

Ferdinand Liefert

## Why are Korean village guardians exhibited in an institution managed by a Japanese new religion? The Intertwined Contexts of the Tenri University Sankōkan Museum

### 1 Introduction

Tenrikyō<sup>1</sup> is one of the oldest of Japan's 'new religions'.<sup>2</sup> Founded by Nakayama Miki<sup>3</sup> in 1838, its main goal is to establish a joyous life which is granted by the god *Tenri-O-no-Mikoto*, which is believed to have revealed itself to Nakayama Miki. The architecture of the main Tenrikyō sanctuary in the city of Tenri is typical of the Tokugawa period; the music in Tenrikyō services is similar to Japanese court music,<sup>4</sup> and one of Tenrikyō's former leaders promoted Judo.<sup>5</sup> As such, Tenrikyō and its educational institutions certainly engage in Japanese culture, and yet the Tenri University Sankōkan Museum's 2001 catalogue<sup>6</sup> prominently features Kore-

- 
- 1 English: 'The Teaching of Heavenly Principle'. For Tenrikyō, see Kasahara Kazuo, ed., *A History of Japanese Religion*, trans. Paul McCarthy and Gaynor Sekimori (Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 2001), 478–87; Barbara Rossetti Ambros and Timothy Smith, "Tenrikyō," in *Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements*, ed. Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018), 33–49; Nakayama Shōzen, *A Short History of Tenrikyo* (Tenri: Tenrikyō Kyōkai Honbu, 1960); Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Teachings and History of Tenrikyo* (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1986); Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Path to Joyousness* (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1998) and Tenrikyo Overseas Department, *A Glossary of Tenrikyo Terms* (Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Department, 2010).
  - 2 This is a common translation of *shinshūkyō*. For a discussion of the term, see Birgit Staemmler and Ulrich Dehn, eds., *Establishing the Revolutionary: An Introduction to New Religions in Japan* (Münster: LIT, 2011), 1–4.
  - 3 Japanese names will be written in Japanese order, surname first.
  - 4 Pictures of the Main Sanctuary can be found in Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Path to Joyousness*, vi. For an outline of the service, see Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Glossary of Tenrikyo Terms*, 375–82; for the instruments, see *ibid.*, 240–41.
  - 5 Sugai Hiroshi, "Academic and Cultural Exchanges between Tenri University and Marburg University: Retrospect and Prospect," in *Purification*, ed. Gerhard Marcel Martin and Katja Triplett (London, New York: T&T Clark, 2013), 5.
  - 6 The museum's full name is often abbreviated to 'Tenri Sankōkan'.

an pillar statues.<sup>7</sup> Why would a Japanese new religion like Tenrikyō display Korean pillar statues in its museum?

Objects in a museum have been taken out of their original context and placed in a new one. Susan M. Pearce showed with reference to the moon rock exhibited at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington, DC, that it is the cultural value applied which makes objects of special interest.<sup>8</sup> Pearce notes that while there is nothing particularly appealing about the moon rock, it is presented in a way that highlights it much more than other exhibited rocks. The rock is also touched frequently by visitors, who are explicitly allowed to do so. Pearce argues that it is the act of selection that gives the rock cultural value. The reason for selecting objects varies. Crispin Paine identifies three ways that curators apply new meaning to museum objects: “as a beautiful/powerful/meaningful work of art, as a scientific specimen, or as an illustration and evidence to a story being told”.<sup>9</sup>

To examine the specific cultural value of the Korean pillar statues, and the mode in which they were integrated into the Tenri Sankōkan, I will first explore the beginning of Tenrikyō’s overseas missionary work, before looking at the origins of the Tenri Sankōkan. I will then examine the links between the history of Tenrikyō’s overseas mission, its educational institutions and its ethnographic collection, which includes the pillar statues. Finally, I will discuss the museum items in the context of colonialism.

