

Tenrikyo

newsletter



Seminar for Heads of Churches, Fellowships, and Mission Centers and Their Spouses

On February 14th, the Seminar for Church and Fellowship Heads and Spouses was held. This training session was simultaneously held online, with 40 participants attending in person and 16 participants attending online from New York, Chicago, and Canada.

Tenrikyo Mission Headquarters in America

www.TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org

March 2026

“A Work in Progress” by Bishop Fukaya

- Regarding the Service Rituals(2) -

We held the spring memorial service this month. I would like for everyone to recall that we are who we are today due to the legacy of our predecessors who left us this Teaching. As such, I would like for us to pass down this Teaching onto the next generation with a fervor that can match our predecessors'. Further, let us do our best to achieve the Joyous Life for everyone in the world.

At the end of this month, our Mission Headquarters and the New York Center will hold our respective Two Day Courses. In addition, next month and the month after, each of our districts will hold their respective Hinokishin Days that will take place at various localities. I hope to see many people take part in these activities, and I hope that this will be of aid in spreading the fragrance of the Teachings in our respective locals.

Then, in June we will hold our Spiritual Development Course, which will be held

here at Mission Headquarters. I ask for your assistance in getting as many participants as possible for this program.

Continuing where I left off in last month's article, I wrote that the rituals of Tenrikyo are great opportunities for us to express our attitude of reverence toward God the Parent and Oyasama.

For this month, I want to touch on this mind of reverence, which goes beyond simply personal sentiment. I believe it transcends that and becomes energy for world salvation. In other words, I would like to focus on the crucial aspect of “unity of mind,” and begin our exploration with the essence of the origin of the Service and monthly services.

For our services, it is absolutely critical that the minds of both service performers and worshippers alike be in “unity of

(continued on page 17)

Coming Up

* Two Day Course

@ Mission HQ 3/21~3/22

* TWA & YWG Convention

@ Mission HQ 5/16

EDITOR: Robert Yuge **STAFF:** Raymond Morishita, Amy Morishita, Ryo Wong

PRINTING STAFF: Yoshinobu Hayashi, Chikai Nakabayashi, Motoko Nakata

COVER DESIGN: Jun Nakagawa

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2727 EAST FIRST STREET, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90033

Phone: (323) 261-3379 / Fax: (323) 261-8659

E-mail: ameden@tenrikyo.com / Website: www.tenrikyoamericacanada.org

February Monthly Service Prayer

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February 15, 2026

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

Dear God the Parent, You created this world and human beings where there was no form, to see us lead the Joyous Life and to share in our joy. At the arrival of the promised time, You received Oyasama as Your shrine and revealed Yourself to the world to open the path of single-hearted salvation.

Since that time, this Path has spread to the world, including here in America and Canada. We are truly grateful for your parental love.

Relying upon Oyasama's Divine Model, we are striving for world salvation. Last month, the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama was successfully held at Church Headquarters. We are truly grateful that many followers from our diocese were able to return and receive the truth of Jiba.

As we stand before a new starting line after the anniversary, let us be spirited each day and look forward toward our next goals. With this in mind, today is our February Monthly Service. Receiving the truth of Jiba, from now, we service performers shall unite our minds and joyously perform the seated service and Teodori service dance.

Looking forward to this day, we Yoboku and followers have gathered here to give thanks for Your daily grace, and we ask for Your continued blessings. In witnessing our spirited singing of the service songs, we ask that You become spirited as well.

The Seminar for Heads of Churches, Fellowships, and Mission Centers and Their Spouses, was successfully held yesterday. Thank you very much. Let each of us make the most of our respective roles and responsibilities through this opportunity. Please continue to nurture the leaders of our diocese, so that they can fulfill their duties in high spirits.

Although Oyasama's 140th Anniversary has concluded, we pledge to continue to stay focused, to spread the teachings even more, and to pass down the faith to the next generation, as we move forward in our work for world salvation.

Dear God the Parent, as we continue to receive your boundless blessings, please accept our sincerity, guide us where we may be lacking, and bless us to be able to, even one day sooner, realize a world of the Joyous Life in which all people help one another. In unison with the whole congregation, I humbly pray that You bless us so.

