eclectic if the founder has been raised in a culture based on various religions and has consciously incorporated the tenets of these religions into his system. If this is not the case, we cannot say that a religion is eclectic simply from a comparative analysis of its teachings. Of course the Foundress

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was under the influence of various contemporary ideas and, as a result, some of Her teachings call to mind the ideas in vogue in Her day; but this does not justify the conclusion that there was intentional borrowing. Tenri-kyō was founded in the first instance by Divine Revelation to the Foundress by God the Parent; and ever afterwards She expounded Her teachings under Divine Revelation.

In this connection it may be noted that various antithetical religious ideas are to be found in the doctrines of Tenri-kyō. If a Christian examines the doctrines, he becomes convinced that Tenri-kyō is similar to Christianity. If a Confucianist does so, he thinks that it resembles Confucianism; and the same thing will happen in the case of a Buddhist, a Taoist, and even a Muslim. But this does not constitute proof that it is eclectic. Bahai, for example, is an eclectic faith. It intentionally incorporates the doctrines of various religions. Tenri-kyō, however, is quite different. Doctrines which resemble other faiths were not deliberately incorporated but are there because they were given by Divine Revelation. Thus, as can be seen from the doctrine of rebirth (*denaoshi*, literally, "to go out and come again," Ed.), which teaches that at death man is re-born into this world, Tenri-kyō is the ultimate and perfect faith.

There are two main currents of theological thought in the world: one is based on the idea of God's Favor, the other on the law of causality. The former, which is known as monotheism, is dominant in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The latter is characteristic of early Buddhism, which later became theistic. Tenri-kyō, however, lays emphasis on the law of causality in daily life and at the same time stresses the ultimate

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Favor of God the Parent. In this way both of them are perfectly united. This is very important because when each side considers Tenri-kyō doctrine solely from its own standpoint, it seems to find a resemblance to its teaching and overlooks the fact that the other point of view is also included.

Consider, for example, the nature of salvation. There are two important aspects to this subject: one is the idea of salvation in eternity, the other is salvation in this present life, that is, in the phenomenal world. Upon which of these is the emphasis placed in a really good religion? The position of Tenri-kyō is that they should be stressed equally. Salvation has generally been considered as pertaining to another world entirely separate from this earthly, phenomenal world; and salvation in this phenomenal world has been thought to have nothing to do with eternity. Naturally salvation should have to do with the actual world in which we live, but it attains completeness when it is coupled with the idea of salvation in eternity. In Tenri-kyō both sides are included.

Looking at this matter in another way, in the religions of the world there are two kinds of salvation: physical (bodily) and spiritual (mental). Folk belief belongs to the former; ethical religions belong to the latter. But as a matter of fact we cannot always clearly distinguish between body and spirit. The physical and the spiritual are so intermingled in everyday life that they cannot always be separated; yet it is very difficult to unite them compatibly in one system of thought. Tenri-kyō, however, has a unique doctrine which makes the followers of all religions, including even folk belief, feel that Tenri-kyō resembles their respective faiths. The various doctri-

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nal aspects of the several religions are perfectly united and blended in Tenri-kyō; but it is not religious eclecticism. On the contrary it is an indication of its originality.

### **Has Tenri-kyō Changed its Original Teachings ?**

A third misconception is that Tenri-kyō has changed its original teachings to accord with the times. It is true, of course, that the understanding and interpretation of doctrines have changed, but this does not mean that the present-day doctrines represent a departure from the original teachings of the Foundress. There must be no misunderstanding about this. To be sure we cannot not say that the doctrine has always been penetrated and understood, because it has only been since 1945 that an interpretation rooted in a recognition of Tenri-kyō's uniqueness has been possible. The reason for this is that, due to the religious and social conditions existing in prewar Japan, Tenri-kyō was subjected to various restrictions. As a matter of fact it was under the influence of Shintoistic thought-control which was not removed until 1945. Consequently it was not possible openly to acknowledge and publish the original teachings as they had been received. On the contrary those responsible had to adapt the teachings to the times even to the extent of compromising some basic principles. Thus, Tenri-kyō leaders were inclined to expound the teachings in accordance with the traditional Japanese way of thinking, that is, in line with popular faith or the Shintoistic way of thinking; and there are many books still in circulation which reveal this tendency. Naturally then, there is a great difference between the present-day books and those of the prewar years; but this does not

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prove that Tenri-kyō departed from its original teaching.

