English term system of Terni religion (semasiological and derivational considerations)

Svitlana M. Mazur [a] [1] iD

ᵃ Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Kyiv, Ukraine

Abstract

The study is devoted to the problem of adequate choice and use of linguistic means for translating into English the key philosophical, ethical and conceptual foundations of the Tenri religion (Japanese: Tenri-kyo / 天理教 /), one of the most ancient religions among the so-called "new" syncretic religions of modern Japan. The main goal of the research is to analyze the adequacy of the English translation of the system of religious terms, once created by the initiator of this teaching; Linguistic analysis and comparison were used as methods. During the study, the following results were obtained: authors have defined and illustrated with specific examples the key trend followed during the translation into English of the terminology inherent in the canonical Tenri religion texts, in particular Ofudesaki. Overall, the analysis of Japanese religious terms shows that Nakayama Miki's efforts have brought to life a pretty clear and logical term system of a new religion, which, at the same time, heavily attracted ordinary residents of the Japanese islands with its poetry and imagery, and which, on the one hand, was totally innovative, and on the other hand, followed the traditions of Kojiki and Nihon Shoki.

Keywords: Tenri religion; Ofudesaki; term system; semasiology; religious terminology

1. Introduction

Today, the total number of new religions in modern Japan is several hundred, according to experts. A renowned Russian culture researcher, historian and religious scholar H. Svetlov (1994) believes that there are now in the Land of the Rising Sun "374 religious organizations, about half of which belonging to the so-called new religions," and "the number of adherents of these new religions is more than a quarter of the total number of all believers". However, "adherents of the new religions greatly outmatch the believers of traditional religious schools in both operations of their organizations and public life overall. It is this, in his opinion, that gives Japanese religion experts good reason to

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[1] Corresponding author.
 E-mail address: mazurlana1983@gmail.com

"describe the new religions as "the most dynamic religious force" of modern Japan, which disregard makes it impossible to ensure a reliable estimation of social development trends" (Svetlov, 1994). *Tenri* religion, which is the principal object of our study, also traditionally belongs to new religions, even though being 200-year-old. Its official birthday is 12 December 1838, with the number of adherents in today's environment reaching almost 3 million people (Wicking, 2020).

Fairly clear was the desire of adherents of this teaching (and of many other new Japanese religions) to extend its influence, to make it world-famous and to involve many new followers from outside Japan. This striving encouraged extensive translation – first of all, into English – of the key canonical texts of this religion: *Ofudesaki, Osashizu* ("Divine Directions") or *Besseki* (wording of the respective introductory lecture dedicated to *Tenri* fundamentals), of them most specific being *Ofudesaki* (*Jap.:* お ふでさき – "The Tip of the Writing Brush"), a poem book written (or better "repeated in writing after the words of God the Parent") by the *Tenri* religion initiator, a simple Japanese village woman named Nakayama Miki, in 1869-1882. In *Ofudesaki*, she wrote and detailed in a poetic form (*tanka*) the key philosophic and ethical fundamentals of this monotheistic syncretistic teaching borrowed from Shintoism, Buddhism and Christianity (Porcu, 2018). That Nakayama Miki opted for a poetic form to write an *Ofudesaki* text was not by chance. In fact, it was a kind of tribute to a Shintoism tradition. Shintoism gods, as the ancient Japanese believed, communicated both within their community and with people solely using poems, which is further proved by the ancient Japanese history and myth chronicles *Kojiki* ("Records of Ancient Matters") and *Nihon Shoki* ("The Chronicles of Japan") and by the traditional Japanese poetology that attributes the writing of the first *waka* (*ad verbum:* "Japanese song" in a *tanka* genre) poem to a sibling of the Sun Goddess *Amaterasu* – God of storms, winds and water *Susanoo-no-Mikoto* (Kavanagh & Jong, 2020). And since it is the second half of XIX century when Japan was undergoing the formation and standardization of the modern literary language, this poetic work gets an important meaning as a unique source of the Japanese language intrinsic to the respective historical epoch, as well as of certain phonetic, lexical and syntactic features of the then *Kansai* dialect. We have already studied this issue in our dissertation paper (Mazur, 2014), and also in a research monograph (Semenko (Mazur), 2017a).