(translation by S. So)

February Monthly Service Sermon

by Rev. Kazumi Kawakami

Learning from the Divine Model: The path to the single heartedness with God

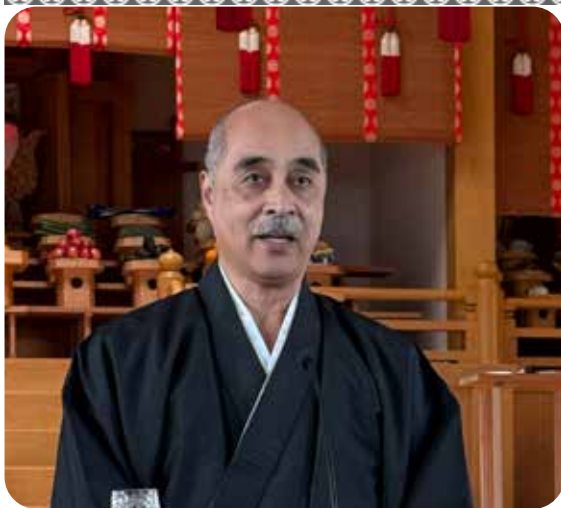
We have just completed the February Monthly Service with the joyous performances of everyone here today. Thank you very much. While I am not so good in front of crowds, I will do my best. I ask for your kind attention.

Around October of last year, the Bishop requested of me, “Would you be able to give the monthly service sermon for next March?” However, due to scheduling changes, I had rescheduled my sermon duty for this month. While I replied, “I understand,” without thinking into it too deeply, I heard from other people after the fact that this month would have the Seminar for Heads of Churches and Fellowships and Spouses, which was held yesterday. Hence, here I am standing here today, in front of a larger-than-usual crowd filled with church ministers, fellowship heads, and mission center heads; to deliver my sermon; it feels very intimidating for a timid person like me. Also, while February is right after the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama, the deadline for drafting this sermon was actually January 29, due it needing be to translated, which meant that I had to have most of this script done before the Anniversary. Although I was racking my brain to come up with a topic, I decided to go with, “Learning from the Divine Model: The Path to Single-Heartedness with God,” since these are

the first steps we are taking after the Anniversary. While I am still feeling nervous, I would like to talk about this topic today.

Right before the Anniversary, Japan was in the grip of a severe cold wave, and snow was accumulating in a majority of places. In northern Hyogo Prefecture, where my supervising church is located, the snow ended up cancelling school for grade school and junior high school students. Luckily, while the cold had lessened on the day of the Anniversary, the bone-chilling cold kept persisting. Despite the circumstances, many followers from all over the world had returned to Jiba for the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama. Many of the people here today were able to return to Jiba, able to show their respective progress in spiritual growth, and therefore bring joy to Oyasama.

In Tenrikyo, there is a reasoning behind why we pronounce the characters for “Oyasama,” our Foundress, in this way. There is a distinct difference between Her and the founders of other religions. A person who comes up with doctrine is called a founder (pronounced “kyou-so”). However, while having the mouth of a human, the mind of Oyasama was of God/Tsukihi (Moon-Sun), and what She was teaching to human beings was not just religious doctrines, but the Truth of this world as taught by God the Parent through the mouth of Oyasama. Also, through Oyasama and the Causality of the Soul of Izanami-no-Mikoto, She is the mother figure for the entire human race. Therefore, to make it easier for us to understand, She left us with the path of the Divine Model, the



Rev. Kazumi Kawakami

head minister of the Kamishuyo Church *hinagata*, as a human figure, to exemplify how we and further generations beyond should carry themselves to promote spiritual growth. With that said, the fifty years of the *hinagata*, from when Oyasama became the physical shrine of God the Parent, until the hiding of Her physical being, is a way for us to learn the way of the Teachings, no matter what our age may be.

From the time God the Parent descended into Oyasama, She underwent a great deal of hardships.

