

Tenrikyo

newsletter



Annual Yoboku Gathering

Sixty-one people attended this year's Yoboku Gathering that was held on November 15th. At the gathering, participants watched a recorded lecture by Tenri University professor Ikuo Higashibaba on the Ofudesaki, originally delivered in August at the Scripture Study Seminar. Afterward, participants split into small groups for a discussion session. Following evening service, a social gathering was held, where participants fostered connections while enjoying performances and food prepared by our various districts.

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

www.TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org

December 2025

“A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

- *The Revival of Cassette Tapes* -

December has arrived and we will be concluding the year soon. On January 26 of the new year, we will welcome the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama. With just over a month left, I hope that each of you will continue striving toward the goals you have set for your pre-anniversary activities.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude for all your efforts this year in working toward the realization of the Joyous Life and in supporting our Mission Headquarters in America.

I humbly ask for your continued support and cooperation in the coming year, just as you have given in this one.

Now, in an earlier issue (September 2023), I wrote an article titled “The Revival of Records.” Afterwards, I learned that cassette tapes have also made a comeback. In other words, cassette tapes are making a resurgence as well. It seems that young people from Generation Z are embracing it as something “fresh” and not something that is just “old”.

So why are cassette tapes making such a resurgence?

As I wrote when discussing the revival of album records, it seems the reason lies in the “comforting” quality of analog sounds.

When listening to music on CDs or through digital streaming, the sound is certainly clear. I believe that is because the “crackling” noises you hear when playing a record are removed. Therefore, the frequency of the noise is removed and this likely makes the music sound clearer. However, at the same time, it seems to create a sense of “coldness.” In other words, because the sound is too clear, the feeling of “warmth” disappears.

(continued on page 14)

Coming Up

- * Annual Cleaning
@ Mission HQ 12/26
- * Annual Mochi Pounding
@ Mission HQ 12/28
- * TSA Winter Conference
@ Mission HQ 12/26 ~ 12/29
- * Oyasato Seminar Preliminary Session
@ Mission HQ 12/28 ~ 12/30

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November Monthly Service Prayer

November 16, 2025

Before You, God the Parent, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto, who is enshrined in this altar, I, Hiroshi Alexander Fukaya, Bishop of the Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America, invoke with reverence.

God the Parent, after awaiting the arrival of the promised time, You received Oyasama as Your living Shrine. Over the years, this path of single-hearted salvation has spread to the world, including America and Canada, and those who steadfastly follow the Divine Model of Oyasama increased. As we continue to receive Your deep parental love, we are truly grateful.

Day and night we offer our gratitude, as we encourage each other to make the Joyous Life world a reality. As this fine day is our November monthly service, from now, receiving the truth of the Jiba, we service performers will unite our minds and spiritedly perform the seated service and Teodori service dance.

We Yoboku and followers have spiritedly gathered before You today, to offer our gratitude as repayment for our daily blessings. As we spiritedly sing the Songs for the Service, we ask that You, God the Parent, become spirited as well.

Yesterday, we were able to successfully hold our Yoboku Gathering here. Thank You very much. This was a wonderful opportunity for our friends in the path from various regions to gather and share their spirited minds as part of our pre-anniversary activities. Please guide us so that the participants can become even more spirited when they return to their homes and do missionary and salvation work.

Today, as we approach the final stage of our pre-anniversary activities, let us bring joy to Oyasama by taking part in our activities to further our spiritual growth. We pledge to have as many Yoboku and followers as possible to return to Jiba for Oyasama's 140th Anniversary.

God the Parent, we humbly ask for You to accept our minds of sincerity and to guide us where we may be lacking. Please provide us blessings so that the hearts of all people will be purified and help us transform this world into the Joyous Life, even one day sooner. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

November Monthly Service Sermon

by Rev. Keiji Sakakura

~ *Rejoicing the Knot* ~

I would like to express my admiration and appreciation to all of you for your daily efforts, full of your sincerity, on behalf of the path. Today, we have spiritedly performed the November monthly service at the Mission Headquarters in America. Though I may be in wanting for this task, I have been appointed to speak before you, so I humbly ask for your kind attention.

At present, I am serving as the head minister of the Hon'ai Atlanta Church. This year marks the 30th year since I received the grant at the Foundress's Sanctuary to establish this church. Although our church still has many shortcomings, we are doing our best as a church representing the southern region of the United States.