According to various data, the number of active followers of this teaching varies between 2.5 and 3 million people, of which almost 180,000 being preachers. This religious community has more than 38,000 temples both in Japan and somewhere beyond in Europe, the Americas, South-East Asia and Africa. The *Tenrikyo* Church Headquarters are located in the city of Tenri (Nara Prefecture), also the location of the Japan-famous linguistic university (*Tenri-daigaku*) founded in 1925, a scientific library, an ethnographic museum, a hospital, secondary and vocational schools wholly or partially belonging to the religious community. The commencement, at the initiative of the then leaders of the religious community, of a linguistic university – called the Institute of Foreign Languages at the time of its foundation, – a library and an ethnographic museum was intended to train professional translators-preachers who would not only be fluent in foreign languages, but also have knowledge of cultures and everyday life habits of the nations expected to be preached with *Tenri* religion fundamentals in future (Horii, 2018). That *Tenri* religion was anticipated to be extended worldwide is proved by a selection of foreign languages taught at this university at the time of its foundation, this list being gradually supplemented with new ones: English, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Indonesian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, French.

As such, the major task we have in this article is to trace, by the example of translation into English of primarily *Ofudesaki* and also of certain other religious texts and specific reference literature, the adequacy of interpretation of the key philosophic and ethical postulates and dogmata of *Tenri* religion reflected in its term system. It should be meanwhile noted that the *Tenri* term system was developed gradually, and the end of this development process should be associated with the first publication in

1927-1931 of one of the biggest canonical texts of this teaching – *Osashizu* ("Divine Directions") (Osashizu, 1966). However, more than 90% of all terms used today by this religion were created and popularized by Nakayama Miki, because they are first met in the texts written by her as far back as in the second half of XIX century – texts of *Ofudesaki* (Nakayama, 1993) and *Mikagura-uta* (Nakajama, 1999).

2. Methods

The materials for this study are translations into English of canonical *Tenri* religion texts: *Ofudesaki, Osashizu, Mikagura-uta* and *Besseki*, which reflect the philosophic and ethical concept of this syncretic teaching, involve its key postulates and the code of conduct for believers, and describe the inherent religious ceremonies, rites etc. The subject of scientific research is a newly made English term system of the above religion, and the aim is the analysis of the adequacy of translation from Japanese of the terms, which make up this term system, and the word-formation means used during the translation (Vecchi, 2019; Awadh & Shafiull, 2020). The methodological basis for the study is the descriptive and comparative methods and also semasiological (structural and semantic) and derivational (word-formation) analyses of the respective religious terms.

It should first be noted that the principal postulate of *Tenri* religion is the one of "Joyous life" (*Jap:* よき暮し /yōki gurashi/ – *Joyous Life*), which means that the God created humans for joyful and happy living. All people on the earth, whatever the social, racial, national, and any other differences between them, are brothers and sisters. Helping the miserable, outcast and seriously ill, protecting the offended and humiliated, people thus contribute to bringing into life this sacred "Rule of Heaven" or "Truth of Heaven" (that is how *Tenri* – 天理 – is translated from Japanese) and this way make the epoch of overall happiness, peace and well-being on the earth coming closer.

We have singled out more than 800 terminology units (words and phrases) (Semenko (Mazur), 2017b) from the respective canonical texts of *the Tenri* religion; those can be tentatively split into 6 lexical and semantic groups of diverse scopes. We attribute to a terminology vocabulary not only the words and phrases that represent these or those religious notions, but also the lexical units that designate specific cult objects, names of religious rites, religion and hierarchy positions, and specific proper names met in canonical texts of *Tenri* religion. In this case, we completely agree with the opinions of our respected colleagues V. Kazhan and R. Kalinina (2012) who said in this regard: "Once included in the term name, proper names get detached from their origin (toponymic or anthroponymic) and become common words, i.e., are subject to a lexical and semantic process of the appellation".