## 2 The beginning of Tenrikyō’s overseas missionary work

Tenrikyō’s legal status was very uncertain from 1838 until 1945.<sup>10</sup> Initially, Tenrikyō was registered as a branch of Yoshida Shinto. In 1908, it was registered as one of the thirteen Shintō sects.<sup>11</sup> To gain this legal status, Tenrikyō officials were forced to adapt their teachings and practices to fit the state Shintō framework. The authorities kept a close eye on Tenrikyō and put pressure on the congregation on several occasions, sometimes breaking up Tenrikyō assemblies and mak-

7 Tenri Sankokan Museum, *Tenri Sankokan Museum Permanent Exhibition Catalogue* (Tenri: Tenri Sankokan Museum, 2001).

8 Susan M. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study* (London, New York: Leicester University Press, 1992), 5.

9 Crispin Paine, *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 14.

10 Ambros and Smith, “Tenrikyō,” 36–38; Kasahara, *History of Japanese Religion*, 483–484 and Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Path to Joyousness*, 56–63.

11 Ambros and Smith, “Tenrikyō,” 35–37.

ing arrests.<sup>12</sup> Tenrikyō started its overseas missionary work in 1893.<sup>13</sup> In the third edition of *A Short History Of Tenrikyo*, Nakayama Shōzen states: “The instructions of the Home Office made the mission in Japan difficult to do. And this was one of the motives of our overseas mission work.”<sup>14</sup> This is a reference to the Japanese Home Office’s ‘Directive No. 12’,<sup>15</sup> issued on 6 April 1896. According to Nakayama: “The instructions said to the effect [sic] that the police must strictly, supervise Tenrikyō, for it was to be blamed for its destruction of the public morals, its interference with medicine, and its laying the believers under contribution.”<sup>16</sup> These difficult circumstances were factor behind Tenrikyō starting missionary work abroad. Tenrikyō always emphasised the need to spread its teachings to all people.<sup>17</sup>

Tenrikyō began its overseas mission in the areas of east and south-east Asia that had been colonised by Japan.<sup>18</sup> Soon, Tenrikyō missionaries also travelled to regions with high Japanese immigration, namely North and South America. The anniversaries of Nakayama Miki’s death have always been an important occasion for Tenrikyō. In the run-up to the anniversary, Tenrikyō headquarters announces important tasks or initiates special activities. After the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1926, Tenrikyō headquarters worked to further strengthen the congregation’s overseas missionary work and launched an associated campaign to double Tenrikyō’s membership.<sup>19</sup>

---

12 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 92–99 and Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Path to Joyousness*, 59–60.

13 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 120.

14 Nakayama Shōzen, *Short History*, 149.

15 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *The Path to Joyousness*, 59.

16 Nakayama Shōzen, *Short History*, 149.

17 The 1986 English version of Tenrikyō’s doctrine states: “The appearance of God into this world through Oyasama [honorary title of Nakayama Miki] was intended for the salvation of all mankind.” Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 42. This is rooted in the scriptures of Nakayama Miki, *ibid.*

18 Korean converts were among the first converts overseas. Yamakura Akihiro, “Transnational Contexts of Tenrikyo Mission in Korea: Korea, Manchuria, and the United States,” in *Belief and Practice in Imperial Japan and Colonial Korea, Religion and Society in Asia Pacific*, ed. Emily Anderson (Singapore: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 165. The school of foreign languages was established in order to teach missionaries the languages that were native to the people in the areas they would be travelling to. However, in the Americas, the missionary activities were more successful among Japanese communities. Susumu Shimazono, “The Expansion of Japan’s New Religions in Foreign Cultures,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18, no. 2/3 (1991): 105–32.