Of course former writers included much serious matter concerning their faith in such books, but there was not always self-reflection as to how deeply it was rooted in the original teaching. As has been noted, Tenri-kyō was for a long time under Shintoistic thought-control which was only removed after World War II, when it was replaced by freedom of thought. It was only then that "return to the original teaching" was strongly preached and announced by the sect headquarters to all believers. "Return to the original teaching" meant a return to the teaching of the Foundress expounded in its original uniqueness; and it was at that time that the Tenri-kyō canon (*kyōten*) was finally completed. Only since then have the believers been able to study it and comprehend fully the essential nature of its teachings.

Superficially it may seem that Tenri-kyō has changed its original teaching; but the fact is that the original teaching has been made more explicit. The author of *The Religion of Divine Wisdom* says that he understood that the ritual would be changed in the near future; and this is what we told him. It has become necessary to do this because the Shintoistic ritual, which was carelessly adopted, should be reformed in order to make the ritual conform to the spirit of the original teaching. However, in many respects the original ritual has been fully observed from the beginning. For example, instead of the traditional costume of shrine priests, the priests perform the ritual in black kimono with a crest. Moreover, the Tenri-kyō priests read the prayers in the colloquial language and not in the literary language used in Shinto. We must admit,



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however, that there remain many Shintoistic elements in Tenri-kyō, which naturally must be changed in the near future ; but this should not be interpreted as a shifting of emphasis.

Another instance of this nature is to be found in the author's contention that Tenri-kyō has recently stressed salvation (*otasuke*, literally, honored help, Ed.) and has ceased to talk about the Tenri-kyō story of Genesis ; but he is mistaken in this. Tenri-kyō has emphasized salvation (*otasuke*) since the very beginning ; and although the Tenri-kyō story of the beginning of the world may not have been mentioned much in recent years, it is to be found in Chapter Three of the authorized canon. Perhaps the author wrote this after encountering Tenri-kyō believers in rural areas where the original teaching had not yet penetrated the minds of all believers.

Now in any religion individual believers — those who are not priests and are not always ardent, or who belong to particular groups — differ from others in their understanding of the doctrine and are apt to interpret it only from the standpoint of commonsense. Moreover, even ardent believers often stray from the authentic doctrine in case they are self-satisfied and individualistic in their interpretation. This occurs in Tenri-kyō as well as in other faiths.

The author also says that Tenri-kyō has not put much emphasis upon the study of doctrine but has put its efforts on propagation. This may be so. The Foundress urged the attainment of salvation and wanted to save as many people as possible in the shortest time, so we have been taught that one's salvation can only be completed by saving another and that all believers should be missionaries. Hence, we have put our

strength in missionary work and, as a consequence, the study of doctrines has not been continuous; even today it has not been completed.

Cannot this be said of any religion in its beginning? Even if the doctrines were studied fully, this effort would end in futile arguments without the realization of salvation. The essential nature of a religion does not lie in the study of doctrines, but in practice. Doctrinal studies should be pursued, but we must not forget that man is never saved by theology. Theology should be formulated in the process of realizing salvation, so it was inevitable that the study of doctrine should have been delayed. This will be completed later.

### **Is Tenri-kyō Monotheistic or Polytheistic ?**

A fourth misconception is revealed in the contention that, while Tenri-kyō was originally polytheistic, it subsequently became monotheistic. In support of this it is pointed out that at least in the beginning the Foundress' idea of God was definitely polytheistic.

This allegation raises a very important problem which calls for a discussion of the way of thinking which divides religions into polytheism and monotheism, and a consideration of what these terms mean.