Several passages of the Osashizu have the phrase, "this path is a one of years accumulated." This year marks 188th year since the founding of the Teachings. We are truly blessed in the path today, but it was by no means something that came about all at once. The path we see today came about through many years of steadfast efforts undertaken by our predecessors, relying solely upon Oyasama's words, as they made

their way through a path of hardship and suffering, often facing ridicule, opposition, and even persecution.

The thirty years of the Hon'ai Atlanta Church are still like those of an infant taking toddler steps. Yet, just as a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, we strive each day to walk the path joyously, never forgetting our smiles. No matter how splendid a tree one plants, if it has no roots and cannot draw up water, it will not survive. Likewise, a tree that has just been planted is still very weak. Only through continuous care over many years does it grow into a magnificent garden tree. In the same way, through being nurtured and guided patiently over a long span of years, we gradually become useful Yoboku and churches able to answer God the Parent's calling. In our path, such manner is taught to us as "the truth of years accumulated." What matters the most is not merely the actual number of years but how sincerely and wholeheartedly we have devoted ourselves and how we have accumulated years full of our sincere efforts. The way we exert our hearts and carry ourselves during those many years will manifest in the future over endless generations, for better or worse. With this in mind, I feel we must take care to advance each day with sincerity and awareness.

In the course of our lives, we are sometimes



Rev. Keiji Sakakura, head minister of the
Hon'ai Atlanta Church (Atlanta, GA)

shown various illnesses and troubles. Even when we strive with all our heart to live in full accord with the intention of God the Parent, unexpected difficulties and sufferings may arise. Oyasama taught us to understand such situations as “knots.” She also taught us that “buds sprout from knots.” When we are given a “knot,” our efforts to make the most of it are indispensable for our growth as human beings. In the world of carpentry, there are expressions such as “living knots” and “dead knots.” In the path, we also often say that “Let us make this knot into a living knot.” Among knots found in a timber used for pillars, living knots are strong; they gain a glossy sheen over the years and become slightly raised over the surface. A dead knot, on the other hand, weakens the pillar: the knot gradually caves in and eventually falls out, leaving a hole. If we think about wood or bamboo, knots are indeed hard. Also, knots often become the place where breaking occurs. Yet, it is precisely because there are

knots that new buds can sprout from them. If we continue to make every possible effort to bring joy to God the Parent, even when we are shown “knots” in the form of illness or troubles, there is no need for worry. By leaning on God the Parent and walking the path with spirited joy, I am convinced that we can make our way through any “knot.” Moreover, I also believe that we will surely be guided from such “knot” to an ever-greater state of joy. As we accumulate the truth of years, we come to see each “knot” as an opportunity to make a great leap forward.

I believe that how we overcome the knots of life—such as sudden accidents, misfortunes, illnesses, or personal hardships—is where we, as followers of the faith, truly show our spiritual strength. No matter the circumstance, it is important to maintain a heart of joy and never forget gratitude. Even in times of sorrow, pain, or difficulty, the key is to direct our attention toward small moments of joy. For example, the laughter of children, the blue sky on a clear day, the beauty of a sunset, the blessing of a daily meal, or the chance to watch one’s grandchildren grow—by cherishing even these fleeting joys and feeling happiness in our hearts, I believe God the Parent accepts that joyous heart and grants us the strength to face and endure difficult situations. It may also be good to make a habit of saying words of gratitude, such as “thank you.” A respected reverent known for their salvation work once said, “In this world—in God the Parent’s world—the first to recover from illness are

those who are able to say that illness is a good thing for them.” As God the Parent says in the Ofudesaki:

The reason Tsukihi began human beings was the desire to see you lead a joyous life.

Ofudesaki XIV- 25

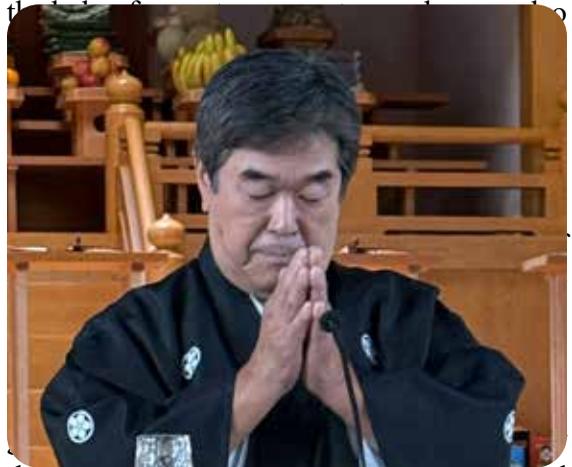
So, in order to see new buds sprout from a knot, I live each day upon making a resolve, “to live this day joyously.” I believe that because there are knots in our lives, our lives become more interesting and we grow stronger. Therefore, it is my intention to accept the next knot that comes my way with a forward-looking attitude. My parent church, Hon’ai Grand Church, has set its Three Years, One Thousand Days guideline for the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama as “Live today joyously.” Each day, I look at the poster of this slogan displayed in the sanctuary, and I remind myself to face whatever knot may come by living “today joyously.”