Firstly, in accordance with God the Parent's directive of, "Fall to the depths of poverty," the property and material possessions of the Nakayama family were given away without hesitation. This resulted in severe backlash and criticism from other members of the Nakayama family, the family and relatives that held Oyasama dear to their hearts. Not understanding the reasons why, the people She held dear said, "What an awful wife," and kept resisting Her. This level of hardship is far from ordinary. Within the scope of Japanese culture at that time, having the status

of marrying into the wealthy Nakayama family, there is no doubt that this suffering is beyond what we can imagine. Through these trying times, there were numerous times when Oyasama went to the edge of the well or the pond nearby to drown Herself. However, each time, God the Parent would stop Her and bring Her back, in compliance of the words of God the Parent.

I realize while reading through the *Life of Oyasama* and the *Anecdotes of Oyasama*, that once She became the shrine of God the Parent, this is really the only instance where She is heard saying, "This is tough," throughout both. Oyasama experiences much suffering after this as well. Despite this, Oyasama would say things like, "This is not suffering," "From knots buds will sprout," and "From these knots, buds will blossom," even expressing joy while being taken into jail.

In my opinion, because of these incidents, once Oyasama became the physical embodiment of God the Parent on October 26, 1838, I believe that God the Parent resided within Oyasama. With that, God the Parent directed Oyasama to do this or that. Oyasama did as She was told, and even through opposition by her family and relatives, She fell into the depths of poverty, doing it as asked. However, in doing so, there was major conflict within Oyasama's heart. Hence why there were these attempts to take Her own life.

After Oyasama became the bodily enshrinement of God, while the mouth may have been human, the mind was of Tsukihi/God the Parent; therefore, I believe God the Parent was trying to demonstrate to us humans through the human embodiment of Oyasama by way of the troubles She went through.

Although we are followers of the Path of the

Teachings, I think that we have all experienced times where our minds are in conflict between self-centered human thoughts and the mind of single-heartedness with God, while we make a living in society.

While following the Path of the Divine Model, as the mind of God the Parent settled into Oyasama, She spiritedly faced any hardships without any difficulties. As we fall more in line and become single-hearted with God, I believe that God the Parent and Oyasama will give us guidance and show us signs of God the Parent's blessings, in order to teach us how to be spirited no matter what happens. Through following Oyasama's hinagata, I feel that we should be able to accept things in this way.

So, what kind of attitude should we have in order to achieve single-heartedness with God? Looking at a translation guide, "single-heartedness with God" translates to, "a heart that is facing towards God." In addition, there is a certain head minister who has a file drawer that says, "By offering the inner depths of the heart to God the Parent is the attitude of fully entrusting in God." Then, by asking Gemini AI for an answer using Tenrikyo terminology, it replied, "Having only God the Parent in one's mind, following the Teachings and walking the single Path." The advent of AI is truly amazing.

To bring it back, "Everything around us that we are being shown, are all God's blessings and guidance. This is the origin of the Truth and how we are to carry ourselves daily while walking the Path," is what I believe it to mean.

For everyone here today, we have been guided here by God the Parent and Oyasama in various ways. Whether being saved from sickness or difficult situations, learning of the Truth of the

Teachings through someone, coming across the teachings through an event, whether spiritedly following the faith or not, we are all gathered here today. And as stated earlier, there are many church ministers, fellowship heads, and mission center heads in attendance here today. For them, walking the Path of the Teachings daily, through the Divine Guidance we are being shown all around us by God the Parent and Oyasama, are here because of seeing the Divine Blessings all around them. Through that gratitude, they are able to become ministers, fellowship heads, and mission center heads and walk the path of single-heartedness with God.

Now, I would like to talk a little bit about a time where I felt the guidance of God the Parent and Oyasama.

Oyasama is the human embodiment of God the Parent, as well as the parent figure of all humanity. Whenever I am able to return to Church Headquarters for the Monthly Service, I attend Morning Service on the 26th as long as there aren't any scheduling conflicts. Before that, I sit at the Foundress Sanctuary and always see many people there at the Sanctuary. Perhaps the reason I always like to go to the Foundress Sanctuary, and why so many other people do as well, is to be alongside Oyasama and to bask in Her warmth.