We must recognize at the outset that there are polytheistic expressions in older books written by Tenri-kyō believers, and from this it may be concluded that Tenri-kyō is a polytheistic faith. In particular the expression "eight myriads of gods" (*yao-yorozu-no-kami*) was used in the Tenri-kyō canon of the Meiji era (*Meiji Kyōten*) as collectively indicating The God

of Divine Wisdom ( Tenri-Ō-Kami ); but we should not conclude from this that the original teaching itself was necessarily polytheistic. As has already been stated, Tenri-kyō was able to attain independence only because it put itself in the category of Shinto, which is a polytheistic faith, and inevitably polytheistic ideas were adapted which naturally found expression in the prewar writings of the sect leaders. However, instead of examining such books, we should study the texts of the original teaching in order to gain a correct understanding as to whether the faith is really polytheistic or monotheistic.

In this connection we must refer to the *Ofudesaki* (literally, Honored Brush-Point, Ed.) and the *Mikagura-uta* (Songs of the Sacred Dances), written by the Foundress Herself, and the *osashizu* (literally, honored direction, Ed.), which is a record of the oral teaching of the Foundress. In these texts there is no trace of polytheism. To be sure, we do find the names of ten kami but this should not be interpreted as polytheism. Generally speaking a polytheistic religion has individual deities which have their own distinct characteristics. When two or more gods are called by individual names and are respected and worshipped as separate entities, such a religion is called polytheistic; but this is not what happened in Tenri-kyō. In *Ofudesaki*, for example, there are such terms as Kami (God), Tsuki-Hi (Moon and Sun), Oya (Parent), Moto-no-Kami (Original God) and Jitsu-no-Kami (Real God); and of those Tsuki-Hi is used most frequently. But Tsuki-Hi is nothing but another name for God, which is also expressed in the term Oya, that is, the Parent. In the *Mikagura-uta* we find only the word God, and not gods. The same can be said of the

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*osashizu*. Thus, there is no genuine polytheism in the original texts.

Turning once again to the rituals of Tenri-kyō, if Tenri-kyō were polytheistic and the names of the ten gods meant ten separate deities, there would then be ten separate shrines and worship would be performed ten times in ten places. If Tenri-kyō had two gods, two kinds of worship would be offered; but we do not have ten or even two separate shrines or any way of worshipping any deity other than the one God. We can definitely say, therefore, that the ten names do not mean ten separate deities.

Why then was Tenri-kyō treated as polytheistic in the prewar writings? This was simply because Tenri-kyō had put itself in the category of Shinto and the Meiji Canon was written by Shintoists. Thus Tenri-kyō was taken as a religion with a polytheistic concept of God, — an almost inevitable consequence at the time in connection with its attainment of religious independence.

However, this point should not be over-emphasized. Although the author of *The Religion of Divine Wisdom* states that present-day Tenri-kyō is monotheistic, we do not necessarily emphasize this fact. The God of Tenri-kyō is God the Parent, but we do not attach too much importance to the oneness of God. We believe in God the Parent as the Parent Whose action is Tsuki-Hi, which means oneness in duality. Therefore, if anyone asks whether Tenri-kyō is polytheistic or monotheistic, we can only answer that, while Tenri-kyō is monotheistic, it is not limited to monotheism. The way of thinking which divides religions into the two categories of polytheism and

monotheism is itself open to criticism. This is only one way of thinking, and we must insist that God the Parent is a different concept which transcends such limitations; and that this idea of God in the original teachings has never been changed.

### **Is the Salvation of Tenri-kyō Worldly ?**

A fifth misconception regarding Tenri-kyō is that its salvation is worldly or earthly, that in its early period, it was especially concerned with a material or physical salvation and that in comparison with the salvation offered in Christianity, it seems vulgar. In this connection we would like to say first of all that in primitive Christianity Jesus Christ himself was a healer of those who were suffering; he was not one who simply preached about the salvation of souls. Though present-day Christianity puts emphasis on spiritual salvation in Heaven, we must point out that the original salvation offered by Christ was rooted in the world; it was an earthly salvation. It is the same in Buddhism where salvation is not only spiritual but strongly worldly. If the idea of salvation is only heavenly, it is apt to be very idealistic; and in this connection it can be noted that a certain Christian sect teaches that present-day Christianity is mistaken in confining its salvation to the spiritual. It insists that original Christianity taught a more realistic salvation.