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Tenri religion, its features and groups of its terms

Group one of the terms named "Sacred Sites" is principally toponymic designations: *Besseki*, *Jiba*, *Moto no Yashiki*, *Oyasato*, which in their figurative meaning can also be attributed to a group of religious notions and categories of *Tenri* religion. Group two of terms, which we have conditionally called "Names of the God and Believers", is the terminology units 神 *(Kami)*, 親 *(Oyasama)*, name choices for the God *(Tenri-Ō-no-Mikoto*, *Oyagami*, *Tsukihi)* and for believers *(yooboku)*, words to designate hierarchy positions within the *Tenri* religion community *(shinbashira*, *toryo)*. Group three of terms is the "Terms to Designate the Names of Religious Rites, Their Elements, Ritual Moves Et Cetera". They principally describe the ceremony ritual of *Tenri* religion. And since all these terms mainly designate specific actions and notions, their synonymic chains are therefore not extensive:

1. よ ふ き づ と め *Yoki tsutome* – *"Joyful Service"*, *"Jolly Service"*, *"Blissful Service"*, *"Delightful Service"*.

2. 神楽 *Kagura* – *"Ritual /Ceremonial/ Dance with Religious Music"*; *"Kagura Ritual Dance"*.

3. 神楽づとめ *Kagura tsutome* – *"Kagura Service"*; *"Kagura – Tenri Ceremonial Service"*.

4. お さ づ け *Osazuke* (about a gift and a rite of healing ailments) – *"Osazuke Rite"*, *"Rite of Healing"*.

5. た す け づ と め *Tasuke tsutome* – *"Saving Service"*; *"Salvation Service"*, *"Ceremony of Mind and Body Salvation"*.

6. て お ど り *Teodori* (about ritual hand movements imitating the process of purification of a human soul from the sin dust) – *"Hand Dance"*; *"Ritual Hand Dance"*, *"Sacred Hand Dance"*.

7. ひ の き し ん *Hinokishin* – *"Daily Donation"*; *"Voluntary Labor"*, *"Voluntary and Unpaid Labor in Favor of the Church"*.

8. つ と め *Tsutome* – *"Service"*, *"Church /God/ Service"*.

9. つ と め 人衆 *Tsutome ninju* – (explan.) *"Term to describe a group of service performers who, accompanied by the music of the winds and the percussion, simulate the God's actions as the God was creating the world and humankind"*.

Group four of terms "Names of Canonical *Tenri* Religion Texts" is the proper names of canonical texts of *Tenri* religion: 神楽歌 *"Mikagura-uta"*, お さ し づ *"Osashizu"*, お ふ で さ き *"Ofudesaki"*, 別 席 *"Besseki"* (wording of the respective lecture).

Group five of terms is the "Terms to Designate the Objects and Facilities of a Religious Cult": *Kanro*, *Kanrodai, Shōko-Mamori*.

Group six brings together the terms that represent the "Key Notions and Conceptual Fundamentals of *Tenri* Teaching": *Denaoshi*, *Yoki gurashi*, *Yorodzu-Tasuke*, *Innen*, *Itte hitotsu*, *Kashimono-Karimono*, *Kirinashi-Fushin*, *Makoto-Shinjitsu*, *Michi-Sugara*, *Moto no ri*, *Osazuke* (in the "Gift of Healing" meaning), *Tanno*, *Tasuke-Ichijo*, *Fushin*, *Hinagata* etc. It is this group of terms that has become the principal material for our study of the adequacy of their English translation and interpretation and of using proper word-formation means for their translation.

