

“My Principles of Living”

by Imaoka Shin’ichirō

&

Kōmyō Kigan

Prayer for Light (Provisional)

by Tenko-san

Translated by

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“My Principles of Living” by Imaoka Shin’ichirō (1881–1988)

In 1973, Imaoka-sensei produced a revised version of an earlier “My Principles for Living” written in 1965. As he noted at the time, since the freedom of *jiyū shūkyō* (自由宗教 i.e, a creative and inquiring, free or liberative religion or spirituality) primarily signifies individual internal freedom, these principles were not binding in any way upon any person who chose to associate with the *Tokyo Kiitsu Kyōkai* (東京帰一教會 Tokyo Unitarian Church or Unity Fellowship). It’s important to note that he always considered his statements of faith to be tentative and provisional.

1. **I have faith in myself.** I recognize my own subjectivity and creativity and feel the worth of living in life (生きがい *ikigai*). Subjectivity and creativity can be rephrased as personality, divinity, and Buddha-nature.
2. **I have faith in my neighbour.**
The neighbour is oneself as a neighbour. If I have faith in myself, I inevitably have faith in my neighbour.

3. I have faith in a cooperative society (共同社会 *kyōdō shakai*).

Both oneself and a neighbour, while each possessing a unique personality, are not things that exist in isolation. Because of this uniqueness, a true interdependence, true solidarity, and true human love are established, and therein a cooperative society is realized.

4. I have faith in the trinity of self, neighbour, and cooperative society.

The self, neighbour, and cooperative society, while each having a unique personality, are entirely one. Therefore, there's no differentiation of precedence or superiority/inferiority between them, and one always contains the other.

5. I have faith in the unity of life and nature.

Life, which constitutes the trinity of self, neighbour, and cooperative society, further unites with all things in the universe. [What Imaoka-sensei later called “a universal cooperative society” (宇宙的共同社会 *uchūteki kyōdō shakai*).]

6. I have faith in the “church” (教會 *kyōkai* — i.e. the ideal community).

The “church” is the prototype/archetype and driving force of the cooperative society. I can only be myself by being a member of the “church.”

7. I have faith in a specific religion.

In other words, I am a member of the Tokyo *Kiitsu Kyōkai* (東京歸一教會 Tokyo Unitarian Church or Unity Fellowship). However, a specific religion (including the Tokyo *Kiitsu Kyōkai*) neither monopolizes religious truth nor is it the ultimate embodiment of it.

8. I have faith in *jiyū shūkyō* (自由宗教 — i.e. a creative and inquiring, free or liberative religion or spirituality).

While having faith in a specific religion, the endless pursuit and improvement towards universal and ultimate truth is the core of religious life. Such a dynamic religion is called *jiyū shūkyō*.

Trans. by Andrew James Brown (August 2023)

Kōmyō Kigan or Prayer for Light (Provisional) by Tenko-san (1872–1968)

The one, non-dual Light (不二の光明 *funi no kōmyō*) is like the sunlight that pervades the universe. Everything it touches emits various kinds of light. The Prayer for Light is merely a phenomenon within the field of consciousness of the person who begins it. It should be added to and subtracted from; inaccuracies must be corrected, and it can be remade. This is why it is called provisional.

1) May we be reborn and allowed to live by the one, non-dual Light.

We should first be reborn and revitalized by the one, non-dual Light (不二の光明 *funi no kōmyō*), entrusted to God (神 *kami*) and nurtured by Buddha (仏 *hotoke*), aspiring to lead a life that does not hinder others.

2) May we revere the heart of all religions, and participate in the Great Vow of Unity.

By revering the heart of all religions (諸宗の真髓 *shoshū no shinzui*) from all times and places, the Great Vow of Unity (帰一の大願 *kiutsu no taigan*) should become as follows:

The collective vow: Complete attainment of great and perfect enlightenment for all.

The individual vow: To achieve true world peace in the future.

Without establishing a single religion, and without bias towards a single spiritual community, we aspire to look up to the light of the saints from all ages, praise their virtues, and fulfil the tasks they have left behind.

3) May we freely serve others in the spirit of repentance and in gratitude for the gifts we have received.

No one can escape responsibility for the vices/evils (罪惡 *zaiku*) and sufferings (苦患 *kugen*) of the world. It is hoped that we will always possess a heart of repentance (懺悔 *sange*), serve freely at the crossroads, with the mind of Bodhi (mind of enlightenment, 菩提心 *bodai shin*), and thus align with the fundamental vow of achieving enlightenment for the universe (法界成就の本願 *hōkai jōju no hongan*).

4) May we make our way in the everyday world by following the Dharma, the sacred laws of nature.

In accordance with the precepts of natural truth (天真法爾の戒相 *tenshin hōni no kaisō*) and following the six practices of aspiration (六度の行願 *rokudo no gyōgan*) [see note below], acting on the true path (真道 *shindō*) in managing our livelihood and industry, we shall

demonstrate the way of life that aims to bring about everlasting true peace (永久真平和 *eikyū shin heiwa*). Thus, we aspire to fulfil the accomplishment of everyday truth for laypeople (在家俗諦 *zaike zokutai*).

Note: *The six practices are: paying homage, “Geza” (taking the lower position, humility), service, consolation, “sange” (penitence), and “gyokotsu” (to do mendicant labour — which I have attempted to capture in the phrase “freely serve/serving” used in the third prayer). And since 10,000 households were counted as a basic unit of this service, it was named “Rokuman Gyogan” (six prayer practice for 10,000).*

5) And, in this way, may we return to our home [the Fragrant Cave of Heavenly Flowers], always rambling leisurely (逍遙 *shōyō*) in the formless paradise (無相の樂園 *musō no rakuen*) of light.

If one attains a broad perspective, indeed, this world is a pure land of serene light (寂光の淨土 *jakkō no jōdo*), a celestial garden of wonderful joy (妙樂の天園 *myōraku no ten'en*) where the rise of civilization and the phenomena of evolution, even the pure rules and precepts, are merely a freely playing samadhi (一の遊戲 *itsu no yuge sanmai*). Sadly, the nuance of this message goes beyond what words can adequately express or hint at. For the moment, let's simply name this reality as the Fragrant Cave of Heavenly Flowers (天華香洞 *tenka kōdō*).

The gate of the Fragrant Cave of Heavenly Flowers, tentatively named the Garden of the One Light (一燈園 *Ittōen*), can be seen as a transformational city (化城 *kejyō*) established for those who aspire to the path but who yet cannot stand on their own, including the elderly, the ill, and the young. It becomes an embodiment of the pure wealth of joyous giving, and entrance to the garden is granted by following its pure rules. Standing in the Fragrant Cave of Heavenly Flowers, the management and organization of the entrusted finances and projects is tentatively named *Senkōsha* [Society for Spreading Light] (宣光社 *senkō sha*). The purpose of *Senkōsha* is to eradicate the world's delusions, conflicts, and strife, aiming for harmonious homes, well-governed nations, and a peaceful world (齊家治国平天下 *seika chikoku heitenka*). The Fragrant Cave of Heavenly Flowers, the Garden of the One Light, and *Senkōsha* are three different things but one in essence, altogether embodying the formless non-duality (無相不二 *musou funi*).

Trans. by Andrew James Brown & Miki Nakura (May 2024).

Note. Tenko-san and his non-sectarian, free-religious community in Kyoto called *Ittōen*, was a major influence upon Imaoka Shin'ichirō's own thinking and practice.

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