Originally, the word “knot” refers to a joint or connecting point—like a bend in a tree limb—or a time of change, such as the change of seasons; in other words, it signifies a boundary or transition from one stage to the next. A knot is not limited to times of hardship; there are also many positive knots filled with hope and opportunity. In the path, Oyasama’s anniversaries and church anniversaries are regarded as knots. In our personal lives as well, we encounter joyful milestones such as entering school, starting

a job, or getting married. Since Oyasama withdrew from physical life in 1887, we have observed Her anniversary every ten years. For us, these are truly great knots. Among the many days in which we are enabled to live with joy, Oyasama’s anniversaries are days of profound opportunity to reflect deeply on Oyasama’s parental love, to discern the intention behind the blessings we receive, and to take a great step forward in our spiritual progress.

This year marks fifty years since I first came to America. To such extent, this year is a turning point in my life. Over the fifty years, I have experienced many knots. Being told by the third head minister of Hon’ai Grand Church in 1975, “Go to America,” and making the decision to do so; deciding to settle permanently in the United States; choosing to do missionary work in the south; and later receiving the grant to establish a church—all of these were turning points where I felt God’s wondrous workings guiding me toward Atlanta. I still remember the time when I left the Mission Headquarters’ Missionary House and headed alone to the East Coast. My intended destination was Florida, but while traveling east along I-10, my car broke down several times. I managed to continue traveling eastward, making a resolve that wherever the car broke down completely, that would become the place of my missionary work. Eventually, I managed to reach the home of a friend in Pensacola, Florida. Three months later, my wife, whom I had recently married, joined me in Pensacola,

and a year after that, our first son was born. As we struggled day by day to get by, an elderly woman we met in Pensacola took notice of our situation. She said, “It must be difficult to live in a rural place like this in Florida. You should move to a bigger city.” She went on to say, “My daughter lives in Atlanta—go there and rely on her.” That advice marked another significant knot for us. Encouraged by her words, the three of us made the move to the unfamiliar city of Atlanta, even though we had no acquaintances or place to stay. The daughter she mentioned turned out to be a kind woman who worked as a real estate agent. Since my wife and I had no credit history or employment, we couldn’t take out a loan ourselves, but she found a house for us where we could take over the existing mortgage. I thought, this must be God’s guidance. When I contacted my parent church in Japan, they immediately told me, “That’s the one; take it.” So, before even seeing the house, I replied, “We’ll buy it.” That house became our current church. Looking back now, I can hardly believe we took on such an adventure, but I truly feel that God the Parent had gone ahead and prepared the way for us. Through wondrous circumstances, we were guided and drawn to this place. As the mortgage was being transferred, we learned that the seller of the house was a Christian pastor and his family. I remember feeling happy, thinking that this house had special ties to God. We first relocated the fellowship to Atlanta, and later, in 1995, it became a church. The church building itself was built in our backyard with



these thirty years, my daughter’s husband represented the church for the Spring Grand Service, my wife and I attended the Oyasama Birth Celebration Service, and our daughter’s family returned joyfully for the Children’s Pilgrimage. Last month, my wife and I returned to Jiba for the Autumn Grand Service.

For next year’s 140th Anniversary of Oyasama, I believe that many of you will be returning to Jiba. From Atlanta as well, as of now, my wife and I, our son and his wife, and six other members will be making the pilgrimage, with several more still considering joining us.

Together with all of you, I wish to welcome the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama with joy in our hearts daily, and with gratitude and smiles for being alive at this very moment. I also hope to increase the number of days when, at the end of the day, I can say to myself, “Today was truly a wonderful day.”

Thank you for your attention.