3.2. Tenri sacred texts: translation features of religious terms

It is these terms, which comprehension is essential for the *Tenri* religion adherents to understand the fundamentals of a philosophic and ethical concept of *Tenri* religion. For true believers, these terms were a kind of *Tenri* religion "alphabet". It was very clear to those who translated the respective texts into English; that is why the number of terms borrowed from Japanese to designate the key postulates and conceptual fundamentals of *Tenri* teaching – which mostly had an abstract meaning, – in this case was limited (25-30%). Translators of canonical texts thought quite rightfully, for proselytistic reasons, that if they used many exotic foreign words in the respective English texts at the beginning of getting introduced to the Tenri religion doctrines, this could scare the readers away, and so they tried to find their adequate equivalents in English (Brandenburg, 2020). And the borrowed Japanese terms were more frequently met in footnotes or comments to those equivalents. Tables 1-2 provide examples of how the terms い ん ね ん ("Innen") and ふ し ん ("Fushin") are given in an *Ofudesaki* text translated into English. Bracketed is, accordingly, a number of the *Ofudesaki* text chapter and a number of the cited poem (Nakayama, 1993):

Table 1. Example of using the term いんねん (Innen) by Ofudesaki

	Translation	Comment
きゝたくバたつね くるならゆてきか そ よろづいさいのも とのいんねん (1-6)	If you wish to know and will come to Me, I shall teach you the original cause of all things (1-6).	If you ever wish to understand this fundamental truth, it would be good for you to come and learn about that. If you do, I shall teach you in detail the providence of all, beginning with how this world is established and supported.
どのよふなところ の人がでゝきても みないんねんのも のであるから　(4-54)	People come to Me from whatever places. It is because of they are of the original causality (4-54).	Many people from each country will begin to return to Jiba. Although, all of them are all My children, the children of Oyagami. They will be returned who will return because of the connection that exists between parents and children. So, you should never think it's a concurrence when they come back.

Table 2. Example of using the term ふしん (Fushin) by Ofudesaki

	Translation	Comment
このあくじすきやかのけ ん事にてハ ふしんのしやまになると こそしれ (1-35)	Unless this illegal action is not completely removed, know that it will stand in the way of the construction (1-35).	Unless this illegal act is not clearly removed from the Residence, know that it will interfere with the implementation the spiritual construction to save the world. "Construction" here can be understood as a reference to Shuji Nakayama's attempts to become one with the mind of Oyasama by following and realizing Oyagami's intention in various forms of salvation, also in the physical construction of Kami's Residence.
あしさいかすきやかなを りしたならバ あとハふしんのもよふハ かりを (1-38)	If only your leg is made completely well, nothing will remain but to prepare for the construction (1-38).	If the illegal actions are not eliminated and the condition of your leg is recovered to health, all that remains is the arrangements for the construction. "Construction" here is understood as the construction of the mind, that is, the clarification of the minds of all people in the world.

As for the translation of religious terms attributable to other lexical and semantic groups from our list above, which mainly involve the terms to designate concrete rather than abstract notions (i.e., toponymic names, names of objects and facilities of a religious cult, names of canonical religious texts, rites etc.), – in these cases, quite the contrary, direct borrowings from Japanese were used much more frequently (65-70%) (Horii, 2019). Let us illustrate this with the translation of the respective terms in an *Ofudesaki* text, in particular the terms から "Kara", にほん "Nihon" and かんろうだい "Kanrodai". *Kanrodai* (*ad verbum:* "Stand for the Heavenly Dew" – the name of a special stand to collect *kanro* – a heavenly dew; a symbolic monument shaped as a high stone-made hexagonal bowl set up at *Jiba*; symbolizes the origin of the world and humanity, their continuous development and improvement; the key religious rites and ceremonies take place around it (Konrad, 1937). (*Jiba* /*ad verbum:* "Sacred Site"/ – a religious term to designate the place where *Kanrodai* is set up). *Kara, Nihon* (also *Tenjiku*) – according to the *Tenri* religion concept, these proper names refer to three steps of approaching God the Parent and its Teaching (Mazur, 2014).