19 Nakayama Shōzen, *Short History*, 155 and Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 123–24.

### 3 The origins of the Tenri Sankōkan Museum

The Tenrikyō Young Men's Association played a significant role in Tenrikyō's early overseas mission.<sup>20</sup> In 1925, the association established the Tenri School of Foreign Languages. Nakayama Shōzen, the second *Shinbashira*<sup>21</sup>, was also head of the newly established school.<sup>22</sup> The school's purpose was to teach languages to those who would engage in missionary work abroad.<sup>23</sup> Initially, those languages included Chinese, Cantonese, Malay, Russian and Korean, the latter of which was taught despite Japanese authorities forbidding its use.<sup>24</sup> The Tenri Sankōkan Museum's website mentions that during the first entrance ceremony, Nakayama Shōzen mentioned his plan to run a museum as part of the foreign language school.<sup>25</sup>

From September to October 1926, Nakayama undertook his first inspection journey to the Korean peninsula and mainland China. Several journeys to Korea, mainland China and Taiwan followed.<sup>26</sup> During his trips, he also visited facilities run by Christian missionaries as he was convinced that Tenrikyō's missionary work could benefit from knowledge of Christian missionary strategies.<sup>27</sup>

In his travel account *From Shanghai to Beijing*, published in 1934,<sup>28</sup> Nakayama recalls visiting two Christian missionary institutions in 1930, both of which included museums. These were the *Guangzhiyuan*<sup>29</sup> in Jinan and the *Hoang Ho Pai Ho Museum*<sup>30</sup> in Tianjin. Given his detailed description of the two institutions,<sup>31</sup> we can assume they made a lasting impression on him. Umetani states that the vis-

20 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 157–60.

21 The head of Tenrikyō.

22 Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō, *Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō Hen* (Tenri: Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō, 1935), 10.

23 Nagaoka Takashi, *Shinshūkyō to sōryokusen: Kyōso igo o ikiru* (Nagoya: Nagoyadaigakushupankai, 2015), 143.

24 Yamakura notes that the Korean Language Department led a precarious existence until 1945. Yamakura, *Transnational Contexts*, 159–60.

25 Tenri University Sankokan Museum, "Tenri University Sankokan Museum," accessed February 28, 2020, <https://www.sankokan.jp/english>.

26 Nagaoka, *Shinshūkyō*, 131.

27 *Ibid.*, 145–46.

28 Nakayama Shōzen, *Shanghai kara Hokuhei e* (Tenri, 1934).

29 According to Tracey L-D Lu, the *Guangzhiyuan* Museum continued to operate until 1949. Its collection was then transferred to the Provincial Museum of Shandong. Tracey Lie Dan Lu, *Museums in China: Power, Politics and Identities* (London, New York: Routledge, 2014).

30 Today's Tianjin Museum of Natural History, as it became in 1952. Lu, *Museums*, 54.

31 For the *Guangzhiyuan*, see Nakayama, *Shanghai kara Hokuhei e*, 210–20; for the Hoang Ho Paiho Museum, see *ibid.*, 282–85.

its inspired Nakayama to start collecting ethnographic material.<sup>32</sup> The museums were run by British Baptists and French Jesuits respectively. Both organisations established educational institutions in order to reach out to Chinese intellectuals who were seen as influential.<sup>33</sup> The *Guangzhiyuan* was designed to show the merits of Western Christian civilisations.<sup>34</sup> The *Hoang Ho Pai Po* was mainly a natural history museum. Its founder, E. Licent J.S. was actively engaged in biological research.<sup>35</sup> It was these museums, which exhibited items in order to provide practical knowledge, rather than being only a place for art, that informed Nakayama's ideas about Tenrikyō's own museum.<sup>36</sup> He and other Tenrikyō missionaries began collecting what they thought of as everyday items from the areas where they were trying to establish Tenrikyō churches.<sup>37</sup>

An initial collection of Chinese ethnographic items was exhibited in a classroom at the Tenri School of Foreign Languages in 1930.<sup>38</sup> The collection grew, and, in 1934, a Korean house was installed in Tenri as another means of cultural education for future missionaries. In 1938, the museum got its own building. In 1943, it became affiliated with the Tenrikyō Research Institute for Asian Cultures. Following a hiatus, the museum reopened after the Second World War and is now affiliated with Tenri University.