This is a very interesting point of view. Spiritual salvation in Heaven is, so to speak, a means of escape from the need to solve the contradictions of this world. It is much appreciated as a fantastic dream which helps some people, but it is more essential for man to know how this earthly, human

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world should be changed into a better world. If spiritual and heavenly matters were preached without reference to earthly matters, sermons would be nothing but talk about how to live in the dream world to come. Salvation through Tenri-kyō is attained in this earthly world, and we want to say that earthly, worldly salvation is more essential. This does not mean, however, that salvation is only material, only temporal.

In regard to the criticism that salvation in Tenri-kyō is only worldly and not eternal, and that eternal salvation should be thought of only as a spiritual salvation in Heaven, Tenri-kyō takes the position that, although it may be possible to think of another eternity, when we think of eternity it is Heaven realized eternally in this worldly life itself. It is futile merely to wait for the world of eternity without making a beginning in this world. Do not Christians earnestly try to realize some of eternity in this earthly life? Tenri-kyō teaches the salvation of the everlasting soul, and this enables us not only to live in this world but in the everlasting world as well.

We are taught to realize eternity in this earthly world in which the Kanrodai, the symbol of the Ideal of Tenri-kyō, is to be founded. The author of *The Religion of Divine Wisdom* claims that Tenri-kyō aims at natural, material happiness in this world, and that the ideal of the blessed life (*yōki-gurashi*) is only a state of natural happiness. By “natural” he seems to mean “temporal”; but salvation in Tenri-kyō is never temporal. The way of living of those who realize and believe in the everlasting soul is quite different from mere natural happiness.

Christians seem to have an unconscious way of thinking about this matter. We do not recognize Heaven as another

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world separate from this world ; but this does not mean that we do not recognize eternal salvation. On the contrary, we recognize an eternal world, too, though we do not recognize Heaven as another world as in Christianity. What we mean by the eternal world is not another world, which is merely heavenly and spiritual, but a world in which eternity is realized in this earthly world. Thus salvation in Tenri-kyō is real ; it is the actual salvation of humanity.

Though the author says that salvation in Tenri-kyō is concerned only with material and physical suffering, and not with spiritual suffering — at least, that this was so in the beginning — he seems to overlook the real nature of religious salvation. But Christians should recognize frankly that religious salvation is fundamentally material and physical. No religion can make a person understand high spirituality at the outset. It is merely playing with ideas to preach spiritual salvation apart from actual suffering. Therefore, when the author says that the essential nature of salvation in Tenri-kyō is material and physical, he is to a certain extent correct.

The salvation offered by Tenri-kyō is material and physical, but it is brought about by the spiritual ( mental ), because the reality of salvation lies in the realm of the spiritual ( mental ). If Tenri-kyō lacked spiritual ( mental ) salvation, it could be called a religion of mere material salvation. But we put emphasis upon the spiritual ( mental ) nature because we are taught that true human freedom exists only in the mind, a word that is used very frequently in the *Mikagura-uta*. Salvation in Tenri-kyō is rooted in the mind ; but this is quite different from the spiritual salvation in Heaven offered by

Christianity. Heaven in the Christian sense of the term is not recognized in Tenri-kyō, but salvation is nonetheless essentially spiritual. It is the salvation of the soul that is everlasting. The phenomenal reality of the everlasting soul is the mind; the ultimate reality is the soul.

Thus, the salvation of the mind is in reality the salvation of the soul; it is material salvation in a temporal sense, and spiritual salvation in its ultimate meaning.

### **The Idea of Ethics in Tenri-kyō**

A sixth misconception is that Tenri-kyō has no moral theology; that is to say, though Tenri-kyō is recognized as having good moral standards, it has no moral principles based on Tenri-kyō doctrine. The fact is, however, that Tenri-kyō has a moral principle which is quite different from that of any other religion. The moral principle of Tenri-kyō is not concerned merely with conduct, as it is in other religions. On the contrary the Tenri-kyō principle is that the mental attitude is prior to conduct. In other words, conduct originates in the mind.