Table 3. Example of using the term からとにほん (Kara and Nihon) by Ofudesaki

	Translation	Comment
これからハからとにほんのはなしする なにをゆうともハかりあるまい (2-31)	From now on, I shall talk about Kara and Nihon. You may not understand whatever I tell you (2-31).	Nihon "means the place settled by those whose use of mind and ways of living are near the intention of God the Parent. On the contrary Kara means the places inhabited by those whose use of mind and way of living are still far from God's intention. Tenjiku, in turn, refers to places inhabited by those whose use of mind and way of living are still farther away from God's intention" (Nakayama, 1993).
このさきハからとにほんをハけるてな これハかりたらせかいをさまる (2-34)	Hereafter, I shall make a distinction between Kara and Nihon. When it is done, the world will settle (2-34).	The expression "Nihon" means to the place where the Jiba is located, where Oyagami created human beings. Thus, it concerns the place where the teachings were first taught and the origin of the salvation of the world (Nakayama, 1999). Further, "Kara" means the place where the first people went after creation. So, it refers to the place where the teachings should be passed on.

Table 4. Example of using the term かんろだい (Kanrodai) by Ofudesaki

	Translation	Comment
めつらしいこのよはじ めのかんろたい これがにほんのをさま りとなる (2-39)	Marvelous is the Kanrodai of this world's beginning. It will be the cause of peace in Nihon (2-39).	When the wonderful Kanrodai – which discloses Kami's providence at the origin of the world and humanity – is built and the Service of the Kanrodai is committed, Oyagami's true intention will spread to Nihon and to the whole world, allowing all humanity to be reborn and live the Joyous Life.
このはなしどふゆう事 であろをなら かんろふたいにひらば ちをのせ (8-80)	Further about this talk: place a flat vessel on the Kanrodai (8-80).	If you ask how I can give you this Food of Heaven, as soon as you put the flat vessel on top of Kanrodai, I shall give it to you from Heaven.

Hence, we have defined and illustrated with specific examples the key trend followed during the translation into English of the terminology inherent in the canonical *Tenri* religion texts, in particular Ofudesaki (Nakayama, 1993). This trend says that the terms to designate the key conceptual postulates and philosophic and ethical fundamentals of *Tenri* religion were mainly translated by way of searching the respective lexical equivalents in English, while in the rest of cases prevalent were direct borrowings from Japanese that could be deemed exoticisms (Osashizu, 1966). The total number of borrowed Japanese terms in translations of canonical *Tenri* texts into English is 75%. However, the adequacy of conveying the meaning of these terms can be solely estimated from the analysis of their English interpretation, which was usually given at the end of a chapter or text, as well as of the English synonymic chain, which was sometimes given after the interpretation of a borrowed term (Yoshikawa, 2019). Overall, the analysis of Japanese religious terms shows that Nakayama Miki's efforts have brought to life a pretty clear and logical term system of a new religion, which, at the same time, heavily attracted ordinary residents of the Japanese islands with its poetry and imagery, and which, on the one hand, was totally innovative, and on the other hand, followed the traditions of *Kojiki* and *Nihon Shoki* (Porcu, 2017; Borys & Garmash, 2019). Some of these term neologisms – like *Jiba, Yoki gurashi, Osazuke, Hinokishin* – can be even attributed to dialecticisms, since they reproduce the language of those who spoke *Kansai* dialect of the second half of XIX century (Kazhan & Kalinina, 2012; Omori, 2016; Akbulut, 2020; Horii, 2020).

As for the language means and word-formation means typical of the terminology of *Tenri* religion initiated by Nakayama Miki, in this regard it did not deviate from the traditions of the general Japanese lexical system (Huang, 2016). In particular, composition in the Japanese language was and is still known to be a much more efficient way of word-formation than affixation, abbreviation, re-derivation, conversion, etc. (or their combination) (Brandenburg, 2020; Horii, 2019). Also, borrowing of foreign vocabulary has always been very efficient for the Japanese lexical system. But if in VI-XVIII centuries mainly Chinese vocabulary was borrowed – with some slight inclusions from Portuguese, Spanish and Dutch during XVI-XVIII centuries, – then starting from the second half of XIX century, English has become the principal "supplier" of borrowed vocabulary to the Japanese language. At some point of time, the Chinese vocabulary had such a strong influence on the formation of the Japanese lexical system that it gave the grounds to academician M. Konrad to assert in one of

his works, "as far as the vocabulary is concerned, the modern Japanese language can be referred to as the Japanese-Chinese language.

