

# Three Memorable Things about Professor Randolph H. Thrasher

Keiko Yamazato

It has been an amazing experience to encounter Professor Randolph H. Thrasher on the campus of Okinawa Christian Institute in Nishihara. There are three things I remember whenever his name is called or the sound of his name is ringing around us. They are "Themes from the Bible," Korea and a writing style of English. Let me describe how these three are connected with Professor Thrasher.

"Themes from the Bible" is a textbook written by Professor Thrasher and I have been using it to teach the course of English Bible Reading to OCU students and OCJC students. Many of them are not Christians, but they seem to try to understand what Thrasher-sensei thinks about that particular part they are reading harder than to try to understand the Bible itself. Thrasher-sensei's thoughts works as a soft touch guideline of the Bible. Here are some examples of Thrasher-sensei's words which they like.

I think ... that prayer is a conversation with God and, in that conversation, we may ask God to help us or to grant us something. But prayer is also a time to quietly listen to what God wants us to do.

There is another advantage in using the Bible to learn to read. ... the vocabulary of the English Bible is rather limited. There are only 8000 different words in the King James Version, ... 40 to 50 thousand that Shakespeare used.

I believe that baptism is an outward sign of a commitment an individual makes to God. I know that not all Christians agree with me, but I think that the form of the outward sign is not the important part. What is important

is the person's relationship with God.

Learning Thrasher-sensei's attitude to the Bible and Christianity, they show their interest in studying cultural difference between Christianity and their Ancestor worshiping and in the individual relationship with God.

The second memorable thing is "Korea." Okinawa Christian Graduate School of Intercultural Communication offers a special lecture by a well-known scholar to the public every year. Thrasher-sensei introduced a Korean scholar in the field of TESTING, Professor Wonkey Lee at Seoul National University of Education. He gave a thoughtful lecture about English education in Korea which attracted me greatly and I decided to visit Korea and observe English classes there. My wish came true. Thanks to Thrasher-sensei and Professor Lee, I and one of our graduate school students could visit Korea twice and observe ordinary English classes at two elementary schools and one Middle High School. They allowed us to video tape their classes. I treasure the tape as the most valuable document!

The last but not least, it is a writing style of English. Thrasher-sensei's way of threading English words is the one I want to acquire. It has a pleasant rhythm of the English language so that I enjoy reading that textbook and speech manuscripts of the Monday Morning Service written by him. I started to copy his written materials in order to take that rhythm into my English. After practicing writing by copying them, one day I realized my English sentences became to have a rhythm instead of being just choppy grammatical sentences. This made me work much harder to do simultaneous interpretation with pleasure than ever before. There came a graduate student who also works

well in simultaneous interpretation, but she wanted to improve her English and asked me if there was any better way to practice. I told her of my experience in copying Thrasher-sensei's written materials and my satisfaction. She immediately asked me to do that practice with her. We decided to do that exercise in class and both of us competed with each other to see how fast we could finish typing his manuscripts of the Monday Morning Service. She always won the competition. The other day, Professor Thrasher said that the student's English was very beautiful. I wonder if hers is originally

beautiful or that practice made her produce beautiful English. Anyway, Thrasher-sensei is satisfied with her English. Great!

If I hadn't encountered Professor Randolph H. Thrasher, I would have never had a chance to teach the course of English Bible Reading, to go to Korea and observe English classes and to learn how to thread English words. I would like to express my gratitude from the depth of my heart.

May God bless you, Professor Randolph H. Thrasher!