

東洋大学長 殿
To the President of Toyo University

ウクライナからの研究員 研究報告書
Research Report by Researcher from Ukraine

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研究課題名 Research topic	“Biblical Metaphors in Japanese: Semantic Shift, Idiomaticity, and Cultural Integration”
研究期間 Research period	2026 年 5 月 25 日～2026 年 6 月 10 日（17 日間）
研究協力教員氏名（所属） Research partner (affiliation)	大谷 英樹 助教（文学部） Hideki Otani, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Letters, Toyo University
研究成果発表 （予定も含む） Publication/Presentation (including future ones)	Journal Article (planned) 1. <i>The Language of Japanese Orthodox Liturgical Chant: Translation, Tradition, and Cultural Adaptation</i> To be submitted to a Ukrainian peer-reviewed academic journal. Conference Presentation (planned) 2. <i>Seishogo (聖書語) as a Linguistic and Cultural Phenomenon: Origins, Development, and Contemporary Usage</i> To be presented at an academic conference in the fields of Japanese Studies, Translation Studies, or Linguistics.
研究成果の概要 Summary of your research achievements	During my research stay at Toyo University, I explored the role of metaphor and religious language in Japanese biblical translations through access to specialized resources, discussions with scholars, and direct observation of religious life in Japan. The research provided new insights into the historical development of Japanese Bible translations, the influence of Seishogo (聖書語, “Bible language”) on modern Japanese, and the relationship between language, culture, and religion. Meetings with representatives of the Japanese Orthodox Church, together with field observations, helped place textual research within a broader cultural and social context. The experience opened several new avenues for future research, that of Japanese Orthodox liturgical language, Bible language in contemporary Japanese, and the translation of religious poeticism.

Research Report by Researcher from Ukraine

I participated in the short-term research program at Toyo University to advance my research on Japanese biblical translations and the role of metaphor in cross-cultural communication. The program allowed me to access resources that are difficult to obtain in Ukraine, engage in discussions with Japanese scholars, observe religious life in Japan, and exchange ideas with students. The experience broadened my perspective on language, culture, and translation, while also helping me identify several new directions for future research.

1. Research Development

As an educator working with both Japanese and English, I have long been interested in how people learn and understand languages. Building on my previous research on phraseological units, I chose metaphor as a key area of study because metaphors reveal how people conceptualize the world and how ideas change when they move between languages and cultures.

My research focuses on biblical metaphors. However, I approach them not primarily as religious concepts but as culturally rich linguistic expressions that are transformed when introduced into Japanese. During my stay at Toyo University, I was able to consult specialized materials, discuss my research with faculty members, and meet representatives of the Japanese Orthodox Church. These conversations provided valuable insight into how faith is expressed through language and how translation shapes communication.

One of the most important discoveries was realizing how certain metaphors and idioms can travel across borders, cultures, and even religions. Some metaphorical concepts appear to be universal enough to be understood by different communities while still adapting to local cultural realities. This highlighted the role of metaphor as both a tool of communication and a mechanism of cultural exchange.

Another important area of research involved exploring the history of Bible translation in Japan. For the first time in my academic career, I was able to directly examine several major Japanese Bible translations from different historical periods. Looking at these texts side by side showed that translation choices cannot be understood through language alone. They are closely connected to the social, cultural, and historical circumstances in which the translations were produced. The needs of religious communities, the intended audience, and the broader cultural environment all influenced how translators approached their work. This realization opened a new perspective that I hope to pursue in future research.

I also became interested in the uniquely Japanese concept of *Seishogo* (聖書語), or “Bible language.” Although Christianity remains a minority religion in Japan, the language used in Bible translations has had a lasting influence on Japanese vocabulary and expression. Some terms that are now

considered part of standard Japanese either originated from or were significantly shaped by Bible translation efforts. This finding sheds new light on the relationship between religion and language and demonstrates how religious communication can become part of a broader linguistic culture.

The program also encouraged me to explore the people behind the history of Japanese Orthodoxy. In Ukraine, figures such as St. Nicholas of Japan and Paul Nakai Tsugumaro are often discussed mainly in connection with missionary work and translation efforts. In Japan, however, their lives and contributions are viewed in a much broader context. I also learned more about and Takuma Sawabe, the first Japanese Orthodox Christian and priest. Their stories provided a richer understanding of how Christianity developed within a Japanese cultural setting.