#### 4 Korean village guardians inside the Tenri Sankōkan Museum

Given that Tenrikyō started its overseas missionary work on the Korean peninsula,<sup>39</sup> it is not surprising that materials from the region are among those collected

32 Umetani Akinori, "The Matter and Meaning of Exhibiting the Tenrikyo Overseas Mission," in *Materiality in Religion and Culture: Tenri University – Marburg University Joint Research Project*, ed. Saburo Shawn Morishita (Münster: LIT, 2017), 163–64.

33 For the missionary strategies of the British Baptist Mission Society, see H.R. Williamson, *British Baptists in China, 1845–1952* (London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957). For the missionary strategies of the Jesuits, see Ku Wei-ying, ed., *Missionary Approaches and Linguistics in Mainland China and Taiwan* (Leuven: Leuven University Press and Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 2001), 33–58.

34 Lu, *Museums*, 44 and *The China Journal of Science and Arts* 1 (1927): 633.

35 Lu, *Museums*, 50.

36 Previously, a different idea seems to have been shaped by the Japanese government. Alice Y. Tseng argues that the focus in national museums shifted from promoting industry to art in the mid-Meiji period. Alice Y. Tseng, *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan: Architecture and the Art of the Nation* (Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2008), 84, 91.

37 Tenrikyo Auslandsabteilung, "Tenri-Sankokan-Museum," *Tenrikyo*, no. 4 (2009): 20–30.

38 Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, *Teachings*, 186.

39 Morii Toshiharu, *Tenrikyō no kaigai dendō: "sekaidasuke" – sono dendō to tenkai* (Tokyo: Zepponsha, 2008), 213.

by Tenrikyō missionaries. As noted, Korean pillar statues feature prominently on the cover of the 2001 catalogue. A catalogue published in 1986 to commemorate the centennial anniversary of Nakayama Miki's death has a different cover, but the statues are the first items detailed. They cover the full first side of the section dealing with items from the Korean peninsula. Today, the statues are located on the ground floor of the museum, between an exhibition of items related to the northern Japanese ethnic minority *Ainu* and the exhibition on Korea. They are free-standing and the first objects of Korean origin that visitors encounter at the museum.

The 1986 catalogue gives only a short explanation: "*Chang-seung* (popular name: General posts) or a pair of pillar statues. Wood carvings, each with an engraved inscription of the Chinese characters – "*Syang-weon Jyu Jyang-gun* (上元周將軍)" and "*Ha-weon Dang Jyang-gun* (下元唐將軍)". The Japanese reign era (1914–45)."<sup>40</sup> The 2001 catalogue gives more details: Statues like this were originally erected at entrances to villages and temples as apotropaic statues and annual rituals were performed with them.<sup>41</sup>

The Korean statues are highlighted in the museum catalogues and occupy a prominent position in the actual exhibition. At the same time, they are grouped with other items, such as masks, instruments, and furniture, that represent Korean lifestyles and culture.<sup>42</sup> The setting, first inside a school building, and later in a separate building but outside Tenrikyō places of worship, suggests an educational purpose rather than the possibility of practising rituals with the statues. Today too, visitors are not encouraged to perform rituals but to learn about the statues. The statues are free-standing, placed together against a grey wall with a sign.

Initially, it was believed missionaries could learn about the customs of those who originally used the statues in order to better apply their teachings. Today, they tell both visitors and scholars about practices that are no longer regarded as important in the lives of Koreans.<sup>43</sup> They also tell us about the history of the museum.

Unlike Tenri Sankōkan, treasure museums of Buddhist temples and Shintō Shrines mostly contain objects drawn from their own ritual praxis or those of emic symbolic value.

---

40 Tenri University Sankokan Museum, *Collection of Tenri University Sankokan Museum: Commemorative Publication for the Centennial Anniversary of OYASAMA* (Tenri: Tenri University Press, 1986), 1.