The author also says in support of his contention that Tenri-kyō has no moral theology, that there is no clear attitude toward divorce or birth control. But, although Catholics want definite teachings, we do not believe that clear instructions on this and similar subjects is necessary. As a matter of fact, it is really not important whether a religion has a moral theology in this sense, although one will naturally develop in the course of time. In primitive Christianity there was no moral theology. It developed later. In Tenri-kyō the doctrine of the eight dusts



should result in the near future in the development of such a theology. However, it is true that at present our moral theology has not developed very far, but this does not mean that Tenri-kyō has no basic moral principles. Moreover, even if we had moral theology today, it would not solve every problem. A person is not saved by theology.

### **The Idea of World of Tenri-kyō**

The final misconception which must be dealt with here is the assertion of the author that Tenri-kyō is bound up with Japanese nationalism and the Japanese racial consciousness, and that Tenri-kyō has succeeded because it has adhered to Japanese nationalism. This is very strange. Of course from the point of view of Christianity, which cannot penetrate deeply into the minds of the Japanese people, we can understand what is meant; but if this statement is correct then most of the religions of Japan must have been successful. If Tenri-kyō has succeeded because it adapted itself to Japanese nationalism, all Shinto sects must have succeeded; which, of course, is not the case. However, these remarks only reflect the impression of a foreigner; they are without academic foundation; and impartiality in this connection is simply out of the question. Nevertheless it should be made clear as to whether or not Tenri-kyō has a deep relation to nationalism.

The name Nihon is often used in the *Ofudesaki*, and there are some songs in which Nihon is emphasized. It is also true that Tenri-kyō in the past allowed itself to be classified as Shinto, a religion of nationalism. Moreover, it is true that until now most believers in Tenri-kyō have been Japanese or

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of Japanese lineage ; but it is superficial to judge the essential nature of Tenri-kyō only from such data. In order to reach a sound conclusion we must examine the original teachings of Tenri-kyō ; and until we have done this we cannot decide whether Tenri-kyō actually has a tendency toward nationalism or universalism.

The word Nihon, as it is often used in *Ofud.saki*, does not mean Japan as a nation. For anyone who reads *Ofudesaki* the kernel of the idea of Nihon is Jiba, the Holy Place of the Kanrodai, which is the symbol of the ideal of Tenri-kyō and quite different from Nihon as a nation. This Nihon, or Nippon, is apt to be taken to mean Japan, but we cannot associate it with Japanese nationalism. In the *Ofudesaki*, the world ( *sekai* ) is greatly emphasized. "Salvation for all the world" ( *sekai ichiretsu-no-tasuke* ) is very important and this *sekai ichiretsu* undoubtedly means to live all over the whole world. It makes no difference whether people are Japanese or not, all human beings are children of God the Parent ; and they are equal in their essential nature.

We are taught that those who live in this Holy Place ( Jiba ) should be in touch with the teaching of Tenri-kyō and that subsequently human beings all over the world will listen to the teaching. The original doctrine of Tenri-kyō teaches us that human beings are children of God the Parent and that they are equal. This is universalism rather than nationalism, so we cannot say from any point of view that Tenri-kyō is nationalistic. Nevertheless we must reflect upon the fact that present-day Tenri-kyō gives the impression that it is Japanese, because until now most of the believers have been Japanese and they

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have the Japanese way of thinking and behaving.

We must make salvation extend throughout the world by returning to the original teaching and taking the original standpoint of Tenri-kyō. Of course, we have had overseas missions for sometime, but our overseas missions are really just beginning. Propaganda among Western people remains a future problem. Before World War II missionary work was carried on in Korea, North, Middle, and South China, Manchuria, and Mongolia, and many churches were founded in these countries. Moreover, many churches were founded in North and South America and Hawaii. But the believers in these churches were Asiatic people, mostly overseas Japanese. After World War II the churches on the Asiatic mainland had to be abandoned, so at the present-day there are only about one hundred overseas churches and these are in South America, Hawaii, and North America. Propaganda in Europe also remains a problem for the future.