A decent while ago, I went back in November to attend the 90th Anniversary of our supervising church. As usual, I attended the Morning Service on the morning of the 26th. At that time, I was worried about how I have not been able to show how we've grown as a church. With that state of mind, I lowered my head and asked Oyasama, "What should I be doing?"

This was 6 am in the morning in November at Jiba. As I am more used to the weather here

in California, I was shivering profusely in the cold, despite me wearing heavier clothing to counteract it. Yet, when I had lowered my head to ask Oyasama, I found that the palms of my hands had started to become warmer and warmer. While the rest of my body was still bone-chilling cold, only my palms were feeling warm. At first, I was awestruck at this, but then I started to realize what it meant. I had received the Grant of the Sazuke from Oyasama. I felt like what Oyasama was trying to say was, “As long as you are doing your best to administer the Sazuke, that will do.” After Oyasama hid Her physical presence, She bestowed the Grant of the Sazuke to us, and through the administration of the Sazuke, She is able to do Her work, hence why it seemed like to me that it was Oyasama telling me, “As long as you are doing your best to administer the Sazuke, that will do.” It is not like I am very smart, nor good with words. Trying to explain things to others is not my forte. Yet, I still have the Sazuke. The Sazuke I have received is a way to ask for Oyasama to perform Her work. As long as I devote myself to administering the Sazuke, everything will be OK. Then Oyasama will be able to do Her work. Because of this revelation, I started to feel happier and naturally became more spirited.

Oyasama is everliving. When Oyasama hid Her physical being 140 years ago, it is unfathomable how jarring this must have been to the people of that time. You may be inclined to think that Tenrikyo would go into decline after this. However, with the Sazuke being granted to people from various places, as well as the Service that was so urgently requested to be done, now being performed, various manifestations of the blessings of God the Parent were shown all

throughout Japan. Due to Oyasama having hid Her physical presence and now being able to carry out Her work through the Sazuke, what should have been a decline in followers instead became the catalyst for the Path to rapidly expand and spread all over. It is because Oyasama is everliving and always working for us. Because of my own experiences, I feel like it is good to visit the Foundress Sanctuary and quietly listen to whatever Oyasama has to say whenever you are able to return to Jiba.

Next, I would like to talk about a time where I was deeply moved by the divine guidance of God the Parent and Oyasama, regarding the illness and difficulties of a certain Yoboku that is connected to our church.

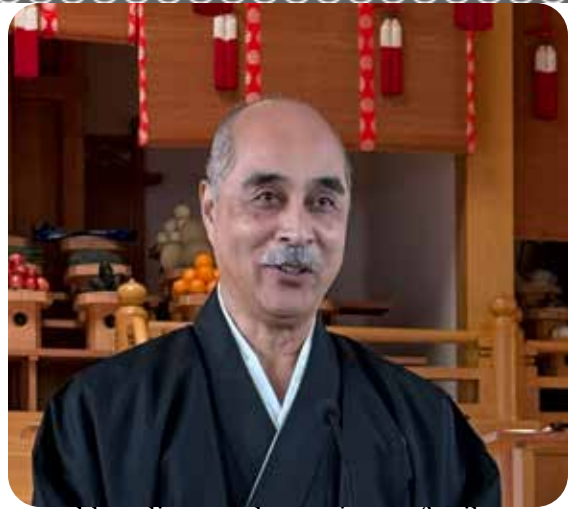
This Yoboku was one of five siblings, of which they visited the church most frequently and stayed most connected to the church. However, due to circumstances, her spouse had lost his job and ended up having to live with his three sons. Then their eldest son went through a difficult period, and due to that, ended up becoming delinquent and issues arose. As their parent, it felt like they ran straight into a large wall. And while that was all happening, this time it was her turn for guidance, as she had been diagnosed with breast cancer.

At first, I could not understand why the person who had been most connected to the church was going through so many difficulties and becoming ill. Still, as this was God the Parent’s and Oyasama’s divine guidance, I was earnestly trying to find out why God intended it to be this way.