(translation by T. Hayashi)

1) DECEMBER MONTHLY SERVICE (12/21)

Officiant: Bishop

Assistants: Satoru Onishi, Zen Yukimoto

Director: Kuniaki Hasegawa

Attendants: Motohiro Iwahashi, Steven Yukimoto

Offerings Officiant: Kinpei Ito

Sermon: Junjiro Nakatomi (E)

2) SERVICE PERFORMER APPOINTMENT

The following individuals will be appointed as service performers as of January 18, 2026 (Sun): Kaori Yamamoto, wife of the head minister of San Mateo Church; Kaori Nomachi, wife of the head minister of LA Central Church.

3) PASSING AWAY FOR REBIRTH

On November 13 at 7:40 PM, Mrs. Wakie Onishi, wife of the former head minister of the California Church, passed away for rebirth at the age of 74. Funeral services were held on November 23 from 10:30 AM at the Mission Headquarters. We would like to acknowledge and appreciate her many years of service and dedication.

4) TSA WINTER CONFERENCE

- The TSA Winter Conference will be held from December 26 (Fri) ~ 29 (Mon).
- Program: Lectures, Mochi Pounding (Mochitsuki), HARP Activities, & Ski Trip
- Registration forms have already been distributed. You can find them in the back of the sanctuary at the Mission HQ.
- Registration Deadline: December 21
- Please register early, as there are only a limited amount of spots to fill.

5) END-OF-YEAR / NEW YEAR ACTIVITY SCHEDULE

The Mission Headquarters will be holding our annual end-of-year cleanup from 12:30 PM following the December 26th Day Service (Fri). If you can take part in the cleaning, and also if you plan to request lunch for that day, please contact the Mission HQ by November 30 (Sun). We will be holding our annual Rice Cake Pounding (Mochitsuki), planned for December 28 (Sun), and we ask for hinokishin from those that live near the Mission Headquarters. Also, we will be holding our New Year's Day Service on January 1 (Thu) from 7 AM (we will open the portals and prepare the offerings from 6:40). If you are a service performer local to the Mission Headquarters and will not be able to take part in performing the New Year's Day Service, please contact the Mission Headquarters by November 30 (Sun).

6) TWO DAY COURSE

The Two Day Course will be held from March 21~22, 2026, at both the Mission Headquarters and at the New York Center. Registration will open from November. At least four applicants are needed to hold this course. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2026.

7) SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE IN JIBA

Shuyoka (three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba) English Class will be held from the end of March next year. Non-Japanese applicants must apply for a visa, which can take several months, so please let the Mission Headquarters know as soon as possible.

8) SHUYOKA SPANISH CLASS

Next year, the Shuyoka (three-month Spiritual Development Course in Jiba) Spanish Class will be

held from September 1 to November 27. Non-Japanese applicants must apply for a visa, so please let the Mission Headquarters know as soon as possible.

9) HEAD MINISTERS QUALIFICATION COURSE

The Head Ministers Qualification Course English Class, usually held from September 27 upon fulfilling the minimum of five participants, has been rescheduled next year to begin from October 27.

10) TENRIKYO HINOKISHIN DAY

We request each district to begin preparations for next year's Tenrikyo Hinokishin Day. We will distribute the Hinokishin Day Plan Report documents to all district representatives, and we ask you to submit them to the Mission Headquarters by December 26.

11) APPLICATION FOR SPECIAL ICHIRETSUKAI SCHOLARSHIP

The application for the Special Ichiretsukai Scholarship is now available for students who will attend college or university from the fall of 2026. The application deadline is December 31, 2025.

12) 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF OYASAMA "SPECIAL EXHIBITION"

- From this fall, a 140th Anniversary of Oyasama commemorative exhibition centered around mementos related to Oyasama will be opened.
- Dates: (2025) Nov. 22~26, 29, 30, Dec. 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 25 & 26
(2026) Jan. 24~27 Time: 10AM ~ 3 PM
 - Exhibit opens at 1PM on the 26th of each month; morning only on Oct. 25
 - On January 26, 2026, exhibit will be open from 2:30 ~ 4:30 PM
- Place: South Right Wing 2 of the Oyasato-yakata building-complex; B1 & B2 Floors
- Please refer to the Tenrikyo website (Japanese only): <https://www.tenrikyo.org/se140/>