Another area that captured my interest was the translation of the Book of Psalms. Unlike many biblical texts, the Psalms are poetic in nature, which creates unique translation challenges. Exploring different approaches, from highly literary adaptations to more literal translations, revealed the remarkable diversity of translation strategies used in Japan. This has become another topic that I hope to examine further in the future.

Finally, as a music enthusiast, I was fascinated by Japanese Orthodox liturgical music. Listening to Orthodox chants performed in Japanese offered a unique opportunity to observe how language, sound, and tradition meet and interact. The way a centuries-old musical tradition has been adapted to the Japanese language presents another promising field for scholarly exploration.

2. Field Study: Religion in Everyday Life

As part of my research stay, I participated in a field study trip to Kamakura together with Prof. Hirahata, Ms. Yoshimura, and my fellow researcher Yuliia Kuzmenko. The trip allowed me to observe Japanese religious practices in their everyday setting and to better understand the coexistence of different religious traditions in Japan.

Our first destination was Hasedera Temple. Besides learning about the site's history and architecture, I was able to observe visitors engaging in prayer, making offerings, and performing other religious practices. The temple's natural surroundings contributed strongly to the atmosphere of the site. This experience helped me understand how closely spirituality, community life, and nature are connected in Japan.

We also visited Tsurugaoka Hachimangū, the most important Shinto shrine in Kamakura. This visit was especially valuable for understanding religious diversity. Observing visitors participate in Shinto rituals while also recognizing the close presence of Buddhist institutions illustrated how different religious traditions coexist and interact within Japanese society.

Another memorable destination was Hokokuji Temple, a temple of the Rinzai school of Zen Buddhism. Its famous bamboo grove and tranquil environment offered a very different experience from both urban life and the busier religious sites I had visited earlier. The atmosphere encouraged reflection and highlighted another aspect of Japanese religious culture, one centered on quiet contemplation and simplicity.

Throughout the trip, I had the opportunity to discuss Japanese history, culture, language, religion, and pedagogy with Prof. Hirahata. These conversations were extremely valuable and helped connect my

observations to broader academic and cultural contexts. Their extensive knowledge and experience provided important guidance for my future academic and pedagogical development.

Overall, the field study enriched my understanding of Japanese religion beyond books and texts. It complemented my research by allowing me to observe how religious traditions are experienced and practiced in daily life.

3. Educational Exchange

An important part of the program was the opportunity to interact with Toyo University students. I delivered a lecture entitled “How Translation Shapes Text and Expression: What Readers Don't See”, which introduced students to several aspects of metaphor, translation, and intercultural communication.

The lecture included examples and case studies showing how culturally specific metaphors change when they move between languages. We explored how translation strategies such as adaptation, omission, and literal translation influence meaning. Students were also introduced to the idea that some metaphors become natural parts of a language over time, while others change significantly or disappear altogether. In addition, I shared examples from my teaching experience and discussed how modern approaches in cognitive linguistics can support translation and language education.

The discussion that followed was particularly rewarding. Students showed strong interest in metaphor as a way people organize and understand their experiences in addition to the broader challenges of translation. Many commented on the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity to contexts, shared observations about translating literature, religious concepts, and culturally specific expressions, leading to an engaging exchange of ideas.

We also discussed the growing role of artificial intelligence in education and translation. Students thoughtfully considered both the advantages and limitations of AI-generated translations and emphasized the continuing importance of human judgment when interpreting meaning, nuance, and cultural context.

The lecture and discussion demonstrated a high level of curiosity and engagement. The opportunity to exchange ideas with students was one of the highlights of the program, and it provided valuable insight into how contemporary students in Japan think about language, technology, and intercultural communication.

Conclusion

My stay at Toyo University once again demonstrated how research, field observation, and educational exchange can complement one another. Access to specialized resources, discussions with scholars and religious representatives, direct observation of religious life, and meaningful interaction with students inspired several new research directions that will influence both my future academic work and my teaching. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Assistant Professor Hideki Otani for graciously agreeing to serve as my host professor and Lecturer Kiyoshi Kobayashi for providing a precious opportunity to give a lecture during his class. Just as importantly, it strengthened the foundations for continued cooperation between Toyo University and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, and I hope these connections will continue to develop in the years ahead.