First off, as for her own family’s casualty, just like her father, they were unable to live under the same household. All the way up until age twenty,

he and his father were not able to live together. This was their causality. Although she and her siblings were raised by their parents, in this case, their children ended up unable to live together under the same roof. This was to have them realize their own family causality. Also, it was to have them realize the importance of putting in effort to sever this causality. And then, when they themselves became sick, her father was the one to administer the Sazuke to her. Their family's faith had started with her mother, while the father was much less of a believer, lightly joking around by saying things such as, "My mother is Oyasama," and what not. Yet, when he heard that his daughter had become ill, he was the first to administer the Sazuke to her. He told his wife, "Hey, you should go too," as he left to administer the Sazuke. I was deeply touched when I heard about it after the fact, thinking to myself, "Wow, he was the first one to administer the Sazuke to his daughter."

With that, the daughter was able to feel how much her father was looking out for her after having the Sazuke administered. It made her rethink how she thought about her parents. For the father, they now held that sense of gratitude and truly say, "Thank you." This also made him reflect and see that he was able to mature as a parent. Soon after, the eldest son also reflected and started to change his ways and became more of an adult. The once hot-headed youth had now changed his expression and became more mellow, with a friendly demeanor as a caring big brother, and became a truly wonderful young man. For a parent to mature as a parent figure, one must first have gratitude toward their parents. After that, the husband was able to find work and start working again, as well as receive the blessings of God the Parent for her illness, and the five of them were



now able to live together again as a family.

After having gone through all this, this time an old friend became gravely ill. Wanting to do something to save them, this time it was their turn to set out to save other people. Rather than a Yoboku who merely was granted the Truth of the Sazuke, she set out to administer the Sazuke and become a true Yoboku.

In the Ofudesaki, there is this verse:

Day by day, I shall tend those trees which are to become My useful timber. Never take it to be an illness.

Ofudesaki Part III Verse 131

To be a Yoboku and be useful, as well as spiritually maturing to make one's mind more joyous, without the need to think any bad thoughts, is what this verse is trying to teach us.

Looking back at the path they have walked up until this point, this is exactly what her path was. For God the Parent and Oyasama to properly nurture Yoboku, and for them to be joyous Yoboku at that, they were given guidance through illness

and difficult circumstances.

As part of a church, having gone through illness and difficulties to stay connected with the church, they had to slowly figure out the profound intentions of God the Parent and Oyasama that led her to receive divine guidance in this way. Otherwise, if she did not do her due diligence and seek out why she was being guided in this way, it would end up lost in time. Beyond that, the mind of single-heartedness with God means that through everything that we are being shown each day, it is important that we have the mindset to perceive the divine guidance we are being given by God the Parent and Oyasama.

From 1999 to 2013, for fourteen years I was a part of the PR Committee of the Mission Headquarters in America. "Ichiretsu," the monthly newsletter, had a small piece published every month on the last page titled, "A monologue from the desk." With three to four other committee members, I oversaw this particular section of the newsletter. But every three to four months, I always had this looming issue come up. At the time, I worked at a company, and during the hour-long commute each way, this would be my time to think of what to write for my monologue. Each day, I would try to produce a good topic to write about. Looking back at the various things I wrote about, there was: my son's constipation, some things that happened while my three children were a part of Chibi Daiko drum group, talks I've had with my own parents, things we talked about at the Spiritual Development Course at Mission Headquarters in America, as well as a conversation that a Savon pharmacist that I had while I was buying hair growth formula; looking back at each day and gleaning the teachings as part of God's divine guidance, I was shown

various things through this process. I believe that we ended up writing some good things there. The "me" of back then that was wracking my brain to come up with monologues, I can appreciate again as a significant time in my life where God the Parent and Oyasama were giving me their guidance.

As written in the Ofudesaki,

If all of the thoughts of God about everything are taught to you, your minds will be spirited.