13) JANUARY 2026 LAY MINISTER PREPARATORY COURSE / HEAD MINISTER QUALIFICATION COURSE SCHEDULE CHANGE

- Application Submission days: January 23, 24 (as usual)
- Dates: Lay Minister Preparatory Course Original – 1/27 ~ 2/10 Updated – 2/1 ~ 2/15
Head Minister Qualification Course Original – 1/27 ~ 2/16 Updated – 2/1 ~ 2/21

14) HEAD MINSTER RECEPTION PARTY FOLLOWING THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF OYASAMA CELEBRATION

- Eligibility: All church head ministers*, excluding directly supervised church (DSC) head ministers **As of reception party date*
- Date & Time: Jan. 28 ~ Feb. 1, 2026, from 12 PM ~ 1:30 PM **Attend once on one of the listed dates*
- Overseas church head ministers are scheduled to attend on January 28th
- If you do not require interpretation and have an assignment as a directly supervised church on a day other than January 28th, you may attend on that day. In that case, please individually contact your directly supervised church to request the change.

15) 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF OYASAMA JR (JAPAN RAILWAY) TENRIKYO GROUP RATES

Apart from the Tenrikyo Group Pilgrimage tickets, there are new discounted tickets for groups

of 8 or more, which will be available from September 1, 2025 ~ January 31, 2026. Please contact your directly supervised church or the Mission Headquarters secretaries for more information.

16) NEWLY EXPANDED AREAS FOR JR TENRIKYO GROUP PILGRIMAGE

TICKETS From September 1, 2025 ~ January 31, 2026, JR will be offering Group Pilgrimage tickets for Kyoto Station to Tenri Station, as a special promotion for the period leading up to the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama celebration. Please contact your directly supervised church or the Mission Headquarters secretaries for more information.

17) TENRI UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT JAPANESE COURSE ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

If you are interested in learning about Japan through the Tenri University International Studies Department Japanese Course (for international students), please explore the links below.

- Entrance Exam Information <https://www.tenri-u.ac.jp/ent/>
- University Information, Application Guide <https://www.tenri-u.ac.jp/ent/request/>
- Entrance Exam Outline for International Students in the Japanese Studies Department <Residing Outside Japan> https://www.tenri-u.ac.jp/ent/system/jp_int_etc
- Admissions Office: Tel+81-743-62-2164, Fax+81-743-63-736,
E-mail: nyushi@sta.tenri-u.ac.jp

For overseas applicants, you will not be required to travel to Japan; you may apply through document submission alone.

18) REGARDING BESSEKI LECTURES DURING THE MONTHS OF JANUARY AND APRIL, 2026

- As the amount of expected Besseki Lecture attendees is anticipated to greatly increase during these months before and after the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama, the days when live lectures are offered will be determined in advance. You may view this schedule by visiting the Church Headquarters homepage, as well as via the Overseas Department homepage. The QR Codes for both pages can be found here:



Church HQ Calendar



Overseas Department Calendar

19) DIVINE SANCTIONS FOR CHURCH AFFAIRS ON ANNIVERSARY DAY

Divine sanction for church affairs are scheduled to be held on January 26.

20) REGARDING THE TENRIKYO BASICS COURSE (IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES) FOR 2026

- Times and languages will be predetermined for the Basics Course held on January 24, 25, & 27, 2026. Please register one week in advance of the day you would like to attend.

- This information should be available on the Missionary Department & Overseas Department homepages. If you are interested, please reach out to the Overseas Department's Human Resources Development Committee.

21) REGARDING INTERPRETATION

- Interpretation in the following languages is scheduled to be provided for the Anniversary Celebration day: English, Chinese (Mandarin & Cantonese), Korean, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Thai, Nepalese, and Mongolian.
- If you are requesting interpretation for Sanctuary Tours, the Grant of Safe Childbirth, Proof Amulet Bestowal, or the Besseki Pledge, please sign up at the Translation Section no later than three days ahead of time.

22) TENRIKYO ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS OFFICES ON JANUARY 25 & 26, 2026

- Only the following offices will be open on January 25 & 26: the Church Affairs Section (evening only), the Administrative Headquarters Management Bureau, the Administrative Affairs Section, and the Religious Corporation Section.

COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS

MISSIONARY COMMITTEE

- Thank you for your monthly service duty at the Mission Headquarters for church, fellowship, and mission center heads. The duty calendar up to March is as follows. Please be aware that there is no monthly service duty in January.
December: Gary Yashiki, Hifumi Nakagawa
February: Yochi Fukui, Eddie Takemoto
March: Junichi Hamada, Brian Kojima
- There will be no Corridor-Cleaning Hinokishin scheduled for January 25.
- Next year on February 14 (Sat), we will hold our Seminar for Church, Fellowship, and Mission Center heads and their spouses. We will receive a lecture from Bishop Fukaya on the theme, "The Daily Mindset Apparent in the Ofudesaki." Following the lecture, we will hold a discussion. More details will be distributed via email on a later date.

NURTURING AND EDUCATIONAL COMMITTEE

- The Oyasato Seminar preliminary session will be held from December 28 (Sun) to 30 (Tue). Six students have applied. The Opening Ceremony will begin at 8:30 AM. Students attending the TSA Winter Conference will join the OS preliminary session from the Opening Ceremony.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- We have incorporated an ongoing section in the Ichiretsu/Newsletter to highlight everyone's efforts and activities leading up to the 140th anniversary of Oyasama. Therefore, we would like to request churches, fellowships, districts, and individuals to submit your activity reports & pictures to us (Kawakami: kamishuyo@hotmail.com or Hayashi: takhayashi@gmail.com).

- We have created and are continuously updating the Mission HQ Homepage so that our congregation members may make use of it. Please visit our homepage, and let those around you know as well.
- The domain name has been changed from Tenrikyo.com to TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org

FUTURE PATH

- We have closed the survey for evaluating the nurturing programs. We had a total of 50 respondents. We will share the results of the survey over the next month.

WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

- 108th TWA Convention:
 - April 19, 2026 (Sun), 9:30 AM @ Church HQ Inner Courtyard
 - Commemorative Activity: Lecture: April 18 (Sat), from 5PM
 - Place: Dining Hall #2, East Lecture Hall, Oyasato-yakata East Right Wing No. 1 Fourth Floor Lecture Hall, East Left Wing No. 5 Fourth Floor Lecture Hall
 - Branch Association Gathering: Following the convention, at each respective branch association
- District Leaders Gathering
 - January 17, 2029 (Sat) ZOOM
- TWA America Convention
 - May 16, 2026 (Sat) @ 10AM
 - Commemorative Activity: Family BBQ
- Julia Yuge, Chairwoman of the TWAA Young Women's Group, will continue her term for two more years.

BOYS & GIRLS ASSOCIATION

- A new Theme Song for the Children's Pilgrimage to Jiba has been announced. The title is, "Sparkling Children of the Path." Koteki members are asked to begin practicing the new song. You can find the music and the video here: <https://tenrikyo-shonenkai.org/kogsong/>
- Please practice the service at your churches, fellowships, mission centers, and homes, towards next year's BGA Practice Service Convention in August!
- Let's share stories about Oyasama with BGA members! Visit your churches as a family and engage in hinokishin together.
- Please send an email to [moto1884@icloud.com] if there are any new BGA members, newborn or new to the North America congregation.

TYMANA

- The International Hinokishin Corps will be held from July 18 ~ 24, 2026. Information will be distributed this month. Please let TYMANA members know, and contact us if you are interested in participating (email: seinenkainorthamerica@gmail.com)

NEW YORK CENTER

- January 16: TCI New Year's Party

140th Anniversary of Oyasama Action Day for All Yoboku

The Action Day for All Yoboku was held at various venues throughout the America-Canada diocese. These activities were carried out with renewed enthusiasm at this fifth and final action day towards the 140th anniversary of Oyasama, which will be celebrated next January.



Community Highlight

On Sunday, December 7th, the Sacramento District came together to volunteer at the 42nd California International Marathon. From setting up event stations and hanging banners to fueling the runners with bananas, protein bars, and water, the group played a key role in making the event a success!

As mentioned earlier, when you play a record, you hear that faint “crackling,” and it seems that today’s young listeners find this comforting and are drawn to this sound. Cassette tapes appear to offer a similar effect. According to an article from January 2024, cassette tape buyers range from teenagers to people in their fifties, with most in their thirties.

When I first came to the United States as a high school student, it was the golden age of cassette tapes. Before coming, I recorded many Japanese songs and brought numerous cassette tapes with me. Naturally, I also brought a radio cassette recorder (a “boombox”) to listen to them.

One day, I visited Tower Records. At the time, I hardly knew which American artists were popular, so I simply bought the first and second most popular cassette tapes displayed on the shelf behind the counter. Those two were the very first tapes I ever purchased in America.