41 Tenri Sankokan Museum, *Permanent*, 12.

42 The section which displays the *Chang-seung* statues is called "Life and Culture of the world." Tenri Sankokan Museum, *Permanent*, 9.

43 Tenri Sankokan Museum, *Permanent*, 12.

More recently established museums run by Japanese new religions, such as the MoA Museum of Art or the Miho Museum, also exhibit a variety of items from different cultures but in a setting that highlights their artistic value.<sup>44</sup> Both of these museums share their founders' emphasis on cherishing beauty.<sup>45</sup> They are also located in scenic surroundings, the first in the coastal city Atami, the second, in the mountains in Shiga prefecture, and are built in elaborate modern architectural styles.

By contrast, Tenri Sankōkan only started displaying a few Tenrikyō-related items in 2001. The mode in which they are exhibited is more that of *heritage*<sup>46</sup> than highlighting their aesthetic value. The museum is also housed in a former hospital, which is a rather pragmatic choice of location. It is perhaps unsurprising that Tenri Sankōkan shares more similarities with museums established by Christian missionaries, which Chris Wingfield calls "home missionary museums".<sup>47</sup> Looking back at the time when the Korean pillar statues were collected<sup>48</sup>, one might say that the museum started as a facility serving mostly Tenrikyō adherents, providing reference material. After the museum opened its doors to the general public following the Second World War, it no longer exclusively served Tenrikyō followers. As the museum<sup>49</sup> now looks back on 90 years of collecting and exhibiting, as well as, more recently, highlighting its own origins in the mission context, it also tells its own story, and in this sense has become even more a Tenrikyō facility. A fieldwork interviewee in Tenri said the museum could be seen as a gate connect-

44 E.g., there is far more focus on individual items than there is in Tenri Sankōkan. In Miho Museum in particular, the lighting is more sophisticated. My own fieldwork, May 2019.

45 Sekai Kyusei Kyo IZUNOME, "Mokichi Okada's History," accessed October 23, 2020, <http://www.izunome.jp/en/izunome/history/>; "Concept: A Real-World Shangri-La," Miho Museum, accessed October 23, 2020, <http://www.miho.or.jp/intro/history>.

46 Matthew Francis has described heritage museums of religious groups in Canada. Matthew Francis, "Community-Led Museums Exploring Religious Life in Canada: Abbotsford's Sikh Heritage Museum and Mennonite Heritage Museum," in *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Gretchen Buggeln et al. (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 129–34. Crispin Paine mentions the categories "heritage" and "religious" when discussing museums that he calls "Rescue Museums" and distinguishes between those categories in Crispin Paine, "Rich and Varied: Religion in Museums," in *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Gretchen Buggeln et al. (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 216.

47 Chris Wingfield, "Missionary Museums," in *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Gretchen Buggeln et al. (London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017), 231–33.

48 Nagaoka uses the neutral term "collecting" (he uses the passive form *"atsumerareta"* in Japanese). Nagaoka, *Shinshūkyō*, 143. However, as I explain, the context suggests that the acquisition took place between parties with different power status and might have included highly problematic practices.

49 The museum contains ethnographic as well as archaeological objects.

ing Tenrikyō members to the world and various people to Tenrikyō.<sup>50</sup> A South Korean exchange student at Tenri University who I interviewed said he was surprised to find Korean objects inside the museum.<sup>51</sup> These items may also be and have been displayed to inspire awe.

In addition to a Taiwanese altar, Hindu figures and other material from ritual contexts, they also stand alongside items like boats, musical instruments, etc., embedded in an institution, which is run by a religious organisation, which does not seem to impose its own religious teachings on the objects. It is a place, as the metaphor of the gate implies, which interconnects different contexts. A place informed by religious<sup>52</sup> interests as well as general education and research.

## 5 The early Tenri Sankōkan museum objects in the context of colonialism

The missionaries obtained the Korean pillar statues when Korea was under Japanese rule. Other museum items were also obtained from Japanese colonies. This raises the question of whether the missionaries' activities in the colonies were driven by the same agenda as the expansion of the Japanese empire.