Ofudesaki Part IV Verse 27

If there is anyone here amongst us today that does not feel very spirited, I would like for them to recall times where you were moved by God the Parent and Oyasama's divine blessings and guidance. Then, to further that sense of appreciation, I would like for you to search through your own lives and put in the effort to see the blessings and guidance that God the Parent and Oyasama gives us on a daily basis. I think that once you are able to accumulate more of this emotion, your minds will become more spirited and, step by step, will be able to self-reflect and your mind will spiritually mature into a mind of single-heartedness with God. Let us be spirited and together we shall walk towards the path of single-heartedness with God.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

1) MARCH MONTHLY SERVICE (3/15)

Officiant: Bishop

Assistants: Takahiko Hayashi, Dairei Masuno

Director: Junjiro Nakatomi

Attendants: Mitsuharu Ito, Kinpei Ito

Offerings Officiant: Taichi Onishi

Sermon: Koji Uesugi (E)

2) DIVINE SANCTION

- San Francisco Church: Request for Altar & Upper Dais Rearrangement along with Church Extension & Repair of the Church Roof, Temporary Transfer of the Medo, Request for Special Service

Divine Sanction: January 26, 2026

Ceremony for Temporary Relocation: March 7, 2026

Enshrinement Ceremony: August 28, 2027

Enshrinement Service: August 29, 2027

3) CHURCH/FELLOWSHIP AFFAIRS

- San Francisco Church: Temporary address change due to church construction work (until 8/28/2027)
- Joyous Fellowship: Temporary address change due to fellowship construction work (until summer this year)

4) SERVICE PERFORMER APPOINTMENT

As of March 14 (Sat), Illinois Church head Hiroaki Takagaki and Seatac Church head Teruaki Nagao have been appointed as Mission HQ service performers.

5) SPRING MEMORIAL SERVICE

The spring memorial service will be held at the Mission Headquarters on March 14 (Sat.), from 7 PM. On this occasion, we will be enshrining the spirit of the late Wakie Onishi, wife of the fourth head minister of the California Church.

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. This year, there are eight applicants for the Los Angeles course, and four applicants for the New York course.

7) SHUYOKA SPANISH CLASS

This 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 contact the Mission Headquarters as soon as possible.

8) 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 this year to begin from October 27.

9) 86TH AMERICA SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE (SHUYOKAI)

The 86th America Spiritual Development Course at the Mission Headquarters is currently scheduled to be held from June 21 (Sun.) to July 18 (Sat). These courses will be held if there are at least two applicants for the English or Japanese course, or five applicants for the Spanish

course, as of one month prior (May 17).

10) REGARDING BESSEKI LECTURES DURING THE MONTH OF 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 below:



Church HQ Calendar



Overseas Department Calendar

COMMITTEE & ASSOCIATION REPORTS**CONSTRUCTION COMMITTEE**

- A new tankless water heater has been installed for the Tenri Kaikan second floor guest room.
- We discovered a water leak in the restroom of the Hinomoto Bunko Learning Center. Since the roof is still under warranty with Ichi Ban Roofing, we will arrange to have them address this issue.
- The breaker panel in the New Lot house has been susceptible to dropping out recently, so we will aim to split the breaker to remedy the issue.

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 April is as follows.

March: Jun'ichi Hamada, Brian Kojima, Hiroaki Takagaki

April: Zen Yukimoto, Mitsuharu Ito

May: Kazumi Kawakami, Taichi Onishi

Also, we are making the duty roster for the next twelve months, until June of next year, so please fill out and submit the form with your desired months (up to three choices) by the end of March. <https://forms.gle/dumLAec17Wj2Vsb5A>

- We will hold Corridor-Cleaning Hinokishin on April 17 (Fri). For those returning to Jiba at that time, please assemble 45 minutes before the morning service (5 AM) in the rear east area of the South Worship Hall.

PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

- We have incorporated an ongoing section in the Ichiretsu/Newsletter to highlight local

activities and events under the title, “Joyous Life Here & There.” Therefore, we would like to request churches, fellowships, districts, and individuals to submit your activity information & 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 (such as Our Guide to Jiba: Oyasama 140th Anniversary, Stories Inspired By Oyasama, etc). Please visit our homepage, and let those around you know as well. Homepage: TenrikyoAmericaCanada.org .