4. Conclusions

According to some Japanese and foreign experts, at the beginning of XIX century 47.5% of the total Japanese vocabulary was borrowed Chinese vocabulary – so-called kango. However, in the term system of Tenri religion, one can consider just a single word to be directly borrowed from Chinese; and this word is Innen (因縁) – a Buddhist term, which meant "causality", "cause"; "doom", "fate" etc. in Buddhism, and which acquired an additional, conceptual meaning – "original cause of all things" in Tenri religion. As it might be expected, the composition has become the most efficient way to form new religious terms for the Tenri religion term system. According to our estimates, the composition was used to form almost half (46%) the total of terms, for example: Tsukihi, Kanrodai, Kashimono-Karimono, Kirinashi-Fushin, Makoto-Shinjitsu, Ofudesaki, Shōko-Mamori, Tasuke tsutome, etc.

The lexical and syntactic way of word formation (mainly based on the respective phrases) makes almost one third (27%) of all terms: Itte hitotsu, Yoki gurashi, Yoki tsutome, Moto no ri, Michi-Sugara, Tasuke-Ichijo (-no Michi). The rest of the Tenri religion terms (25%), namely: Jiba, Denaoshi, Besseki, yooboku, Kanro, Osazuke, shinbashira, toryo, Hinagata etc., have been formed by way of re-interpretation of their original lexical meaning, i.e., by a lexical and semantic way. Finally, let us note that the relevance of our survey is also about the fact that the translations of canonical Tenri religion texts into English have subsequently become a kind of illustrative sample, and where the translators did not master the Japanese language – also the key source for translation of these texts into other foreign languages.

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İngilizce Tenri Din Terim Sistemi (semasiyolojik ve türevsel hususlar)

Özet

Makale, modern Japonya'nın "yeni" senkretik dinleri olarak adlandırılan dinler arasındaki en eski dinlerden biri olan Tenri dininin (Japon. Tenri-kyo / 天理教 /) temel felsefi, etik ve kavramsal temellerini İngilizceye çevirmek için yeterli seçim ve dilbilimsel araçların kullanılması sorununu araştırılmaktadır. Çalışmanın temel amacı, bir zamanlar bu doktrinin başlatıcısı tarafından oluşturulan dini terimler sisteminin İngilizce çevirisinin yeterliliğini analiz etmektir. Yöntem olarak dilbilimsel analiz ve karşılaştırma kullanıldı. Araştırma sırasında, aşağıdaki sonuçlar elde edildi: Yazarlar, Tenri dininin kanonik metinlerinde, özellikle de Ofudesaki'de bulunan terimbilimi İngilizce'ye çevirirken kullanılan ana eğilimin belirli örneklerle belirlediler ve örneklediler. Genel olarak, Japon dini terimlerinin analizi, Nakayama Miki'nin çabalarıyla, yeni dinin oldukça açık ve mantıklı bir terimleri sistemini uyguladığını, ve bu sistem aynı zamanda şiirleri ve imgeleriyle Japon adalarının sıradan sakinlerini

güçlü bir şekilde cezbeden ve bir yandan tamamen yenilikçi olan, öte yandan Kojiki ve Nihon Shoki'nin geleneklerini takip eden olduğunu, göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Tenri dini; Ofudesaki; terimbilim sistemi; semasiyoloji; dini terimbilimi.

AUTHOR BIODATA

Svitlana M. Mazur is a PhD in Philology, Associate Professor at the Department of Foreign Languages for Mathematical Faculties, Head of the Section of the Faculty of Mechanics and Mathematics of the Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. She is the author of more than 15 scientific works about methods of teaching foreign languages to students of mathematical specialties, methods of teaching English, Japanese dialects (Kansai dialect), Japanese dialectology.