Religious studies scholar Nagaoka Takashi examines a possible connection between the missionaries' collecting activities and nationalism or imperialism.<sup>53</sup> Analysing Nakayama Shōzen's thoughts on mission work,<sup>54</sup> he first notes Nakayama's sceptical view on entanglement with state authorities based on his study of Matteo Ricci and the Rites affair.<sup>55</sup> Nagaoka also describes what he calls "the violent nature of the overseas mission".<sup>56</sup> He argues that Nakayama's study on the Christian mission in India reveals his bias towards changing local societies' cultures to advance them.<sup>57</sup> Nagaoka also contends that Nakayama had a culturally chauvinistic view on the people of Manchuria and, to various degrees, those of the Korean peninsula.<sup>58</sup> Besides spreading the original Tenrikyō teachings, an

---

50 Interview with a curator of Tenri University Sankokan Museum, April 3, 2019. I conducted fieldwork in Tenri in April 2019. During this period, I interviewed students of Tenri University as well as a curator of Tenri Sankōkan.

51 Interview with a Tenri University student, April 17, 2019.

52 Here, I refer to the cultural education of future missionaries.

53 My translation of "kokkashugi ya teikokushugi". Nagaoka, *Shinshūkyō*, 144.

54 Cf. *ibid.* Nagaoka argues that the mission work was the main reason for collecting those objects.

55 *Ibid.*, 146.

56 *Ibid.*, 148–53.

57 *Ibid.*, 150.

58 *Ibid.*, 150–52.

idea of needing to contribute to cultural advancement was adopted. This was in line with the official view of that time.

In a 2017 study, the historian Yamakura Akihiro considers the transnational contexts of Tenrikyō in Korea,<sup>59</sup> and examines whether the mission work was fuelled by the same ideas as the expansion of the Japanese empire. Yamakura explores the work of historians and scholars of the history of religion, and differentiates between three different views on Tenrikyō's missionary work: the *conformity view*, the *façade view* and the *synthetic view*.<sup>60</sup>

Scholars of the *conformity view* point to pro-expansionist statements published in the Tenrikyō bulletin *Michinotomo*<sup>61</sup> as evidence that Tenrikyō's overseas missionary activities before 1945 were informed by the Japanese empire's expansion policy. By contrast, the *façade view* highlights the fact that Tenrikyō mission work started on an individual level in Korea. Scholars of this view stress that missionaries were instructed in the Korean language and the first pilgrims to Tenri from overseas were from the Korean peninsula. The *façade view* regards the pro-expansionist articles published in *Michinotomo* as evidence that Tenrikyō followed the empire's policies – but only superficially. Another important argument for that view is the ongoing persecution of Tenrikyō during the 1930s. The *synthetic view* is a combination of the other two perspectives. According to Yamakura, it can be found in publications by the religious historians Lee Won-Bum and Fujii Takeshi. Yamakura states:

They agree with the thesis that Tenrikyo overseas missionaries were sincere in their personal interactions with native people, yet also recognize the (ostensible) conformity to the militaristic statism of the empire in their mission efforts, especially after 1937.<sup>62</sup>

One argument for this view is the suppression Tenrikyō followers faced at the hands of the Japanese colonial authorities. Equally, proponents of this view point to the nature of Tenrikyō missionary work, which is based on face-to-face interaction in situations of disease and personal hardships. These scholars point to the difference between Tenrikyō's universalistic approach before 1937 and its particularist approach afterwards as evidence of its conformity.

---

59 Yamakura, *Transnational Contexts*.

60 For the discussion of the "conformist view", see Yamakura, *Transnational Contexts*, 163–64; for the "façade view", *ibid.*, 165–66; for the "synthetic view", *ibid.*, 166–68.

61 *Michinotomo* is regarded as one of Tenrikyō's primary publications.