WOMEN’S ASSOCIATION

- 108th TWA Convention:
 April 19, 2026 (Sun), 9:30 AM @ Church HQ Inner Courtyard, Front of South & East Worship Halls, West Church HQ Precincts
 Commemorative Activity: Branch Association Gathering following the convention
 Lecture (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)
- TWA America Convention
 May 16, 2026 (Sat) @ 10AM
 Commemorative Activity: Family BBQ
- Following in the Footsteps of Kokan Gathering
 May 16, 2026 (Sat) @ 2:30 PM
 Place: Hinomoto Bunko Learning Center
 Program: Lecture by Taitan Church Head Rev. Lynn So, discussion

BOYS & GIRLS ASSOCIATION

- The 2026 BGA Practice Service Convention will be held on June 20 (Sat) at the Mission Headquarters, and the Youth Conference will be held the day before, June 19 (Fri). We ask for your help in spreading the word, so that many members may attend.
- 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).

NY CENTER

- March 15: Spring Memorial Service
- March 21-22: Two Day Course
- March 28-29: BGA Sleepover

TENRIKYO
USA & CANADA

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携帯のカメラでQRコードをスキャンし、ウェブサイトを最新情報でチェックしてください!

CALENDAR

tenrikyoamericacanada.org/events-calendar

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SERMONS

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OYASAMA-INSPIRED STORIES

tenrikyoamericacanada.org/stories-inspired-by-oyasama

Seminar for Heads of Churches, Fellowships, and Mission Centers and Their Spouses

Bishop Hiroshi Fukaya delivered a talk entitled "Daily Mindset as Seen in Ofudesaki," followed by a one-hour discussion session in which participants were divided into small groups. During the discussion session, participants reviewed the content of Bishop Fukaya's lecture and discussed the activities they have each been involved in leading up to the 140th Anniversary of Oyasama.





mind.”

When I say, “unity of mind,” firstly, I feel it emphasizes “consistency of form,” such as when service performers ascend up to and descend down from the upper dais in unison, and when the movements of the Otefuri service dance are in sync. To show respect to God the Parent, it is important for our form to be in unison. Yet, beyond this, we aim for all service performers to have a “unity of mind.”

Even if one person were to have a truly sincere mind of reverence toward God the Parent, if this mindset is not shared by others in the group, I believe that the “power of reverence” cannot truly be manifested. It is essential for everyone who is taking part in service rituals be in harmony, so that God the Parent can sense the reverence in our hearts.

The profound meaning of “unity of mind” truly manifests itself through the “Kagura Service” that is performed at Church Headquarters.

Let us examine Part One of the Kagura Service and the hand movements of the ten Service dancers. The hand movements of the performers do not exactly mirror one another. Rather, each person is dancing the truth of the workings of God the Parent at the time of human conception. When viewed from the outside, at first glance, it can seem like everyone’s movements are not in unison.

However, although each performer’s movements differ because they

symbolically represent different workings of truth, they are trying to manifest the one goal and prayer for “the realization of the Joyous Life world,” and it can be said that they already collectively have a “unity of mind.” As they are of one mind united, each separate working comes together as one force, and I believe that this is how God the Parent was able to realize the magnificent creation of the world and of human beings.

As can be seen from this above example, performing the service as part of religious rituals is not only about synchronizing form and movements, but it is of prime importance for our minds to come together when performing the service.

In the *Tenrikyo Jiten* (Tenrikyo encyclopedia) third edition, when you look up the entry for “ritual,” or “saigi” in Japanese, pertaining to the main ritual we perform that is the Service, it reads, “It is not only about the form in which the service is performed, but it is the complete devotion, in both body and soul, that is in accord with mind of the Parent that we are striving for.” This is the core of a mind that is truly, “in unity of mind.”

The mind of reverence toward God the Parent and Oyasama does not simply stop at the rituals of our monthly services; this mindset must also permeate through every aspect of our daily lives.

Taking a broader view of the word “ritual,” it is not limited only to the solemn rituals of our grand services and monthly services. It also includes:

- Daily morning and evening services
- How sanctuary cleaning and offerings are done
- The way one ascends onto and descends off of the upper dais of the sanctuary

All these could be considered as part of “daily rituals” that are carried out before God the Parent and Oyasama.