Before we attempt to advance much farther, however, we must study the original teaching and decide which Japanese elements are essential and which are unessential. Non-essential Japanese customs and ways of thinking should be subordinated; but we need not put away these Japanese elements in a hurry. We should base the standards for missionary work on the essential nature of the teaching itself. We who live in Japan are Japanese and not merely abstract human beings. We are Japanese and at the same time citizens of the world. So we should not confuse our standpoint as Japanese with that of Tenri-kyō. We must not completely cover the teachings of Tenri-kyō with the feeling of Japanese life, so that Tenri-kyō

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cannot be truly understood and heartily believed in by Western peoples.

It is nonetheless an indisputable fact that this religion was founded at Jiba, a place in Japan, but this should not be interpreted as meaning nationalism. It is simply a central point in the teaching and plan of salvation. Jiba is like Jerusalem for Christians, the Vatican for Catholics, and Mecca for Muslims. These places are in reality quite different from Jiba, but each one is like it in the sense of being at the same time both a limited geographical place and a symbol of universality. Mecca is a city in Arabia, but Islam is not Arabianism, and it would be nonsense to claim that it is. The center of Catholicism is Vatican City in the suburbs of Rome, but we cannot say that Catholicism is either Italian or Roman, although most of the Popes have been Italians. In the same way it should be clear that Tenri-kyō is not bound up with Japanese nationalism and it would be a great mistake to think that it is.

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In spite of its limitations, however, Dr. Van Straelen's *The Religion of Divine Wisdom* is an excellent book for an outsider. We of the Tenri faith appreciate it highly because the author's viewpoint is much better than that of Japanese outsiders who have written about our faith. Reading it will remain in the memory of many people as an impressive experience.

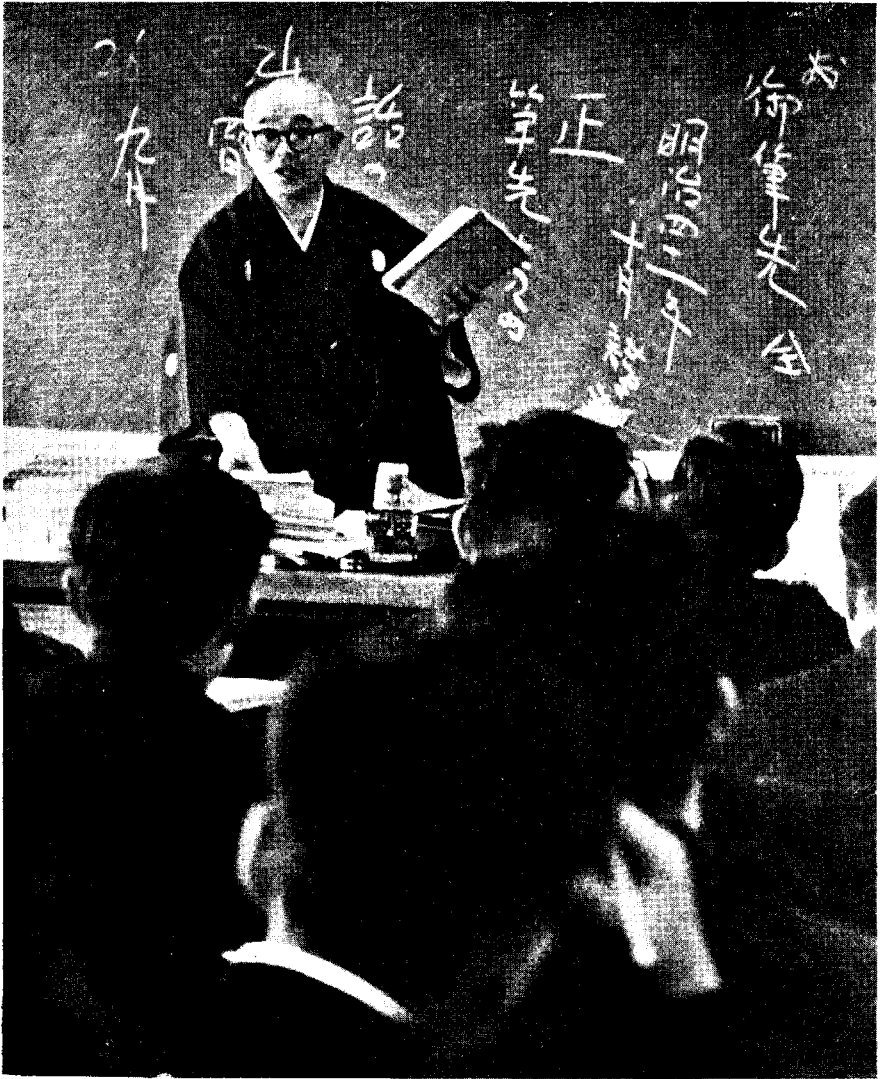
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### Kanji Glossary