62 Yamakura, *Transnational Contexts*, 166.

In order to evaluate the missionaries' activities during the Japanese occupation of Korea, the third view considers a broader picture, including Tenrikyō's more official acts and publications. It acknowledges Tenrikyō's interactions and mission work before the new religion applied imperialist ideology, as well as the fact that Tenrikyō itself was subject to state suppression. Nagaoka's analysis hints at important points. Nakayama was in the highest position and therefore his thoughts might have had a major impact. However, Nagaoka's strict focus on Nakayama overshadows the fact that Tenrikyō missionary work was carried out by individuals.

I suggest looking at the missionaries' activities in a more differentiated way and recontextualising the objects collected during that time. It is evident that these items were obtained from people who would have been legally inferior to Japanese nationals during the colonial period.<sup>63</sup> The objects may also have been used to construct a certain image of the other from the perspective of the privileged in Tenri. The objects were brought to the centre<sup>64</sup> and the cultures, from which they stem, were previously seen as inferior.<sup>65</sup> Equally, the objects may serve as evidence of an interest in those cultures and interactions between individuals.

## 6 Conclusion

Korean pillar statues, which previously had apotropaic functions at village and temple entrances on the Korean peninsula, are exhibited among Tenri Sankōkan's many ethnological and archaeological specimens. They were initially selected and given new value by Tenrikyō missionaries in the context of missionary work and, to a certain extent, of Japan's colonial enterprise.

An interviewee elaborated on the unique features of the museum, noting that it does not exhibit models but "real items".<sup>66</sup> This corresponds to Pearce's notion of the power of the "real thing" – items having a real connection to past events.<sup>67</sup> This quality might have been an important reason for collecting objects from the cultural contexts of people who Tenrikyō missionaries saw as potential converts. After the Second World War, the museum became affiliated with Tenri University,

---

63 *Ibid.*, 162.

64 Here, I refer to the Japanese archipelago, but to be more concrete, also to Tenri city.

65 E.g., Nakayama mentioned that he saw the culture of the Manchurians as inferior to that of the Japanese in Manchuria. He also had a negative view of Koreans, who were broadly adopting Communism. Nagaoka, *Shinshūkyō*.

66 Interview with curator.

67 Pearce, *Objects and Collections*, 24–29.

Tenrikyō's private university, and over the years, the purpose of the exhibition and the context of further collecting activities has altered. The statues, which are prominently featured on the cover of the 2001 catalogue hint at the museum's origins, since they were among the first items collected. Today, the exhibition includes videos featuring various practices involving the statues. As such, these statues illustrate not just one, but a variety of stories. They can be seen as a reference to their original use on the Korean peninsula, to Tenrikyō's mission history and to the history of the museum itself. The metaphor of the gate might describe the character of this museum quite well. It can be understood as an institution that connects a variety of different contexts as well as Tenrikyō followers and non-Tenrikyō followers.

## References

- Ambros, Barbara Rossetti, and Timothy Smith. "Tenrikyō." In *Handbook of East Asian New Religious Movements*, edited by Lukas Pokorny and Franz Winter, 33–51. Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2018.
- Francis, Matthew. "Community-Led Museums Exploring Religious Life in Canada: Abbotsford's Sikh Heritage Museum and Mennonite Heritage Museum." In *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Gretchen Buggeln, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate, 129–34. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Kasahara Kazuo, ed. *A History of Japanese Religion*. Translated by Paul McCarthy and Gaynor Sekimori. Tokyo: Kosei Publishing, 2001.
- Ku Wei-ying, ed. *Missionary Approaches and Linguistics in Mainland China and Taiwan*. Leuven: Leuven University Press and Ferdinand Verbiest Foundation, 2001.
- Lu, Tracey Lie Dan. *Museums in China: Power, Politics and Identities*. London, New York: Routledge, 2014.
- Miho Museum. "Concept: A Real-World Shangri-La." Accessed October 23, 2020. <http://www.miho.or.jp/intro/history/>.
- Morii Toshiharu. *Tenrikyō no kaigai dendō: "sekaidasuke" – sono dendō to tenkai*. Tokyo: Zepponsha, 2008.
- Nagaoka Takashi. *Shinshūkyō to sōryokusen: Kyōso igo o ikiru*. Nagoya: Nagoyadaigakushuppankai, 2015.
- Nakayama Shōzen. *A Short History of Tenrikyo*. Tenri: Tenrikyō Kyōkai Honbu, 1960.
- Nakayama Shōzen. *Shanghai kara Hokuhei e*. Tenri, 1934.
- Paine, Crispin. *Religious Objects in Museums: Private Lives and Public Duties*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013.