For example, when one goes up to the upper dais and the altar of the sanctuary for cleaning, we should remember to go up with your “lower” foot first and come off with your “upper” foot first. This is not simply sanctuary etiquette, but the fundamental protocol to bring about the mind of reverence toward God the Parent.

If we are not aware of how rituals are supposed to be carried out and we do it in a haphazard way, people will question it and think, “Why do we have to do it this way?” However, if we are able to understand that it is to shape our mind of reverence toward God the Parent and Oyasama, we will naturally keep our clothing tidy and maintain a serious attitude when it is time to do so. Eventually, as we conduct ourselves in this way in our daily lives, then this will naturally translate to how we perform rituals during ceremonies and services.

So, if we are to show our mind of reverence periodically through these religious rituals, then when and why did it become so? To figure out the origin of this, we need to uncover the true reasons why we continue to perform the religious ritual

[of the service].

During the period of Oyasama's physical life, the Grand Services were not conducted like we do currently, but rather it was a “festival (matsuri)” that people gathered for every month.

The first followers who came to believe would, as their schedules allowed, come to the Residence to worship. However, as everyone got to know each other through each meeting, it naturally became a gathering on the 26th of each month, due to the significance of that day.

In the *Anecdotes of Oyasama*, it is written that, in 1878, these gatherings were referred to as “matsuri.” People would gather at the Residence on the 26th of every month to meet Oyasama and make inquiries to Her directly. This was the earnest and sincere feeling behind why people gathered.

During the years from 1861 to 1864, the number of followers increased to the point of worshippers not being able to fit indoors and eventually, they spilled out to the surrounding gardens. Prompted by the words of Oyasama given on July 26, 1864, the construction to build the “Place for the Service” began, and the 26th of each month came about spontaneously as a special day for those who followed Oyasama.

I think that the origin of the “matsuri” (festival) and the framework for the Monthly Services was due to the “mind of spontaneous faith” to follow Oyasama, and to the “prayers of gratitude” for God the Parent's blessings.

While we do not know exactly what happened during these matsuri gatherings that our predecessors attended, from before 1864 and onward, “Namu Tenri-O-No-Mikoto” began to be chanted as a prayer. Later, these gatherings were incorporated into the Service, which eventually took on the monthly service structure that we recognize today.

In 1866, Part One of the Mikagura-uta was taught to us by Oyasama. Then in 1867, She taught the Twelve Songs of the Mikagura-uta, after which She taught the accompanying hand movements of the service dance.

Looking at this sequence of events, we can discern that the Service Oyasama taught us took the place of the “matsuri,” which helped shape the current state of our rituals and ceremonies.

Through our history, we see that our monthly services are not merely gatherings; we now understand that these took shape spontaneously through the thankful prayers of followers who had a mind of reverence, with the Service to carry out world salvation that we received directly from Oyasama Herself at its center.

If we decide not to participate in performing these rituals, we cannot truly call ourselves a follower of Tenrikyo. This is because at the core of these rituals is the performance of the Service, which was taught to us by Oyasama as part of our ultimate mission to save humankind.

In order for us to realize the Joyous

Life that God the Parent so much wants us to partake in, we go to the sanctuary to worship by performing the service. These rituals are for us ourselves to renew our pledge and our determination to succeed in this critical mission.

To succeed in our mission, we must do the daily services and the rituals for our monthly services without fail.

From the morning and evening services to cleaning the sanctuary area, while it may seem insignificant as part of the big picture, I think that keeping in mind that showing our “reverence toward God the Parent through engaging in these daily rituals,” while performing them is very important.

While this stance may seem to be a bit overboard, believing that even small things can come together and become a greater power that can save others is the sincere mindset that I think is very important in terms of performing our rituals. As followers of the faith, as we perform our rituals to accomplish our mission, we should reconfirm and implement them as we do so. Now, I think this is what we are being asked to do, but what does everyone think about this?

TENRIKYO MISSION HEADQUARTERS IN AMERICA
2727 EAST FIRST STREET
LOS ANGELES, CA 90033

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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.