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|----------------------------|--|
| Beseki 別席                  | Ofudesaki おふでさき (お筆先)                  |
| denaoshi 出直し               | Osashizu おさしず (お指図)                    |
| Jiba ぢば (地場)               | Otasuke おたすけ (お助け)                     |
| Jitsu-no-Kami 実の神          | Oya 親                                  |
| Kami 神                     | sekai ichiretsu-no-tasuke 世界一列の<br>たすけ |
| Kanrodai 甘露台               | Shintō Honkyoku 神道本局                   |
| Kojiki 古事記                 | Tenri-kyō 天理教                          |
| Kyōten 教典                  | Tenri-Ō-kami 天理大神                      |
| Meiji Kyōten 明治教典          | Tenri-Ō-no-mikoto 天理王命                 |
| Mikagura-uta みかぐらうた (御神楽歌) | Tsuki-Hi 月日                            |
| Moroi, Yoshinori 諸井慶徳      | Yao-yorozu-no-kami 八百万神                |
| Moto-no-Kami 元の神           | Yōkigurashi 陽気ぐらし                      |
| Nihon (Nippon) 日本          | Yoshida Shintō 吉田神道                    |
| Nihon Shoki 日本書紀           |  |



Annual Meeting of the Young Men's and Young Women's Associations

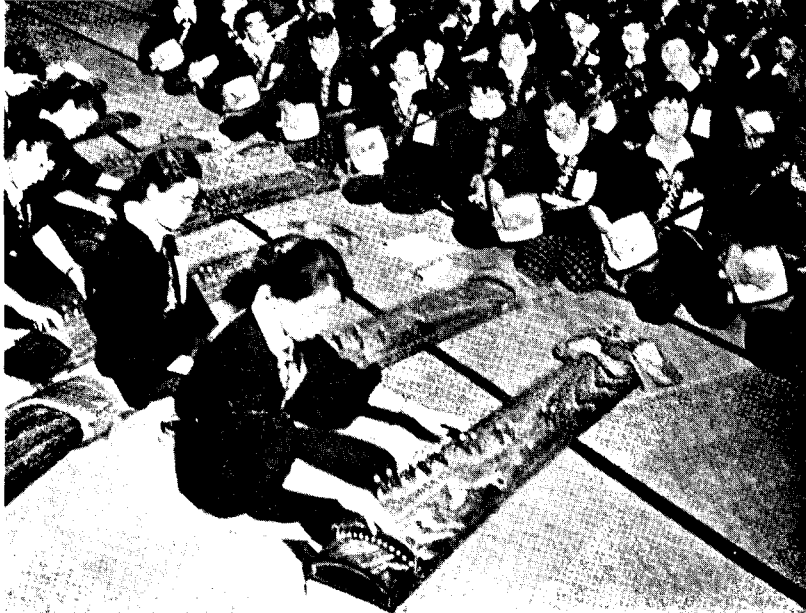


The Shimbashira Teaching at Tenri University



Students in the 3-months Missionary Training Course





Practicing Three Kinds of Stringed Instruments  
— Japanese Harp (Koto), Banjo (Shamisen), and Fiddle (Ko-kyū) —



Service Offered to God the Parent  
(Hinokishin)