- Paine, Crispin. "Rich and Varied: Religion in Museums." In *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Gretchen Buggeln, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate, 213–23. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.
- Pearce, Susan M. *Museums, Objects and Collections: A Cultural Study*. London, New York: Leicester University Press, 1992.
- Sekai Kyusei Kyo IZUNOME. "Mokichi Okadas' History." Accessed October 23, 2020. <http://www.izunome.jp/en/izunome/history/>.
- Susumu Shimazono. "The Expansion of Japan's New Religions in Foreign Cultures." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 18, no. 2/3 (1991): 105–32.
- Staemmler, Birgit, and Ulrich Dehn, eds. *Establishing the Revolutionary: An Introduction to New Religions in Japan*. Münster: LIT, 2011.
- Sugai Hiroshi. "Academic and Cultural Exchanges between Tenri University and Marburg University: Retrospect and Prospect." In *Purification*, edited by Gerhard Marcel Martin and Katja Triplett, 1–12. London, New York: T&T Clark, 2013.
- Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō. *Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō Hen*. Tenri: Tenri Gaikokugo Gakkō, 1935.
- Tenrikyo Auslandsabteilung. "Tenri-Sankokan-Museum." *Tenrikyo*, no. 4 (2009): 20–30.
- Tenrikyo Overseas Department. *A Glossary of Tenrikyo Terms*. Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Department, 2010.
- Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department. *The Path to Joyousness*. Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1998.
- Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department. *The Teachings and History of Tenrikyo*. Tenri: Tenrikyo Overseas Mission Department, 1986.
- Tenri Sankokan Museum. *Tenri Sankokan Museum Permanent Exhibition Catalogue*. Tenri: Tenri Sankokan Museum, 2001.
- Tenri University Sankokan Museum. *Collection of Tenri University Sankokan Museum: Commemorative Publication for the Centennial Anniversary of OYASAMA*. Tenri: Tenri University Press, 1986.
- Tenri University Sankokan Museum. "Tenri University Sankokan Museum." Accessed February 28, 2020. <https://www.sankokan.jp/english>.
- The China Journal of Science and Arts* 1 (1927).
- Tseng, Alice Y. *The Imperial Museums of Meiji Japan: Architecture and the Art of the Nation*. Seattle, London: University of Washington Press, 2008.
- Umetani Akinori. "The Matter and Meaning of Exhibiting the Tenrikyo Overseas Mission." In *Materiality in Religion and Culture: Tenri University – Marburg University Joint Research Project*, edited by Saburo Shawn Morishita, 163–68. Münster: LIT, 2017.
- Williamson, H.R. *British Baptists in China, 1845–1952*. London: The Carey Kingsgate Press Limited, 1957.

Wingfield, Chris. "Missionary Museums." In *Religion in Museums: Global and Multidisciplinary Perspectives*, edited by Gretchen Buggeln, Crispin Paine, and S. Brent Plate, 231–38. London, New York: Bloomsbury, 2017.

Yamakura Akihiro. "Transnational Contexts of Tenrikyo Mission in Korea: Korea, Manchuria, and the United States." In *Belief and Practice in Imperial Japan and Colonial Korea, Religion and Society in Asia Pacific*, edited by E. Anderson, 153–76. Singapore, Palgrave MacMillan, 2017. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1566-3\\_9](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-1566-3_9).