The American artists I knew before coming to the States were Stevie Wonder and the Carpenters. I also knew The Eagles who sang “Hotel California,” which was a popular song when I was in the ninth grade. So I figured that the top two best-selling tapes would be a safe choice. I remember one of the tapes I bought this way was Billy Joel’s 52nd Street. I hadn’t even heard of Billy Joel’s name before, but by sheer coincidence, I bought his tape—and after that, I began purchasing and listening to many more of his recordings.

I believe a single cassette tape could

record up to about 120 minutes. Like records, they had a Side A and Side B, so a 120-minute tape meant 60 minutes per side.

My boombox could automatically switch from Side A to Side B, but many simple cassette players required you to remove the tape and flip it manually. The boombox also had fast-forward, rewind, and recording functions, but using them required physically pressing the switches.

Repeated fast-forwarding or rewinding often stretched the tape, causing the pitch to become distorted or making the sound wobble. Exposure to heat or long-term use could also damage and stretch the tape, rendering it unusable.

Unlike compact discs (CDs), which required a computer to record audio onto a CD, cassette tapes were extremely simple to record. As mentioned, anyone could do it as long as the boombox had a recording function. Because of that, people sometimes accidentally recorded over something important. At the same time, the ease of overwriting meant you could wipe unwanted audio and record something new in its place. You could even record speeches, and it was common to overwrite old speeches with new ones.

Cassette tapes also had a “tab” (the record protection tab) to prevent accidental overwriting of important songs and/or speeches. If the tab was removed, you could no longer record over the tape—but if you covered the empty tab space with scotch tape, you could record over again.

Listening to or recording cassette tapes

required manually inserting and removing the tape and operating the controls. This is what makes them “analog.” Although this requires additional effort and may seem tedious, this very inconvenience seems to feel fresh to Gen Z, who find meaning in the physical process itself. For them, this entire series of actions becomes a kind of routine or “ritual” for listening to music—and perhaps this brings comfort to them.

In the fashion industry, styles from several generations ago can suddenly feel new again and make a “revival.” It seems a similar phenomenon is happening with cassette tapes and boomboxes. For this reason, some popular American artists now sell their music on cassette tape as well.

Many companies once manufactured cassette tapes. In Japan, SONY, TDK, and Maxell were well-known brands, and today multiple manufacturers—including Maxell as a major one—continue to produce them. Cheap options are also available, but the basic structure of cassette tapes has not undergone major “evolutions” or “innovations.”

However, recent boomboxes and cassette players have evolved: some now include Bluetooth capability, and their tape mechanisms run more smoothly than before. Sales are reportedly increasing.

The revival of cassette tapes may not merely be nostalgia. It may reflect a renewed appreciation for the value of taking time and performing each step with one's own hands. Perhaps this shows that people have a natural tendency to seek comfort

and warmth. In that longing, we may see a reflection of the innate human sensibilities of “helping one another” and “not shying away from effort.”

God the Parent wishes for our spiritual growth, and we strive each day toward the “spiritual growth of our minds” in accordance with that divine intention.

This “spiritual growth of the mind” is not something that arises automatically. Just as cassette playback and recording require manual steps, practicing the faith also requires daily, careful “handwork.” Such as performing the service, engaging in hinokishin, and working earnestly in missionary and salvation work. It is the accumulation of these steady, sincere actions that is essential.

Through such steady efforts, I believe that we can align our hearts with the intention of God the Parent, fill our lives with true joy and warmth, and connect ourselves with the world of the Joyous Life.

(translation by Y. Nakagawa)

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TOWARD THE JOYOUS LIFE

TENRIKYO came into existence on October 26, 1838, when God the Parent, Tenri-O-no-Mikoto, became revealed through Oyasama, Miki Nakayama, to save all humankind. God the Parent is God of Origin and God in Truth who created this world and has nurtured and protected us ever since.



God the Parent created human beings so that by seeing us lead the Joyous Life, God could share in our joy. Leading the Joyous Life is, therefore, the purpose of our existence. Since God is our Parent, we are all God's children; thus, we should realize that we are all brothers and sisters.

“With human beings : the body is a thing lent by God, a thing borrowed. The mind alone is yours.”
Osashizu : June 1, 1889

We are taught that we borrow our bodies from God the Parent and only our minds truly belong to us; further, through the proper use of our minds, we will be able to lead the Joyous Life.